

6. The First Haiku

資料館 心耳のなげき 百合匂ふ

shiryoukan shinji no nageki yuri niou

shi ryo u ka n, shi n ji no na ge ki, yu ri ni o u
1 2 3 4 5, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7, 1 2 3 4 5

The atomic museum, the cries in the heart's ears, the scent of the lily

shiryoukan	memorial museum
shinji	heart's ears
no	possessive post-positional particle (English "of")
nageki	cry, wail
yuri	lily
niou	scent, smell (intransitive verb)

As the translation of each haiku is limited, I will take each one and delve deeper into the profound nature of its words and phrases. As was explained in the brief description and explanation of haiku in general, the nature of the haiku is to use just a few words to express an infinite wealth of reality and emotion. In a sense what I will be doing is to begin to delve into that reality and emotion. I will be using many words. I myself must be careful, as must the reader, to remember that I am not

going to be able to “explain” each haiku. I will rather be trying to direct the imagination of the reader toward a more Japanese understanding. The role of the imagination cannot be replaced in interpreting each haiku. Thus, I hope that the few words I write down assist the reader in experiencing each one more fully. As I also mentioned in the opening introduction, we need to remember that we are building our understandings of Hiroko’s poetry. These are based upon our experiences and background and the limitations those bring. Thus, we may arrive at an understanding very different from that intended by Hiroko herself. We need to realize that we have come to an understanding, not the understanding of her poetry.

This haiku begins with the word “shiryokan” 資料館, officially known as Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. I have translated this, “the atomic museum” but only because it is essential to let the reader know precisely which building we are talking about. The word “atomic” does not exist here. The “kan” 館 of “shiryokan” when used on its own means, palace, mansion, castle, house or building. It is tacked onto the end of a variety of words to describe the kind of building being referred to. For example, the word library (“toshokan” 図書館), is made up of the word for “books” (“toshō” 図書) and building (“kan” 館). The word gymnasium (“taiikukan” 体育館), is made up of the word for “physical education” (“taiiku” 体育) and building (“kan” 館).

There are many words which could mean museum in Japanese. The word “hakubutsukan” 博物館 is the word generally used for “museum” and literally means a building of