

## Chapter 4

### Thai People and Animals as Described by Japanese Haiku Poets

The interest of various Japanese haiku poets in Thailand differed, depending on the individual character, gender, age, occupation, family background and living surroundings of each poet. These haiku poets included young and old men and women, permanent-visa holders and temporary-visa holders. Some married Thai persons, while others did not. Some stayed in Thailand for a long time, while others stayed for only a short time, and these poets lived in Thailand during various periods.

The poets described Thailand with their perception, recognition, understanding, and sensibility through their experience and circumstances. Therefore, various topics became the subjects of their interest in haiku; for example, people, natural phenomena, social events, ceremonies and festivals, animals, plants, environments, culture, customs and history. Some of these topics reflect social and economic changes in Thailand. This chapter focuses on Thai people and animals as described in haiku.

#### 4.1 Thai People

##### 4.1.1 Vendors and Purchasers

A familiar scene in Thailand was vendors on the streets, lanes and other corners. Haiku poets have watched vendors of food, brooms, baskets, balloons, accessories, flowers, garlands, shirts, and papier-mache animals, among others. Food-vendors are often seen selling cut pieces of fruit, noodles, rolled dried squid, papaya salad, sticky rice, and other snacks.

Foreign people usually met Thai people while shopping in daily life and while travelling. Negotiating the prices of the purchase was sometimes fun, sometimes not fun. When Japanese people did not speak Thai language at all, they had to pay more. When they came to live in Thailand, most Japanese, regardless of their age, tried to learn Thai language for the first time. Then, they had the chance to speak to the vendors, although often Japanese pronunciation of the Thai language was not very good. For

these Japanese, communication with Thai people was a step to the understanding of Thailand.

*Waga taigo kīte maketaru yomisekana*

(Akihiro, 1979, Ntbk., Vol. 12)

Having heard my Thai language,  
the vendor reduced the price  
a night stall!

The poet was happy to find his Thai language was good enough to get a reduced price on his purchase. On the other hand, he felt that the Thai vendor was kind enough to understand his poor Thai language and to reduce the price. The vendors were often thinking about making profit and therefore decided the prices after assessing the customer.

*Menamu mite dorian o mite nebumi kana!*

(Takako, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Looking at the Menam,  
then, looking at durian  
decides the price!

This haiku indicates that some short, but concentrated time is taken to decide the price in a successful negotiation between the purchaser and the seller. Durians were attractive merchandise, for vendors and the fruit was much appreciated by lovers of the spiky and strong smelling fruit.

When vendors had no change, they were clever in solving the problem. The following poet was impressed by the vendor's soft way of thinking and quick idea to add more strawberries. Strawberries were usually sold during the cool season in Thailand.

*Tsurisen no nashi to ichigo o tashinikeri*

(Akihiro, 1984., Ntbk., vol. 15)

Saying,  
"Having no change",

and adding strawberries

Thai people often use the waterways along rivers to commute to jobs. Street vendors come and sell at these busy places. Each vendor usually has a parasol to protect their goods and themselves from the heat of the sun. The following poet found each vendor under a parasol. Among them, he observed a fortune-teller (*mooduu*) under an umbrella that was set at a lower position. The poet discovered that the social position of an ordinary *mooduu* was just a little higher than that of a beggar. It is Thai tradition that a person of a higher status sits in a higher place than a person of a lower position. In Thailand, there are respected fortune-tellers like the royal Brahmans (priests of Hindu origin who preside over ceremonies), some Buddhist monks and famous, expensive *mooduu*, while some cheap *mooduu* receive small amounts of money from people.

*Ōhigasa hitotsu hitosu ni monourime*

(Akihiro, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Big parasols,  
under each one  
a female-vendor

*Hioōi no hitotsu hikuki wa uranaishi*

(Akihiro, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

One of many sunshades,  
it is the lowest one  
that belongs to the fortune-teller

In the 1960's and in the 1970's, many bare-footed people were seen on the streets of Thai towns, and as well, many Thai people liked to put on simple rubber sandals. No guests wearing sandals entering the fine lobbies of hotels were stopped. Monks were also usually seen walking bare-foot. As the country became developed, most Bangkok people began to wear shoes and some women wore stockings. For people coming from cold countries, walking bare-foot on the street was something unusual and deserved notice.

*Rei urumo shin'bun uru mo hadashi kana!*

(Midori)

Those who are selling  
garlands and newspapers  
are bare-footed!

In the 1970's, luxury consumer goods were still expensive, as most of them were imported. Therefore, toys for children were very high-priced. One of the popular items for children was simple, but colorful balloons. Balloon-vendors would hold the strings of balloons filled with hydrogen, which flew high in the sky. When balloon-vendors walked, a cloud of balloons also moved and children chased them, eager to get one.

*Fūsen-uri kyōkan hinemosu kouen ni*

(Sekiyō, 1976, Ntbk., vol.11)

A balloon vendor,  
a big fellow  
at the park all day long

Lumpini Park has become a green oasis for Bangkok people since it was built. King Rama VI contributed the land for the people to use, and originally cars and vendors were allowed to enter the park so it was not as clean and beautiful as it is today. It was also considered dangerous to go deep into the park, especially in the early morning, or late at night. However, on holidays, families with children come to play at the park; hence the lingering of balloon-vendor all day long. At that time, before the boom of economic development, it was difficult to get good jobs in Bangkok. People often saw balloon vendors.

Thirty years ago in Bangkok, people used charcoal as well as propane gas in daily life. Making fire with charcoal is not difficult at all, with the help of the fibers of palm trees. Although charcoal was used as the main source of fire and is still used in many places, today it is difficult to find charcoal vendors.

*Garan garan to sumi uri no neya soi no asa*

(Tada Minoru, 1977, Ntbk., vol. 11)

The rattling sound  
of the charcoal vendor,  
the lane in the morning.

Stepping into the mango market in the mango season, many vendors were eager to sell their mangoes. Once a customer glanced at mangoes at the stall, a female vendor started to ask using sign language.

*"Sume ka" to iu me mukerare mango-ichi*

(Sekiyō, 1983, Ntbk., vol. 14)

*Su mai ka?* ("Are you buying?"),

I was asked by a female vendor  
with her eyes, at the mango market

In October, November and December, sometimes the Thai climate is like the autumn in Japan; especially when the air is cool and the sky is high. Japanese people have come to use some season words that are used in Japanese autumn. In the north or in the northeast regions, sometimes these periods are so cold that people need blankets. In Bangkok, aside from these cool months, people have to face hot weather, which causes considerable perspiration if air-conditioners or electric-fans are not available.

*Deku-uri no inemuri te o ri aki biyori*

(Midori, n.d.)

A papier-mache vendor  
is taking a nap  
in fine autumn weather

A vendor was selling papier-mache animals shaped like pigs, tigers, elephants and other animals. This vendor settled down on the sidewalk to sell his goods and as the autumn weather was comfortable and no one came to buy, the vendor obviously took a nap.

Today, if the purchaser does not mind paying a little more, people in Bangkok can save time when purchasing durians, as they are available from supermarkets packed and wrapped with fixed prices. However, for a long time, and still now, in many places people have bought durians by examining and negotiating. The hard shell was split open and the ripe fruit was taken out onto clean papers and wrapped by the sellers. This is a unique picture of Thailand in Japanese people's eyes.

*Dorian no toge hajikitsutsu ne o tataki*

(Suriyon Teruko, 1988, Ntbk., vol.16)

Flipping spines of durian,  
a purchaser  
is beating down the price

The scene shows the two actions by the purchaser; by flipping spines of durian, the person indicates that she is experienced in choosing good durians and by beating down the price she shows she is a tough negotiator.

For Thai cooking, a stone mortar and pestle are essential utensils. Papaya salad (*somtam* in Thai), which is now very popular among all Thais, not only people from the northeast where the dish originates, but also urban people in Bangkok, is prepared with a mortar and pestle.

*Shunchū ni ishīusu ching to tatakikau*

(Takashi, 1988, Ntbk., vol. 16)

Daytime in spring,  
tapping the pestle,  
then, buying a stone mortar

A stone mortar is very heavy to lift and there is a special way to choose a good one by observing the shape and color of the stone. The person referred to in this haiku finally decided to tap the mortar once and bought it.

#### 4.1.2 People in Rural Areas

Before the Friendship Highway from Korat to Bangkok was constructed with the aid of the United States, the northeast was a remote area. The new transportation tool

connected rural areas of Thailand to the metropolitan area and changed villagers' lives and fate. Originally the lifestyle of the isolated areas consisted largely of work in the rice fields and rest. However, with the new access to urban areas and the economic focus on industrialization, many northeasterners were drawn to Bangkok to earn higher incomes, while others went abroad, for example to Saudi-Arabia, to earn money. Poverty was an influencing factor in compelling some rural girls to become engaged in prostitution or working as housemaids in Bangkok. These maids would send their income back home to their parents and families or make donations to their local rural temples, as contributions to Buddhism and merit-making activities.

Japanese poets described the peaceful way of life in the rural areas where people got up early in the morning to work in rice fields, for they lived according to the sun, rain and light. After working hard, these people took naps. Their houses were built in such a way that the wind could pass through and cool the inhabitants, and animals such as water buffalo, pigs, or chickens were kept below the first floor.

*Ieie wa shyamo hanashigai hirunechū*

(Akihiro, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Houses,  
roosters foraging freely,  
people napping

Roosters in rural areas were often independent, finding food by themselves. Compared to that of hand-fed barn fowls, the meat of these free-range chickens was considered delicious.

Many village people planted mango trees around their houses and they were able to enjoy plentiful harvests in the months around March-May. Many small mango flowers were an indicator of happiness of the village.

*Murajū ga hirunedoki nari hana-mango*

(Takako, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

For all the villagers,  
it is time to take a nap,  
mango flowers

A poet came across the house which was wide open, with the inside able to be seen by anyone. Village people did not feel suspicious about people from outside at that time. The hammock is often used in Thailand.

*Hammocku shihō to no naki ie ni sumi*

(Takako, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

A hammock,  
living in a house  
with four doors open

The wind can blow from any direction. The houses built in the rural areas tell us something about people's lives, as we can see in the following:

*Inu wa chi ni hito wa hammocku ni hirune*

(Takako, 1980, Mango no Hana)

A dog on the ground,  
a person in the hammock,  
both napping

Features of working people were also observed near the rivers, seaside and rice fields. People lived simple lives, catching fish to eat and if they had any extra fish they would sell it.

*Hae oite ippiki no uwo utte ori*

(Akihiro, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Shooing flies away,  
one fish is sold

*Iso no ka ni mamirete onna ika wo uru*

(Yamamoto Michiko, Menam., vol. 2)

Smearred with the smells  
of the sea-shore,  
a woman sells squids



Women in Thailand are generally hard working. Japanese poets who were of the generation to experience the aftermath of the Second World War understood the Thai women's capacity for endurance and observed these people with some admiration.

*Michi-an'nai shitsutsu mo ochibo hiroikeri*

(Akihiro, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

While showing the way  
and still  
she gathered harvest remnants

The poet's eyes were warm to this kind-hearted and hard-working farmer. Some Thai women are skilled at weaving cloth or mats. Some men also had skills in wood carving or basket-making.

*Hanagoza oru osa no hibikau hina no sato*

(Gogyū, 1977, Ntbk., vol. 11)

Weaving figured mats,  
sounds of reeds of looms echo,  
a remote village

The life of Thai farmers is not easy, especially in the northeast which is prone to droughts. The following poet heard about the situation of hard-working farmers in the northeast region and described it as below.

*Hibi ware no daichi fumikuru hadashi kana!*

(Midori, Menam., vol. 3)

Walking  
on the cracked, solid earth,  
bare-foot!

## 4.1.3 Children

During the dry season, winds change. A comfortable southerly wind blows during February to April and in this season people, especially children, enjoy kite flying at Sanam Luang, or other open spaces.

*Dono tako ga dono ko no tako yara Sanamu Ruan*

(Tada Minoru, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Which kites belong  
to which boys, I wonder,  
at Sanam Luang

Haiku poets in Thailand often saw children working. Thai children were relatively obedient to their parents, teachers and other seniors. One active boy was vividly described as follows.

*Sue no ko wa ine kubari yaku hadakanbō*

(Sekiyō, Menam, vol. 1)

The youngest child  
distributes seedlings of rice,  
naked

This young rural child was helping his family, however, some children had to work for their own survival. Their circumstances may be not the same, but many children of slum dwelling parents in Bangkok did not have certificates of nationality to enable them to be admitted to schools. Teacher Duang Pratheep who works in Bangkok in the Klong Toey slum community was the person who effected change to this situation more than twenty years ago. However, today we can see still child-vendors weaving through traffic jams.

*Mari no rei oshiutte shonen waraikeri!*

(Midori, 1978, Ntbk., vol. 12)

A boy smiled  
after he forced me to buy  
a jasmine garland

Some street children had the countenance of sorrowful grown-ups, although possibly under ten years old.

*Shishi-gashira toreba shōnen narishi kana!*

(Takashi, 1990, Ntbk. vol. 16)

Taking off a lion-head mask  
of the Chinese lion-dance,  
then, it was a boy!

Many small-sized retail operations are family businesses.

*Chichi to ko wa onaji me wo shite kōri uru*

(Nobuko, 1987, Ntbk. vol. 16)

Father and child  
having the same eyes  
selling ice

Not only male-workers, but also female-workers worked at construction sites. Although the sites were not suitable for small children, working mothers sometimes had to bring their children to their work place.

*Kōri-gashi kōji- genba ni haha matu ko*

(Fumi, 1974, Ntbk., vol. 10)

With a ice lolly in its hand,  
A child waiting for its mother

It is easy to give food to children to keep them quiet and comfortable for a while.

If circumstances allow, many parents want their children to seek higher education. In Thailand, it is a challenge and a big burden for a teenager to prepare for the entrance examination. There are limited places in national universities with good reputations and a student has to overcome strong competition. Entering private universities is also very difficult, for tuition fees are very expensive.

*Nyūshi oe te-ashi nagedashi jukusui su*

(Midori, 1984, Ntbk., vol. 14)

Having finished her entrance examination  
 a girl is asleep,  
 her legs and arms sprawled out.

The girl was the poet's daughter who had Thai nationality and was brought up as a Thai. The girl made great efforts and cultivated her own way by herself. The poet observes her with affection.

In Chinese tradition, giving money to children at Chinese New Year is common. Therefore, Thais of Chinese descent in Thailand also give money to even very small children.

*Yokodaki no yōji ni atau otoshidama*

(Masatoshi, 1971, Shūhō),

Someone gives a New Year gift of money  
 to an infant  
 held on the hip bone of its protector

As Bangkok became more industrialized, the number of children on the roads appeared to decrease. In the past, babies were often taken care of by their young siblings or relatives. One such young girl is depicted in the following haiku.

*Akidemizu akago dakuko no ashi tashika*

(Yoshiko, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Floodwaters in autumn,  
 the steps of a child holding a baby  
 are steady

It is unsafe for even an adult to wade in the floodwaters, much less a young girl holding a baby on her hip. Yet, as she was accustomed to doing so, her steps were confident and seemingly safe in the floodwaters.

In the hot evening, people come out of their houses in search of the cool.

*Hiza no ko no utaite oruya yūhashii*

(Yasujo, Menam., vol. 2)

Is the child in someone's lap singing?

cooling off and sitting  
outside the house in the evening

A mother, elderly person or another minder held a small child on her lap to cool off outside, perhaps on the veranda, in the evening wind: the child uttered, or murmured something that seemed as if it was singing.

#### 4.1.4 Aged People

In busy modern life, the aged are often overlooked. An exception is at Lumpini Park in the early morning and deep in the lanes of the residential areas where old people can be observed being active before the heat of the day sets in. The condition of roads and pedestrian bridges and other environmental problems make it difficult for aged people, babies and the disabled people to get about. Before, the roads were not jammed by cars like today, and haiku poets were often able to observe aged people.

The next haiku describes old people enjoying chattering over a cup of *oliang*. *Oliang* was a popular drink for people, though today, people are not as familiar with *oliang* (Thai black coffee) as they were two or three decades ago. Japanese people in Thailand also loved *oliang*. Those who spent some of their childhood in Thailand and who come to visit Thailand again from Japan often look for *oliang* stalls or shops and miss drinking *oliang*. The hot weather caused people to want cool, sweet drinks and *oliang* was ideal when poured into a plastic bag of ice and tied with an elastic band and served with a straw.

Today, people in Thailand are able to choose from a variety of drinks, such as cola, Fanta, canned tea and bottled water. *Oliang* is still popular among some people, and handy, bottled *oliang* is now available, instead of the time-consuming old method of preparation. In the past, aged people gathered at the old *oliang* shops and enjoyed sharing gossip, as noted in the following:

*Ōrian ni jōzetsu hatezu rōkakyō*

(Gogyū, 1971, Ntbk., vol. 8)

Over *oliang*,  
chattering endlessly  
old Chinese residents

During the Chinese festive season of *Cheng meng*, people of Chinese descent can be observed burning gold paper in a ritual to pay respect to ancestors. Those who try to uphold these old Chinese customs are generally aged people.

*Chenmen ya oibito gezashite kinshi taku*

(Suriyon Teruko, 1988, Ntbk., vol. 16)

Cheng meng,  
an aged person crouches  
and burns gold paper

Foreigners in Thailand are surprised to see how active tropical ants are. People have to be very careful with food. If a small piece of food is dropped on the floor, black ants gather quickly, regardless of the height of the building.

In Japan, during the winter, ants hibernate and there is no chance to see them. Besides, they stay outside houses and on the ground in all other seasons. To protect food from ants, Thai wisdom produced some small water-container pots to prevent the ants from climbing up four-legged cupboards. Such cupboards were commonly seen thirty years ago. Thus, ants are a common concern for people. Even in high buildings, ants find places to live in groups. Through his experience, an old man knows how to cope with a procession of ants, as described in the following haiku:

*Ari no retsu miiru rōya wa nekoze kana*

(Gogyū, 1975, Ntbk., vol. 11)

A procession of ants,  
an old man watching  
is humpbacked

In the haiku below, the man is too old to act like younger people, but he acts in his own way. All people have to die some day, although we do not know our destiny. Some die suddenly, some after long-term diseases. Some may have dim recollections of the past and the present when they are still alive.

*Chūshū no kira ni se mukete rōfu hōke*

(Midori, 1974, Ntbk., vol. 11)

Turning his back on the festive glittering  
in the middle of autumn,  
an old father is in his dotage

When he was younger, he might have been one of the active participants of the Moon Festival. Now, he is indifferent even to festivals. By watching previous generations, people learn lessons of their coming days or destiny.

In Chinese tradition, several generations of the same family would live together; a great-grandmother lived with her great-grandchildren. In a big family, this older woman does not have to work as hard as she did when she was younger. If she is healthy, her role in the family is often to do the traditional cooking. The same poet described this in the following:

*Ohaha ni yakume arikeri niku o iru*

(Midori, 1988, Ntbk., vol.16)

There is a role  
for the great-grandmother,  
to fry garlic

Thai farmers work with a variety of soils; some cultivate the rich central plains while others must make do with hard dry earth, such as in the northeast. Twenty or more years ago, potatoes (*man farang* in Thai), onions and carrots were imported from other countries, for they were not readily available in Thailand. Thai vegetables were not as good in quality, in terms of size and taste, as they are today. However, in Bangkok, healthy, fresh vegetables, fruit, fish and meats were available in many fresh markets, especially at the Bang Rak Market.

For a Japanese person living in Bangkok used to an abundance of vegetables, scenes from rural life made an impact on them. In spite of people's hard work, returns were small. How much money could be earned by selling potatoes? The poet could not be indifferent to the forty or fifty-year old woman depicted in the following:

*Ishikoro no yona imo uru hiyakeba*

(Fumiko, 1976, Ntbk., vol. 11)

Selling some kind of potatoes  
similar to pebbles,  
a sun-tanned old woman

In rambutan season, mountains of the hairy red and green fruit are sold in the markets and at the edges of towns. To show that these rambutans are fine and delicious, vendors often half peel the fruit and offer customers a taste. Another poet guesses how hard the old woman selling rambutans has worked through her life, focussing on her cracked nails.

*Rukugo o mukiiru rōba no tsume warete*

(Ryōko, 1971, Ntbk., vol 9)

An old woman  
who is peeling the rambutan,  
has cracked nails

These poems tell us that Thai women, regardless of their age, where they live, or their circumstances, were hard-working people.

#### 4.1.5 People of Chinese Descent

Referring to the assimilation of Chinese people into Thai society, the Thai case is one of the more successful examples of people co-existing peacefully, and harmoniously working together to bring the country towards modernization.

Chinese assimilation today in Thailand is largely affected by factors of Thai society, economics, and politics as well as history; hard struggles, compromise, cooperation, and harmony in Thailand. During Field Marshall Pibul Songkram's administration, the Thai government promoted the reduction of Chinese influence by controlling the occupations of foreigners, prohibiting Chinese language education and tightening up immigration laws.

Today, Thai youths of Chinese descent speak more Thai at home than was spoken fifteen years ago. Furthermore, thirty or thirty-five years ago, more varieties of



Chinese language was spoken, and more Chinese social customs, culture, and peculiarities were visibly discernable in the Chinese community.

The same poet lived in a Chinese *hongtaew*, shop-house in the alley off New Road, and worked in the editing and printing business for the monthly magazine of the Japanese Association. While the poet worked in a Japanese world, her family life was carried out in Thai and Chinese society.

*Ikokugo no kono uramachi ni hi o okosu*

(Midori, 1977, Ntbk., vol.11)

Surrounded by foreign languages,

I make a fire

with charcoals in this back alley

Around the poet, people speak in Thai, or in Chinese which she still feels is an unknown, foreign language. Later she became accustomed to the surroundings and successfully cultivated her own way of life, but at this stage she was a lonely foreigner.

Thai people consider it polite to speak quietly. On the other hand, Chinese people make it a custom to speak loudly. These days Chinese-Thai people also speak quietly, for they study at Thai schools as Thais, and have adopted Thai customs. Chinese descendents today are not the same as the ones in the past. A Japanese poet observed the loud voices of her neighbor.

*Koe araki kajin nagaya no kado-suzumi*

(Midori, Menam., vol. 1)

Rough voiced Chinese,

cooling

at the entrance of the town-houses

The history of Chinese immigrants dates back to the Thonburi (1767-1782) and the current Chakri (1782 – present) dynasties. In the early period of the Chakri dynasty, foreign laborers were hired to dig canals in Bangkok and in other areas. Many Chinese worked hard to earn a living. At that time, pawnshops were necessary for poor people. Three to four decades ago, old pawnshops were easily visible and little obstructed the sunset shining on the shop roof.

*Shichidana no sudare no aka ni aru yūhi*

(Fumio, Fiftieth)

A sunset on the dirt  
of the bamboo blind  
at the pawnshop

Japanese people recognized pawnshops by the Chinese characters and bamboo blinds at the entrance. The shop was simple, but the image of the shop contained various stories of people who struggled for survival.

Many Chinese and their descendants were diligent, but some people were troublemakers; others were gamblers, some gangsters, and some were debt-stricken people. As was the Chinese custom, debts were to be paid before the Chinese New Year, so some people tried to set fires to destroy the certificates of the debts. This was a cause of rumors in the town. Actually, there were many cases of fires in Bangkok in February. Sirens of fire brigades were often heard in the past. One of the reasons for a fire breaking was because of the dry weather in February; there could have been other reasons. To cope with the phenomena, during the Premier Sarit Thanarat's administration (1959-1963), criminals who set fires were faced with the death sentence.

*Mata konchin no hitsukeka to uwasa nigatsu-kaji*

(Sekiyō, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Once again the Chinese have set a fire?  
says the rumor,  
a fire in February

The poet lived in Thai society and heard the rumor. It might be true or not. Fires in February make people think of debt troubles or problems in getting rid of unwanted tenants.

Asian faces are sometimes very similar, and it is very difficult to tell which persons come from which countries. Japanese faces are varied. Some people are mistaken as Thais. Some are mistaken as Chinese on sight, as was this poet.

*San-gurasu na mo kakyō ka to towarekeri*

(Takako, 1984. Ntbk., vol. 14)

Sun-glasses—

“Are you also a Chinese?”

I was asked.

When the poet put on sunglasses, a Thai person asked if she was Chinese. For some Thai people, Chinese people are different from their own people in their consciousness.

The Chinese and their descendants often enjoy exercising at Lumpini Park. Of their exercises, “tai chi” is very popular. Early in the morning, followed by the sounds of loud Chinese voices, people start Chinese exercises.

*Nemu taiju rōnyaku nan'nyo no taikyokuken*

(Yoshiko, Menam., vol. 4)

Under a big silk-tree

young and old, men and women

practicing tai-chi

#### 4.1.6 Various People

Various people were the subject of haiku, and through people's behavior and scenes in the background, particular times, places, circumstances, atmosphere and other conditions were spotlighted.

More than thirty years ago, when fine consumer goods were too expensive for most people to afford, and people's lives were simpler, in what kinds of hobbies did people find interest and enjoyment? One fine and graceful hobby, even still, is the growing of orchids.

*Otonaeba mazu randana e izanaware*

(Nishino Minoru, 1968, Shūhō.)

On my visit,

the host first took me

to the shelves of his orchid flowers

Cultivating orchids is difficult. It is not easy to create the forest-like conditions where the sun shines through trees and boughs reflect plants with some rainfall. Therefore, the host, a friend, is very happy and proud to show his orchid flowers to someone.

In the 1960's in Thailand, people were faced with many problems, such as unemployment, especially young men who faced the possibility of going to Vietnam to fight in the Vietnam War as soldiers. Jobless young women might be able to become maids, but such young men often gathered at the cheap *oliang* shops to chatter and were ready to take any simple jobs offered. As far as the following poet observed, at least on the surface, the youths were cheerful and peaceful.

*Kuttaku mo nakute hiyake no wakasa ari*

(Fumiko, 1975, Ntbk., vol. 11)

Looking carefree,  
he/she is young,  
suntanned

Another poet observed the nature of youth through the bare feet of youngsters. Older people do not run as younger people do. For young people, rainfall was not an obstacle, but something to enjoy.

*Urawakaki hadashi ya ame o hashiriyuku*

(Kaoru, Menam., vol. 1)

Very young bare feet,  
ran through  
the rain

In January 1999, the 7<sup>th</sup> FESPIC Games, the international sports events for handicapped people, was successfully held in Bangkok which followed a month after the 9<sup>th</sup> Asian Games held in Bangkok in 1998. The achievements of participants, both athletes and supporters, including medical doctors, overwhelmed the people and indicated the possibility of a comfortable co-existence of handicapped people and non-handicapped people in the future.

In Thailand, handicapped people historically have been placed in rather a poor situation. Disabled persons are often found selling lottery tickets and clothes. Some are begging in the lanes. This gives the disabled people a derogatory image. The popular Buddhist thought that the present life circumstance is a result or incarnation of merit-making in previous lives (world) makes it difficult for disabled people, as it is commonly believed that such disabilities are the result of behavior in previous lives.

*Mōjin no shakujō hikage o saguridasu*

(Fumio, 1971., Ntbk., vol. 8)

Searching with a brass stick,  
a blind person  
finds shade

Today footpaths have become more obstructed and inconvenient for the blind; telephone boxes, small governmental service-corners, such as police boxes or *Amazing Thailand* campaign boxes and numerous stalls of vendors cram the way. This situation makes it difficult to pass and sometimes it is impossible for the blind to make their way. When the roads were less dangerous, people heard bells ringing on the sticks and the sound of "Lotteries! Lotteries!" called by the blind vendors who held those sticks. This haiku indicates the careful observation by the poet who might want to ensure the safety of blind persons who walk along the street to find shade.

In the 1960's and 1970's, there were not many high buildings in Bangkok. For a long time the Choke Chai Building between Soi 24 and Soi 26 on Sukhumvit Road was the highest structure in Thailand, and was described as such in Thai school textbooks. One of the higher apartment houses in 1960's, owned by an Indian, had twelve stories.

In the past ten years, multi-storied buildings have replaced the old landscape of Bangkok, and other districts. As new condominiums and office buildings were built, new security systems were adapted, and changed the image of guards, which were previously represented by old-fashioned Indian guards.

The past capital cities of Thailand, and formerly Siam, were international cities and many foreigners lived in them. Among these people and their descendants were Indians and some Indians were successful in the Pahurat area, dealing with cloth. Some successful Indians built large apartment houses in central Bangkok areas. Such

examples were Thailand Court, Villa Pauer in Soi 24 and Villa Bajaj in Soi 19 off Sukhumvit road. Indian owners of the apartments usually hired Indian men as guards who stayed and lived 24 hours a day in the small corners at the gate. When visitors came to the apartment houses, they often met the same guards who had done the job for decades. The same guard often worked in the same position for a long time, until old age.

*Monban o teshoku to shite sotone kana*

(Midori, Menam., vol. 3)

A guard,  
accepting his role as a heavenly-given job  
sleeps outdoors!

Thai society has accepted many nationalities and many cultures. Indian women usually wear their traditional costume, the sari. This poet finds many foreigners in Bangkok during the day and night time also. She recognized that Bangkok was really an international city.

*Sarī kishi gakusei ga iru yagaku kana*

(Takako, 1984, Ntbk., vol. 14)

A student dressed in a sari  
attends  
night-school!

Many Thai people seem to enjoy gambling and it is common to see crowds engaging in many kinds of gambling, including; lottery, horse-racing, boxing, traditional games, cock fighting and others. Traditional cock-fighting is described by poets as in the following:

*Takei o daku irezumi no ude no naka*

(Takako, 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Holding a fighting cock  
in his arms,

tattooed

Some ordinary Thai men choose to get tattooed with magical images and powerful incantations on their arms or chests, with the belief that it will protect them from harm. However, in Japan, tattooed men are considered to have some relationship with *yakuza* (gangsters, gamblers) and sometimes they are rejected by even the public bathhouses in towns. Japanese people in Thailand came to know and understand that, for example, a Thai driver might also have tattoos and that the tattoo had a different meaning for him. Far from the world of the *yakuza*, a Thai fighting-cock trainer is holding a cock in his arms.

When the cock fighting game started, a cock trainer zealously shouted loudly to encourage his cock.

*Tōkeishi kinnba sorashite yajirikeri*

(Takako, 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

A cock trainer  
with golden-bucked teeth showing,  
jeers

The poet was surprised to see the world of gambling by the cock-trainer who totally devoting himself when the game started. The poet was more interested in the trainer than cocks fighting in the games. The cock-trainer tries to inspire the game and to lead it in his cock's favor. After the game, he takes care of the cock.

*Kuchi no naka made makedori o arakeri*

(Akihiro, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Even as far as inside the billbeak,  
the cock trainer washed  
a beaten fighting cock!

As a popular Thai *hors d'oeuvre*, *Miang Kham* is served to guests. In a partitioned plate, dried shrimps, peanuts, fried coconut chips, cut ginger, cut limes, cut purple onions are served with seasonings and *plu* leaves. A guest holds the leaf and puts

what he likes on the leaf and adds sweet soya-sauce seasoning and wraps it up to serve himself.

*Miyan kamu moritsutsu henji nobashiori*

(Sekiyō, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Putting *miang kham*

on the plate nicely,

she replied with a long answer

“She” could be the poet’s Thai wife or a long-term housemaid. The poet must have had some guests and they started drinking. The host asked if the *miang kham* was ready, then she gave a long answer, for she was still arranging the food nicely. She might have picked the *plu* leaves from the trees in the garden. Off Sathorn Tai Road *plu* trees were planted and instigated the name of the lane as Soi Suan Plu. The poet’s lane was also off Sathorn Tai Road, but named after Saint Louis Church.

In the 1970’s, a group of foreigners went on a study tour to visit the Khmer ruins of Phanom Rung in Thailand, which were known as fine examples of Lop Buri art. Several Americans first started the Bangkok Museum Volunteers group. French, Japanese, German and other language groups also later joined the activities at the National Museum in Bangkok. The Volunteers continue to give newcomers fundamental knowledge about Thai history, art, culture, religions and customs. Such a landscape of the study tour is described as in the following:

*Koshi oroshi iseki o kataru sangurasu*

(Yoshiko, 1974, Ntbk., vol.11)

Sitting down,

a man with sunglasses

explains the ruins

The man with sunglasses was Victor Kennedy who studied Khmer art in depth and he explained many interesting facts to members. People also sat down in the ruins to listen to his story. It was a very impressive meeting amongst the ruins.

*Toride niwa hei no me hikari kyabetsu-bata*



(Tada Minoru, 1976, Ntbk., vol. 11)

In the fort  
soldiers watch carefully,  
a field of cabbage

Haiku does not have to be non-fiction. Through observation, poets use their imagination to write haiku. Sometimes Japanese poets misunderstood what they saw, perhaps because of their limited experience or because information was only written in Thai. The next haiku seems to be describing the training center at Lumpini Park.

*Ryokuin ni isu hitotsu oku tokoya kana!*

(Takako, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Under the green shade,  
set a chair  
a barber's shop!

Sometimes Thai newspapers give reports about prisoners in jail; such as doing public labor on the streets and having reunions with their families in prison gardens. Prisoners wore uniforms and acted in groups, therefore it was easy to recognize that them. These prisoners were preparing to return to society and sometimes worked cleaning drains

*Murenashite shūto hataraku aki no machi*

(Naomi, 1988, Ntbk., vol. 18)

A group of prisoners  
working  
in the town in autumn

#### 4.2 Animals

In Thailand, one may observe various species of animals that are specific or peculiar to its tropical climate, or are not common in other areas. Almost every kind of

living creatures can be the object of haiku poets. According to the circumstances, Japanese poets described these animals, ranging from insects to elephants. Through the existence of these animals in haiku, we are able to build a picture of Thailand's natural surroundings in more detail.

#### 4.2.1 Insects

The calling sounds of insects would attract Japanese poets giving them a feeling of nostalgia, especially when the climate was cool and resembled Japanese autumn. This was especially true in the past when it was more difficult to return the homeland than it is now.

In the rich fields of upcountry and in the green spaces of the urban cities, the overwhelming sounds of insects were appreciated, as can be seen from the following:

*Kyū-teisha no ni sen-man no mushi no koe*

(Sekiyō, 1976, Ntbk., vol. 11)

The train stops suddenly,  
the sounds of a thousand crickets  
in the field

On the way to the poet's destination, the train comes to a sharp halt. Without the rhythmical tones of a running train, nothing was heard in the nearby field, except for the overwhelming calls of crickets. In the 1970's, in the remote rural areas in Thailand, electricity was not supplied, so at night such villages and fields were enveloped by pitch darkness and the sounds of the night stood out.

In the past in Thailand, many people used to live in traditional Thai-style wooden houses with long pillars. The raised floors were used as living spaces for people. The space underneath the house was often used for raising animals, such as pigs and cattle, and for keeping daily tools used for ploughing and weaving cloth.

During the rainy season, Thai people kept rainwater in big earthen-ware jars for use in their daily lives. Such jars were seen in Bangkok until a few decades ago and are still commonly seen today upcountry. Crickets and jars were described in the following poem:

*Mizu-game no narabu taka-yuka mushi no yado*

(Akihiro, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Water jars in a line,  
on the raised floor,  
a home filled with the sounds of crickets

This poem was written in September. In a month or so, the rainy season would be over and the jars would be filled with waters. The Thai-style house up-country was surrounded by the nature, including the singing of insects.

Insects were found not only in fields, but also in modern facilities. Another poet writes:

*Yo no aki ya aka-jūtan ni mushi hitotsu*

(Fumio, Ntbk., vol. 2)

Autumn night,  
on the red carpet,  
a single insect

The red carpet was for a precious special guest at the hotel entrance, or at the airport. Although the insect was not invited, it had freedom to fly to the spot and it indicated that Thai life was still connected to nature. Locusts are illustrated in the following:

*Inago tobu eapōto no machiaisho*

(Akihiro, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Locusts fly  
in the waiting room  
the airport

Today's modern facilities of Don Muang Airport are the result of three major renovations. After each renovation, the airport became bigger and more modern and the scene in this haiku was lost long time ago.

Although these days many Thai people live in apartments, including condominiums, in the 1960's most Thai people preferred to live in houses. It was a time when Bangkok was less populated and the construction of high-level buildings was

considered to be too difficult in Bangkok, due to its low sea-level and high water content in the ground.

A Japanese artist and a haiku poet lived in a comfortable Thai house with his Thai family. He planted many flowers, especially orchids to help him illustrate on his canvas. As the result, around his house in the garden, he owned many earthen-ware pots and the scene was described as follows:

*Fuse-bachi no dore tomo tsukazu chichiro naku*

(Sekiyō, 1977, Ntbk., vol. 11)

From which up-side down pot,  
I wonder,  
is the cricket humming

The poet could not see the insect, but guessed from the humming that the cricket was under one of the pots. Another poet also lived in a house with a lawn garden and heard the singing of crickets as in the following poem:

*Heya no uchi ni hisomi kōrogi naki-idasu*

(Masae, 1974, Ntbk., vol. 11)

A cricket in hiding  
in the room  
starts to call

The garden next to the house was the playground of her three young children and the children went to and fro in the garden and to the house. A cricket also flew from garden to room freely.

In the past in Bangkok, the most common insects for people to encounter in their daily life were mosquitoes, ants and cockroaches. Wild bushes, ponds, canals, water-jars and open-style houses without air-conditioners enabled mosquitoes to prosper and annoy people. A foreigner who has lived in Bangkok for forty years made the comment that, "Thai life was always connected with mosquitoes". People could not be indifferent to the power of the mosquitoes. One poet found that the buzzing of mosquitoes decreased in the cool dry season, as in the following:

*Ka no koe mo kasokeku narite jūnigatsu*

(Gogyū, 1970, Shūhō)

The buzzing sound of mosquitoes  
has become lower,  
it is December!

Swarming ants in Thailand were also the object of observation by poets. For Japanese people, ants are thought to like sweet things, but the ants in Thailand also like many other things. Such examples are seen in the following:

*Ari no michi banana no hana e tsuzukikeru*

(Nansei, 1975, Ntbk., vol. 11)

A path of ants  
continues on toward  
the banana flowers!

*Ari no retsu naname ni nobite kururu kyō*

(Nansei, 1975, Ntbk., vol. 11)

A procession of ants  
tends diagonally-  
today's night falls

In Thailand, people sometimes experience swarming winged ants suddenly appearing around electric lamps in the room. How they could come into the room and why such swarming winged ants suddenly appeared often amazed people.

*Bankoku no yūyake ippai ha-ari tobu*

(Kyoko, 1963, Fiftieth.)

An evening glow  
presides over the Bangkok sky,  
full of flying winged ants

In 1968, fireflies could be observed in the garden of the residential area off South Sathorn Road in Bangkok. Fireflies like clean water, so the surroundings of the residential area seemed to be endurable for a firefly.

*Hotaru tobu rokugatsu no yami gyōshi shite*

(Gogyū, 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

A firefly flies  
staring at the pitch-darkness  
in June

In the darkness, a shining firefly was moving around and the poet felt staring eyes to the pitch darkness which he could not see.

Some of the older generation of Japanese people is nostalgic of fireflies, dragonflies and cicadas, as they spent their childhood days in the fields chasing them. Familiarity with dragonflies is described in the following examples:

*Aki-akane Tōto Kachin no retsu ni tsuku*

(Gogyū, 1982, Ntbk., vol.13)

A dragonfly  
follows the procession  
of "Laying down robes" ceremony

In November, in the dry season, Buddhist festivals were held and people head to the temples to donate monks' robes and money in the *Thot Kathin* ceremony. During the procession, people walk and dance joyfully to the tunes of Thai musical instruments. A dragonfly also joins the action.

The wings of dragonflies are transparent and thin, yet they fly comfortably. A poet illustrated as follows:

*Aka-tonbo hane yasumereba usuki kage*

(Hōjirō, 1996, Ntbk., vol. 20)

When a dragonfly rests  
its wings,  
it reflects a vague shadow

In Thailand, there are numerous famous old Buddhist temples and structures which are popular destinations for sightseeing visits. Away from the concrete jungle,

people find a peaceful, quiet world among the stupas and dragonflies in the following example:

*Butto ni takami o kisou tonbo kana*

(Hōjirō, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 22)

Competing with  
the height of the stupa,  
dragonflies!

On the ground, a poet was looking up at the stupas to find dragonflies in the sky which fly as high as the top of the stupa. The next example shows that dragonflies are not only in the sky, but all around us:

*Aki-demizu kuchiki no saki no aka-tonbo*

(Masatoshi, 1970, Shūhō)

Flash floods in autumn,  
a dragonfly  
on the tip of a rotten tree branch

Not only people suffered from flash floods, but dragonflies also. A dragonfly found a place to land on a rotten tree branch in the water which was placed by someone to warn others that it was a dangerous spot during flash floods.

Insects in Thailand are very active and they co-exist with people in houses and condominiums. They tend to suddenly appear, as shown in the next example:

*Susu harau ashi-naga gumo no funwarito*

(Yōko, 1996, Ntbk., vol. 20)

Clear the dust,  
a long-legged spider  
appears lightly

Butterflies were sometimes found in the ruins or in the quiet lanes off busy streets. They were illustrated as in the followings:

*Itsuchō o oeiba chō waku iseki kana*

(Akihiro, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Following a butterfly  
to the ruins  
here butterflies swarm out!

This scene took place in the ruins of the old capital, Ayudhya. The poet found butterflies and their birthplace.

*Chō chō ya murete enji no kaeriyuku*

(Yoshiko, 1975, Ntbk., vol. 11)

Butterflies swarm,  
children from kindergarten  
returning home

When butterflies fly, they do not move straight ahead, but from side to side. Children from kindergarten are also apt to walk the same way to find something interesting on the way home.

In their larval stage, cicadas spend many years underground, and after they appear above the ground, live only a week or so. Many Japanese recognized that cicadas have a short life in this world, namely above the ground. Deep feelings toward dead persons were often inspired by singing insects, especially cicadas. Such an example is in the following:

*Totsu to shite chinkon no uta kamo semi-shigure*

(Gogyū, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Suddenly  
a chorus of cicadas  
a requiem, perhaps

The poet experienced the Second World War as a young Japanese soldier in Kanchanaburi province and faced the fact that many lives were lost. This kind-hearted man who spent all of his latter life in Thailand continued to write requiem haiku for those who died in the war.

Cicadas let us know their existence by their singing sounds. When the sounds are loud and active near our ears, we may be surprised and our sentimental feelings disappear. Echoes of loud sounds were expressed in the following:



*Toshi-furishi nemu no ki ippon semi shimeru*

(Hanac, 1986, Ntbk., vol. 15)

An old silk tree,  
completely enveloped  
by singing cicadas

#### 4.2.2 Fish and Crabs

Thailand is rich in both fresh and saltwater fish. Also, tropical fish and goldfish are popular for their gracefulness and variety of colors. They are constantly moving and a haiku poet illustrates this condition as follow:

*Nettaigyo opāru to nari safaia to nari*

(Takako, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Tropical fish  
at times appear as opals,  
then like sapphires

The tank for tropical fish or goldfish is often placed in the living room in houses in Thailand, for people to be able to enjoy the fish. The living room has many visitors including the family, so the door is frequently opened and closed. Each time such an incident occurs, the goldfish are surprised and turn.

*Doa shimaru tabi hirugaeru kin'gyo kana*

(Takako, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Every time  
the door shuts,  
goldfish turn!

No one is working in the office at night and the atmosphere of the office is quite different from the daytime. No people, no telephone sounds, no action, only angel fish moving around.

*Yoru no ofisu ugokuwa enjeru fisshu nomi*

(Midori, 1992, Ntbk., vol. 17)

The office at night  
only angel-fish  
moving

It seems to the poet that the tropical fish live in the office twenty-four hours a day and are watching everything. Toward tropical fish, the poet who is working in the office, has friendly feelings.

The feelings expressed in haiku also extend beyond mere fish-human relations and the poet takes care of her fish as she does her children, as in the following example:

*Mono iwanu dakedo mite- iru nettaigyo*

(Shiroko, 1994, Ntbk., vol. 18)

Saying nothing,  
but watching,  
tropical fish

We do not know whether it is effective to point the air of the fan at the goldfish, to solve the problem of hot weather, but the intention below is understandable.

*Kin'gyo nimo kaze okuriyaru kono atsusa*

(Ibrahim, Teruko, 1983, Ntbk., vol. 14)

Such a heat,  
as to send the wind  
to goldfish

Thai farmers often dig large holes to make ponds in which to raise fish. People also catch fish in local canals and later sell them at the markets, as in the following:

*Haruna-ichi kuchi kukurarete sakana ari*

(Ibrahim, Teruko, Ntbk., vol. 12)

The market of spring vegetables,  
fish are placed

with their mouths bounded

These fish are not from the sea. The amount of the fish is limited and for the convenience of carrying such fish from ponds and canals, the fish are bound together. The poet's surprise and her sympathy for the fish is seen in this haiku.

To avoid sweltering heat, people like to go to the seaside where they can enjoy observing the natural life of small living things on the shore, as in the following:

*Yashi no mi ni higata no kani no hashiriyoru*

(Fumio, Fiftieth)

To a coconut,  
a crab on a beach at the ebbing tide  
runs up

*Yadokari no isogashige-nari hishochi kuru*

(Midori, 1972, Ntbk., vol. 9/10)

A hermit crab seemingly busy,  
night falls  
at the summer resort

Before the 1970's, famous resort places in Thailand were in *Hua Hin* and in *Bang Saen*. During and after the Vietnam War, *Pattaya*, near the *U-tapao* US base, became the famous resort and new hotels started being constructed.

On the way back from the resorts, some people enjoyed visiting the aquarium at *Bang Saen*. One day, members of the Menam Kukai group visited this place to observe tropical creatures. A seahorse was noted as follows:

*Umi-uma no o o nobasu toki susumi-keri*

(Akihiro, 1981, Ntbk. vol. 13)

Stretching its tail,  
a seahorse  
moves along!

In the original Japanese language of this haiku, the poet expresses the creature as both sea and horse. Actually the, Japanese meaning of seahorse is “a dropped child of a dragon”, or “a bastard child of a dragon”.

#### 4.2.3 Amphibians

In the rainy season, Bangkok people used to hear the sounds of “ung- an, ung-an” everywhere, even in the built-up Silom and the Sathorn areas. These sounds came from frogs and attracted poets’, as in the following:

*Oame-ya un-an wakiizu soi no soi*

(Nansei, 1986, Ntbk., vol. 15)

In the heavy rain,  
bullfrogs spring out  
in the small lane

Without their sounds, it was difficult to find frogs during the rainfall. Far from the main street, the chorus of frogs was loud in the small lane. After the rainfall, low and thick sounds were clear like music, inspiring the poet inspired to describe as follows:

*Shūu saru un-an shutsujo biora no ne*

(Yōko, 1994, Ntbk., vol. 18/19)

The squall is over,  
bullfrogs make,  
the sound of viola

*Oame no tsurekishi kaeru narinu beshi*

(Akihiro, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 13)

It might be that  
the frogs were brought  
by the heavy rain!

Frogs and rainfall should have some connection. The poet noticed the chorus of frogs and heavy rain together.

*Tsuyukekute kutsunugi ni gama, "oban desu"*

(Gogyū, Menam., vol.3)

Mist falls,  
A toad happens upon my doorstep,  
"G'd Evenin', it offers

The poet was surprised to see a frog at his doorstep, like a visitor.

*Sake kōte un-an no koe ni okurareru*

(Tada Minoru, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Having bought liquor,  
the sound of frogs  
celebrate my returning home

The poet lived in Thailand while his family was in Japan. His job brought him upcountry and he traveled often. Alcohol and the sounds of singing frogs could reduce his loneliness a little, being far from his family.

When *Pattaya* Beach started developing, Nippa Lodge was the best facility for tourists staying in *Pattaya*. Some tourists stayed at bungalows in *Sri Racha*, for hotels were not available until the end of the 1960's, when a large new modern hotel facing the *Pattaya* sea was built. In thirty years, the numbers of hotels, restaurants, shops and condominiums in *Pattaya* increased until it became the substantial town it is today, dense with buildings and people. As the change was so remarkable, people often wondered if these hotels would have enough guests. Such a scene was illustrated with sounds of frogs in the following:

*Tō-gaeru kūshitsu ōki hoteru kana*

(Midori, 1973, Ntbk., vol. 10)

Frogs croak in the distance,  
the hotel must have  
many vacant rooms!

The *Pattaya* resort was so quiet that the guests could hear the sounds of frogs in the field in the distance

#### 4.2.4 Reptiles

Some people say that as lizards eat mosquitoes and other insects, they can be regarded as useful creatures. Somehow lizards make their way into rooms and live in the houses and buildings. At night crying sounds of lizards can be heard like, "Chi! Chi! Chi!", or "Tch! Tch! Tch!" inside the home and the clear callings of the geckos like, "Tokkei!, Tokkei!, Tokkei!....", or "Tookae!, Tookae!, Tookae!" outside the home. Crocodiles in farms or zoos have been objects of interest for visitors and tourists. Crocodile skins were sold at great price as material for bags, purses and belts, until they were prohibited from export by the Washington Treaty for protection of rare wild animals in the world.

Snakes, such as pythons are native to Thailand and well-known. Both dangerous and harmless snakes live in the Thai fields, gardens, near water. In this respect, reptiles have always been close at hand and a part of everyday life. Reference to them has often been made in Thai proverbs.

Thai people predicted their good or bad luck or received an indication of fortune by listening to the directions of crying lizards and how many times they called. In his book, Segaller writes of an old Thai superstition as in the following:

If you hear that "Tch! Tch!" cry just as you're about to leave the house-then don't! In fact, say the superstition, if you hear the *jing-jok's* cry just as you 're about to do anything at all-don't do it! I don't know how many Thais still take this warning or portent seriously, but like most superstitions, elderly folk upcountry still believe in it....Another superstition says the *jing-jok* can bring you good luck....If the cry comes from behind you, this signifies trouble from someone who's jealous of you-so watch out! If it comes from your left, this means your efforts during next few days will be successful, and you'll win respect and deference from everyone... But if the cry comes from the right side, you may expect some form of suffering. (Segaller, 1984: 140)

Although many foreigners do not know Thai superstitions, they understand that a lizard, in Thai, a *jing-jok*, or a *ching-chok* is not regarded as a pest in Thailand, in spite of not always being a welcoming presence. Japanese poets earnestly observed the creatures and they described them as in the following:

*Oyamori no utsuri nakunari jūni-gatsu*

(Nishino Minoru, 1977, Krungthep-1968)

A big lizard  
 scuttles and croaks,  
 then calls in December

December in Thailand is generally the cool dry season. People celebrate the His Majesty the King's birthday at this time, some enjoy Christmas and many prepare for the New Year holidays. Because December has a special image of being a busy month, the movements of lizards may hold a significant meaning. As people cannot be indifferent to the lizards in their homes, they often watch how they act. Such observations are seen as in the following:

*Kumi-chinchoku ochite betsubetsu ni hashiri-keri*

(Sekiyō, 1972, Ntbk. vol. 10)

Having fallen down,  
 a pair of lizards  
 run away separately

A pair of lizards did not expect to fall from the ceiling, so they fled from the dangerous spot as soon as possible. On the floor, people or cats might injure them.

Although some people dislike geckos or *tokkei* (*tukke* in Thai), others consider them to be like pets. *Geckos* are not seen so often but are familiar for their unique deep callings from the walls outside houses or apartment houses. Such familiarity is described as in the following:

*Mjikayo ya tokkei no koe kikiwakeshi*

(Natsujo, 1987, Ntbk., vol. 16)

Summer night,  
 I recognize the voice  
 of the gecko

The callings of geckos are not always heard as, *tokkei* for haiku poets, but as meaningful phrases like the next example:

*Uso tsuke to tokkei natsuno ni futoki koe*

(Ibrahim, Teruko, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

“Don’t tell a lie!”,  
a gecko seems to call deeply  
in the summer field

The poet heard the call of a gecko, as “*Uso tsuke!*” which in Japanese means “Don’t tell a lie!” in place of “*tokkei!*”.

Thai people say, if a *tokkei* calls seven times continuously, it is a good omen. Therefore, people hope that the calls continue longer. *Tokkei* do not bother people at home, instead they often give some hope with their sounds. Such feelings are expressed like in the next example.

*Tokkei ni ko no umaretaru ryōya kana*

(Midori, Menam., vol. 3)

A lizard has  
the young ones,  
a fortuitous night!

*Makkuragari tokkei mikoe de owarikeri*

(Taniyama Toshiko, 1974 Ntbk., vol. 10)

Pitch dark,  
the *tokkay*, gecko cried three times  
and ceased!

In the dark, lying in bed, the poet was counting the number of cries from outside, with expectations, but the cries stopped after three calls.

Thirty years ago, travel upcountry was not easy and not always safe. For example, during the Vietnam War, guerrilla groups were known to ambush travelers, thieves attacked passengers, and people possessed guns freely. Such factors prevented an easy-going trip, so people who wanted to enjoy sightseeing chose to travel to other places they regarded as safe.

The next example is a scene which depicts harmless, wild animals still living near people and which appear to surprise passengers, mistaken as dangerous people:



*Ôtokage yûran-basu o tome mo shite*

(Nishino, Minoru, 1969, Shûhō.)

And then,  
a big lizard made the tourist- bus  
come to a halt

The big lizard may be a *king'ka* in Thai or a water monitor (*hia*, in Thai), which used to be commonly seen in Thailand when crossing the road. Today, the lizard's environment has changed a lot and it is rare to encounter this lizard. One Thai proverb says, "A lizard gets gold", which refers to a humble-born person becoming rich and forgetting about his or her origins. (Owens and Campiranonta 1989: 71) Lizards are considered to be in low status in Thai proverbs.

When visitors came to Thailand, they often joined special trips for tourists which included attending crocodile-shows. Those who lived in Thailand sometimes joined such trips with their guests. A poet describes as in the following:

*Wani idaku otoko suwareri haru no shō*

(Taniyama Toshiko, Menam., vol. 2)

A man sits  
cradling a crocodile,  
a show in spring

Spring in this haiku means March, April, or May, which are the spring months in Japan. For those who have strong impression of Japanese seasons, the hottest season in Thailand could be called spring. It was incredible for foreigners to see a dangerous crocodile cradled in a person's arms. Crocodile skins used to be important and expensive items that were sold as souvenirs, bags, belts and purses. The crocodile farms are referred to in the following:

*Yōshoku-jō mure-kasanarite wani hirune*

(Benijo, Menam vol. 1)

A farm of crocodiles,  
one on the top

of the other

The space in the farm seems to be so limited that crocodiles had to climb upon each other, or perhaps it is their natural habit.

At the Dusit Zoo, near the quiet crocodile cage, the following poet notices a small movement:

*Mijirogamu wani no senaka ni konomi otsu*

(Jisuke, 1996, Ntbk., vol. 20)

Upon the back of  
a motionless crocodile,  
a nut falls from a tree

A crocodile is large and has a hard back and here we are presented with a case to ponder, whether the big motionless one moves a little or not because of the impact of a tiny nut. The poem seems to pose a Zen question.

*Hangan no ugoite aki no hideri-wani*

(Midori, 1996, Ntbk., vol.20)

Half-opened eyes moved,  
a crocodile drying in the sun  
in autumn

Tortoises are seen in ponds in gardens, at zoos or in temple compounds. In Hindu mythology, one incarnation of the Hindu God Vishnu is a tortoise and therefore Thai people tend to respect tortoises. On special occasions, people release tortoises, fish and birds. Tortoises lived in ponds together with other animals in the zoo; a tortoise has the freedom to act as it likes. Water in the dry cooler season is expressed as water in "autumn".

*Doro tsukete kame nossorito aki-no-mizu*

(Yoshiko, 1996, Ntbk., vol. 20)

Stuck in mud  
a tortoise walks slowly,

water in autumn

Snakes are also common animals in Thai life and people suffered from bites from poisonous snakes such as green snakes, while non-poisonous pythons were sometimes the objects of interest for tourists. A poet describes a python in the following:

*Nishiki-hebi ō-akubisuru koto no ari*

(Akihiro, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 12)

A python,  
sometimes  
gives a heavy yawn!

Members of the Menam Kukai once visited the snake farm, where an important goal was to get profits from raising snakes, and selling snakeskin or snake products. Eventually, the living condition of the snakes appears to have become of secondary importance and a large number of snakes were kept in a limited space. A poet writes about their condition in the following:

*Kagirinaku motsurete hebi no arinikeri*

(Nansei, 1986, Ntbk., vol. 15)

Endlessly  
entwined,  
the snakes lie about

#### 4.2.5 Birds

Thailand's variety of species of birds is a source of great interest for visitors to Thailand and Thai people as well. The colorful feathers, peculiar calls and unique shapes make them obvious inspiration for poets. Relating these birds to the culture and natural features of Thailand, we can observe some particular reflection of the country. Thai Buddhists have a tradition to make merit, especially on special occasions, such as birthdays, celebrations or divine ceremonies. One of the activities for merit making is to

buy birds to release them. Nowadays, this has become a business with people catching birds to sell to merit-making people. In the following haiku, such an example is seen:

*Uraruru tori kastugare-nakumo aki-biyori*

(Midori, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Birds sing  
on the bird-vendor's back,  
a fine autumn day

A bird in a cage is singing before it is sold, perhaps at the temple or a shrine. Some Thai people love traditional cock-fights and these fighting cocks are carefully trained and brought to where the fighting venue. Such examples are seen in the following:

*Kake-dori o kaimono-kago ni sagete kisi*

(Akihiro, 1983, Ntbk., vol. 14)

A man appears  
carrying a game cock  
in a shopping basket

The fact that a cock was carried in a shopping bag seemingly indicates that the cock was fed at home and brought up with care, like one of the family.

*Ryō-ashi o yuware kake-dori chi ni tachinu*

(Takako, 1983, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Both limbs bound,  
a fighting cock stands

A fighting cock recognizes its duty; the hard training, fighting spirit and zeal of cock-trainer also show through.

*Shirimochi no totabi hatatabi tōkeisu*

(Akihiro, 1983 Ntbk., vol. 13)

Falling on their rear ends,  
ten times, twenty times,  
game cocks fight

Never-giving up, the fighting spirit is seen in the numerous challenges by these game cocks.

*Kara-kago o kaze ga nuke-yuku tori-awase*

(Hanae, Menam., vol. 3)

Empty cages,  
the wind rustles through,  
a cock-fighting

The female eyes of the spectator observe something quiet amidst the fierce cock-fighting.

Like an independent person, a freeborn duck is not afraid of people and is described as follows:

*Ki no araki ahiru ayumiki aki-no-en*

(Yoshiko, 1986, Ntbk., vol. 16)

An ill-tempered duck  
comes over  
in the autumn garden

Bang Rak Market was the main fresh market in Bangkok, so many professional cooks came to buy ingredients there. Later the market was obliged to change, following the construction of Sathorn Bridge which was planned to smooth traffic snarls between the Bangkok side and the Thonburi side of the Chao Phraya River.

Duck is a favorite dish among Chinese people, especially at New Year. Live ducks in cages can often be seen in the Bang Rak Market, along the Menam, as a poet describes below:

*Okago no ahiru dotto tsuku kure-ichiba*

(Sekiyō, 1972, Ntbk., vol. 10)

All at once,  
ducks arrive in large cages  
at the year-end market

The energy of the people and noise of the market are seen in this haiku, as well as the pitiful destiny of the birds.

For a long time, Wat Pailom was a well-known temple along the Menam, Chao Phraya River, where storks migrated yearly in huge numbers and built their nests. People interested to see the white storks visited the temple during the cool season, in December or January. Visitors are advised to bring hats or umbrellas with them to avoid suffering from direct droppings from flying storks. Many storks in the sky over the Wat Pailom are illustrated as the following:

*Zujō tobu kō dono ashi mo gyogi yoku*

(Sekiyō, 1972, Ntbk., vol. 9)

Flying storks overhead,  
their limbs

all held properly.

Looking up at the storks flying overhead, a poet was impressed by the way each stork holds its limbs in such a proper way. The childhood experience of Japanese education in the home, where children are taught how to sit and how to hold legs properly, might have inspired this haiku.

*Chisaku mo ōkiku mo nari kō mainu*

(Yoshiko, 1972, Ntbk., vol. 9)

Looking smaller and bigger,  
storks fly

High and low in the sky, each stork flies and people on the ground look up at the numerous white birds in flight.

*Koeda sage ko ama-kakete yuki-kainu*

(Yoshiko, 1972, Ntbk., vol. 9)

Holding a twig,  
each stork flying and passing  
to and fro

Each stork is busy with carrying a twig or other things to build its nest.

Migrating swallows in Silom Road and nearby areas have been famous among people who have commuted around these areas. The migrating swallows would sit in rows on the electric wires and often deposit white droppings, often annoying the people underneath. It is not clear why Silom area is so loved by the swallows. The phenomenon is noted in the following haiku:

*Mi-agureba oto naku narabu iwa-tsubame*

(Sekiyō, 1973, Ntbk., vol. 10)

Looking up and finding  
swallows in a line,  
noiseless

*Etto no tsubame oshikora-manju kana*

(Gogyū, 1973, Ntbk., vol. 10)

Migrating swallows perch side by side,  
pushing each other off  
as if playing a game.

If we try to listen carefully to the singing of birds in daily life, we will know more about birds. Cool mornings are a good time to enjoy the twittering of birds as noted in the following example:

*Asa-zamu ya indo-kakko naki-yamaz*

(Shunrō, 1998, ntbk., vol. 11)

In the cool morning,  
an Indian cuckoo  
chirps endlessly

The natural tropical environment of Thailand is suited to birds like parakeets, which breed in great numbers here. The twittering of these green, sky-blue or yellow parakeets is revealed in the following:

*O-minami bisei akusei inko naku*

(Yoshiko, Menam., vol. 3)

A big south wind,  
 beautiful voices and harsh voices,  
 grass parakeets twittering

Hérons are often seen in the rice fields upcountry and they are remarkable for their rather large white wings and long, stick-like limbs in the green field. Poets describe this as the following:

*Sari-yaranu aota no sagi ni koruka-ome*

(Gogyū, Menam., vol. 1)

A heron remains  
 in the green rice field  
 in the drizzling rain.

The climate in Thailand is hot so some Thai farmers to plant rice twice or three times, if they want. Herons come to catch insects in the green fields where rice is planted.

*Niki-saku no shirota hirogari sagi mururu*

(Shunrō, 1997, Ntbk., vol. 21)

Hérons gather,  
 at wide rice fields prepared  
 for the second rice planting

#### 4.2.6. Mammals

Through old sayings in Thailand, we can discern that Thailand has been a country based on agriculture. A large number of animals seen in the fields or villages are mentioned in Thai proverbs. The most frequently introduced animals among them are mammals, like water buffalo, cows, dogs, and elephants. Of these animals, the status or estimation in which they are held by Thai people are not of the same level.

Elephants are regarded very highly and cows also regarded relatively highly, while dogs and useful water buffalo are not. Thai people will get angry if told that they are like dogs, due to the low status of dogs in Thailand; people feel insulted. Although



water buffalo played important roles in rice farming, they still have a lower position than cows. Water buffalo represent stupidity and weak-headedness, in spite of their large role in the daily life.

A Thai proverb says that if you play with dogs, they'll lick your mouth, meaning familiarity breeds contempt (Owens and Campiranonta 1989: 57). As in this proverb, animals that are too familiar around people are not respected.

On the other hand, the white elephant was a symbol of Siam and was featured on the national flag during the reign of King Rama IV and King Rama V. It is still used today on the Royal Thai Navy flag.

Hindu and Buddhist legends brought from India to Thailand, as well as to other Southeast Asian countries, influenced Thai thought. The Erawan elephant is depicted as a three-headed white elephant and the vehicle of Hindu god, Indra, and can be seen in statues around the country.

As Simatrang writes in "The Elephant: Legend and Myth" in the essay of a folk story collection, according to the Sanskrit belief, the story of a certain family of elephants is originated by Hindu God Shiva. Another legend says that Airavata (Erawan) came out of the Milk Ocean, together with Amrita, the drink of immortality, and celestial jewels when the gods and asuras were churning the Milk Ocean. Thus, the elephant became an auspicious symbol of the king. Erawan, combined as the vehicles of Indra, the God of rain, as Simatrang writes, became the symbol of abundance, rain and fertility, which were all important for agricultural countries and one reason that the elephant is highly appreciated. So, in Thailand there was a rule to present to the king all the white elephants which were discovered. Oxen are considered as Nandi in Hindu mythology, the vehicles of Hindu God Shiva and white oxen are seen in traditional ceremonies. Hindu mythology and culture are deeply interconnected with Thai culture. In the past, The environment of elephants has changed considerably in Thailand. In the past, the possession of white elephants caused wars between Siam and Burma and in battles like that of the famous Prince Naresuan against the Burmese prince, war elephants played an important role as vehicles for warriors. Elephants sometimes were killed because of their expensive, fine ivory tusks.

Today, elephants are protected by the Washington Treaty, the international system for prohibiting the import of ivory and rare wild creatures. The Thai government

has set up the Elephant Centers for helping elephants, yet the living conditions for the animals are still very hard. Traditionally in Thailand, elephants were trained to carry teak wood logs from the mountains. As this practice is today illegal, the elephants and their mahouts have resorted to other ways of making a living and must travel to get money and food. A scene illustrating the former daily life of an elephant is seen in the following:

*Sutyoku ni zō ga hikarete kawa ni iru*

(Issō, 1962, Fiftieth.)

For bathing,

an elephant

is led to the river

Like people, elephants in the old days took baths in the rivers after hard work in

the mountains or in the villages. The trunks of elephants express their feelings.

*Utsuki jarite zo wa shōnina o hōni garimu*

(Takako, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

Waving its trunk,

an elephant is eager

for bananas

*Kare-basho se ni nosetemiru kozō kana*

(Yoshiko, 1984, Ntbk., vol. 15)

Trying to play,

putting dried banana leaves on its back,

a child elephant!

Also, like a person, a baby elephant creates its own method of play.

*Zō no se ni yurare shūten chikaku nari*

(Natsujo, Menam, vol. 3)

Swaying back and forth

on the back of an elephant,

approaching the autumn sky

Elephant teams today tend to travel to urban areas to earn their daily food. At some leisure places, such as the Rose Garden tourist restaurant, elephants and mahouts are hired to perform. Visitors can enjoy riding on the back of the elephants. A poet writes about an elephant in the following:

*Kyokugei no zō no me shizuka kareobana*

(Hōjirō, 1998, Ntbk. vol. 22)

The eyes of the performing elephant  
are peaceful,  
withered eulalias

Elephants are clever and quick-witted. In comparison to its large body, the elephant's eyes are small but peaceful, even while performing difficult stunts. Withered eulalias refers to the surroundings and indicates the animal's destiny.

*Kure hayashi kokudō zoi ni zō inuru*

(Hōjirō, 1998, Ntbk. vol. 22)

It grows dark quickly,  
An elephant passes  
along the main street

These days it is common to see elephants together with their mahouts walking on the streets in Bangkok. The cost of feeding elephants is very expensive, so jobless elephants are brought to cities to earn money. In the foregoing poem, it grows dark quickly, the elephant is passing along the polluted, concrete road.

*Zō-matsuri yakume naki zō machi o yuku*

(Shiotani Toshiko, 1998, Vol. 22)

The Elephant-Round Up Festival,  
having no role to play,  
a lone elephant walks into town

Every year in November, around 200 elephants assemble in Surin District to take part in the large traditional Surin Elephant Festival.

*Zō no se ni yurarete fuyu no yama-aruki*

(Shunrō, 1997, Ntbk., vol. 21)

Swaying back and forth  
on the back of elephant,  
I approach the mountain in winter

In the mountains in the North, tourists often enjoy riding on the back of elephants.

\*For Japanese people in general, both dogs and cats are rather familiar pets and good friends. In particular, dogs are considered as faithful and useful animals; they understand people's minds, are clever enough to help blind people, they are good guards in the house and they are often important family members.

In the sweltering weather of Thailand, the cats and dogs which many haiku poets observed, seemed to behave in a way different from the cats and dogs in Japan. It is rare to see very relaxed dogs and cats in Japan reclining on their backs on the ground.

People often hear the calls of cats in love and cats give birth many times in a year. The extraordinary cry of cats is like that of babies and people sometimes find it difficult to differentiate. Poets describe this in the following:

*Kobi fukumu neko no naki-goe ame-agari*

(Hanae, 1979, Ntbk., vol. 12)

A cat  
gives her coquetish call,  
just after the rainfall

*Neko no koi samete hitasura ashi o name*

(Yoshiko, 1977., Ntbk., vol.11))

A cat in love,  
having been brought to its senses  
earnestly licks its paws

*Oya oya oya kore ga mike-chan no koi-neko ka*

(Sekiyō, 1974, Ntbk., vol. 10)

Oh, ho, ho,  
so, this is the lover  
of my dear cat, Mike

The same poet observed a female cat carefully and saw that it saluted to a male cat, its husband, with its tail straightened, as below:

*Chikayorare osaki de eshaku neko no tsuma*

(Sekiyō, Menam., vol. 3)

When "a cat's husband" comes close,

"the cat's wife"

salutes with the tip of her tail.

Whether it is a special day or not, cats eagerly demand food. A poet writes as in the following:

*Toshi-hajime neko ni wamekare sakana niru*

(Ibrahim, Teruko, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

At the start of the year  
hearing a loud meowing cat,  
prompts me to cook fish

On New Year's day, many housewives in Japan do not worry about cooking, as they prepare a lot of special food beforehand, at the end of the year. But the poet in Thailand has to cook fish as a New Year treat for her cat.

Cats and people live together, sometimes sharing relaxation time with each other. A female poet describes their daily life as in the following:

*Kaze soyogu neko o onaka ni han'mokku*

(Yōko, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 21)

The wind rustles,  
a cat upon my belly  
in a hammock

In the very hot climate, without the wind, a cat and a person could not comfortably enjoy being in a hammock. However, both of them are at the right place at the right time in Bangkok.

Siamese cats come in many species; including the special seal-pointed cats and Korat cats. Siamese cats are known for their swift movements, elegant features and for taking pride in themselves. Sometimes, people are surprised to see the elegant movements of these slim Siamese cats. A scene relating to a Siamese cat seen in the 1970's is described in the following:

*Shamu-neko no monokage sugimu jokusho kana*

(Keison, 1973, Ntbk., vol. 10)

A Siamese cat

darts past,

in the sweltering heat!

*Koneko kite bugenbiria no hana kobosu*

(Jisuke, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 21)

A kitten passes, causing

pieces of bougainvillea flowers

to drop.

The purple, pink and white flowers of bougainvillea are actually not flowers, but colored bracts. A cat chooses the short way to pass and its motion causes the flowers to fall.

In the daytime, dogs can often be seen sleeping, as at night they actively roam around, barking or fighting with other dogs. Barking dogs are illustrated in the following:

*Mijikayo ya inu no kensō tsuzukikeri*

(Nansei, 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

A short night,

the noisy barking of dogs

continues!

After the summer solstice, the night becomes shorter. In haiku terms, these nights are called short nights.

*Mono-uri no yobigoe takaku inu banshō*

(Yōko, 1994, Ntbk., vol. 18)

The loud cry of a hawker,  
following  
a dog's howling

Dogs often start howling at the sounds of hawkers and sirens.

In the cool, dry season, not only people, but dogs also enjoy the comfortable climate in Bangkok. A poet describes the dog as follows:

*Karekusa o inu se ni tsukete nekorobinu*

(Toshiko, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 22)

With dried grass  
against its back,  
a dog reclines leisurely

Dogs seek various spots as suitable places for napping, for example, under the shade of trees, houses, under cars and even on the side-streets along busy streets. A poet illustrates in the following:

*Sansui-sha ni owareshi inu no hirune kana*

(Jisuke, 1997, Ntbk., Vol.20)

Being persuaded to move on  
by an irrigation truck,  
a dog napping!

This scene reminds us of Wireless Road, which still retains tall old silk trees along the roadside. In the old days, canals lay beside the trees but these were later filled in.

One of the teachings of Buddhism is not to kill creatures, so unwanted cats and dogs in Thailand are often left at the temple compounds, surviving on spare food given by merit-making Buddhists. A poet illustrates in the following:

*Makabucha no kyō ni shitari-gao tera no inu*

(Shiroko, 1994)

Listening to the sutra on Makabucha day,  
with a complacent look,  
the dog of the temple

The sutra in Thailand is in Pali language, so it is hard for ordinary people who have had no chance to study Pali, or Sanskrit language to understand the meaning. The haiku poet may be thinking of a Japanese proverb saying that, "A boy before a temple gate reads sutras without learning" (The environment has influences). A poet saw the dog at the temple sitting as if it understood the sutra, since it must have heard the chanting repeatedly.

For a long time, people in Bangkok have suffered from flash floods. In the past, heavy flash floods came at the end of the rainy season, in September or October.

A poet finds a dog amongst those who suffer in the following:

*Nora-inu mo yuki-nayami ori aki-demizu*

(Midori, 1998, Ntbk., vol. 21)

A stray dog also hesitates  
to cross the street,  
flash floods in autumn

In the 1960's, a Thai language text book for first grade pupils in Thailand started with the story of school children who enjoy riding on the backs of water buffalo in daily village life, driving along with cries of "Hui, Hui, Hui". Since that time, the role of water buffalo has decreased, replaced by machines. The animals that used to sustain rice fields everywhere in Thailand are illustrated in the haiku as follows:

*Furiko meku suigyū no o ya yudachi yamu*

(Takako, 1981, Ntbk. vol. 13)

Like a pendulum,  
the tail of a water buffalo



*Suigyū no hito-tamuroseru hanano kana*

(Takako, 1982, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Water buffalo  
gathering at flower fields  
in autumn

In addition to water buffalo, white, cream and thin brown cows can be seen.

*Haiuei kosu ushi no retsu iwashi-gumo*

(Takako, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

Passing along the highway,  
a row of cows,  
fleecy clouds

Some white cows feature in the Ploughing Ceremony to welcome and bless the year's harvest.

*Nōkō-sai memoto suzushiki kami no ushi*

(Gogyū, 1981, Ntbk., vol. 13)

The Ploughing Ceremony,  
sacred cows  
have calm eyes

In Thailand in the past, few people rode horses. It was said that New Road was built for the convenience of westerners that rode horses.

During the Second World War, Lumpini Park and some places on the South-Sathorn Road and Wireless Road area were used by the Japanese Army and later the Australian and English armies.

The poet who experienced life before and after wartime in Thailand, recalls the time that horses were seen, as follows:

*Hōhei no kanba tsunageri nemu namiki*

(Waiyaresu-ji)

(Sekiyō, 1980, Ntbk., vol. 13)

A cannon soldier  
 tied a stout horse to a tree,  
 rain trees in a line  
 (Wireless Road)

Today in Bangkok, some enthusiastic people go to watch horse-races at the race-tracks opposite Dusit Palace and opposite Chulalongkorn University.

*Banryoku ya bobo ya hinba no hizumé-ato*

(Yoshiko, 1986, Ntbk., vol. 15)

An abundance of green,  
 the hoof prints  
 of male and female horses

One day, members of the Menam Kukai haiku group decided to go to Henri Dunant Road to experience horseracing and each of them wrote haiku after careful observation. In this haiku, before the races start, horses were exercised by leads held by horsemen. The hoof prints were left clearly on the sandy ground.

*Kumo wakuya sendō-ba no ho midare nashi*

(Midori, 1986, Ntbk., vol. 15)

Fluffy clouds gush out,  
 a leading horse trots  
 at a steady pace

When the race is about to start, the horses trot to the race-ground and the eyes of the crowd are concentrated on the trotting horses, selecting the best.

*Chaiyō no kansei umara hashiri-dasu*

(Mariko, 1986, Ntbk., vol. 15)

To cheers of "Chaiyo!", Victory,  
 the race-horses dash,  
 like raging billows

When the race starts, a large number of spectators shouted at once, "Chaiyo"!, (Victory!), hoping to win the race. The movement of the horses and the shouts of the people created the special atmosphere, like raging billows.

*Gunshū no yoko-gao sotto kurabe-uma*

(Yoshiko, 1986, Ntbk., vol. 15)

I steal a glance  
at the crowd's profile  
at the horse race

Surprised by the overwhelming energy of the people, the poet watched both the racing horses and the profile of the shouting crowds of people.

*Kachi-uma no inanaku kumo no hikaru-nari*

(Midori, 1986, Ntbk., vol. 15)

A winning horse  
gives a neigh,  
shining clouds

At the moment a winning horse taking pride in its accomplishment, the sky is beautiful.

Bats are often seen around the eaves of old temples or caves in Thailand, as they like dark, shadowy places. Although they fly like birds and eat insects and fruit, bats are not birds but belong to the mammal group, however, in the haiku poets eye's, they are similar to birds.

*Kawahori no sumu hondō no noki takashi*

(Yoshiko, 1986, Ntbk., vol. 15)

High upon the eaves  
of the main temple,  
bats settle in

*Kōmori no nishi-bi no nakani fuki-dashinu*

(Natsujo, 1988, Ntbk., vol. 16)

At sunset  
the bats burst forth

It is the nature of bats to be active at night and during the daytime they are quiet. Dusk is when the bats start their activities and they burst dramatically into the sky in groups.

Some people in Bangkok like to keep white gibbons at home, as a poet describes in the following:

*Kaizaru no mikan tabe-aki ko-rokugatsu*

(Gogyū, Menam, vol. 1)

The late autumn,  
a domestic gibbon  
is tired of eating oranges

Oranges are the gibbon's favorite food, but this gibbon is bored with always eating the same fruit. Gibbons have white fur, black faces and long arms that like to snatch at interesting things. Domestic pet gibbons are often kept in chains. In one case it was observed that a chained long-armed ape was throwing about chairs on the veranda and in the other case there was an unintentional suicide of a gibbon bound by chains. Both seemed to want to be freer.

This particular poet lost his legs and had to give up walking freely in his latter life. The compassion he shows for a gibbon in his poem also reflects his sorrow.

The Menam Kukai 's haiku gathering once visited the Dusit Zoo in Bangkok and soon after held a monthly meeting. Animals are described in the following.

*Saru nomi ga asobi-gokoro no aki-bi sashi*

(Hajime, 1996, Ntbk., vol. 20)

In the autumn sunshine,  
only monkeys  
want to play

A poet also has a same playful mind. Watching monkeys is one of the most popular spectacles at the zoological gardens.

When observing a hippopotamus, it is difficult to tell whether it is a male or female, but it is clear to see which is the parent and child. They are described in the following:

*Aki-biyori shigusa onajiku oyako kaba*

(Midori, 1996, Ntbk., vol. 20)

On a fine autumn day,  
their behavior is alike,  
a father and a child hippo

People like to throw bread to the hippopotami in the water and the animals wait with their mouths open wide. The following is an example:

*Ô-guchi o akete pan uku kaba no aki*

(Yoshiko, 1996, Ntbk., vol. 20)

In autumn,  
the hippo opens his mouth wide  
and receives some bread

Tigers have a strong and fierce image, but in the zoo they are different. A poet illustrates as in the following:

*Shūten ya ori no semakute tora modasu*

(Haruo, 1996, Ntbk., vol. 20)

The autumn sky,  
a narrow cage silences  
the tiger

#### 4.3 Summary

Haiku poets living in Thailand chose to describe Thai people, their situations and backgrounds. Some of the landscapes and lifestyles captured by the poets in their poems are becoming things of the past, for instance, the aged people at the “oliang” shop hardly exist today. Many haiku depict working people in Thailand, such as

vendors, as the haiku poets had many chances to encounter these people. While the pictures of Thai people created by the Japanese poets do not reflect all Thai people, they are useful indicators. The animals depicted by the poets also reflect some attitudes in Thai society and the surroundings of Thailand. In the past, there was a lot more space for animals, reptiles and insects, including mosquitoes in Bangkok.

Nowadays, news about elephants can often be read in the newspaper. Many elephants today are likely to live in a dangerous environment. Elephants have been involved in traffic accidents on the road of Bangkok, been poisoned by villagers to keep them away from crops (elephants cannot find enough food in the forest because of dwindling resources), or have been maimed by land mines. The changing environment has affected all living creatures. These haiku, which depict the Thai natural environment in vivid detail over many years, can be utilized as a precious resource for future generations that are growing up in a very different environment.



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