

Korea Haiku Is Our Literature

Korea Haiku Writing

Integrated Manual

A Beginner's Guide to Observation, Seasonal Words, and Scene Building

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5·7·5

Three-line fixed form

02

Seasonal Word

A word that calls up time

03

Observation

Turn emotion into a scene

04

Open Space

Leave room for the reader's senses

05

Metaphor

One shift that changes the world

06

Revision

Reduce explanation; revive the scene

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Publication Purpose

This manual is a creative-writing guide designed to help readers encountering Korea Haiku for the first time learn, in an accessible way, the principles of the 5·7·5 form, seasonal words, observation, scene-centered expression, open space, and revision. Building on the beginner framework of the Korea Haiku Federation's earlier material "How to Write Korea Haiku" - "What is Korea Haiku?", "5·7·5," "seasonal words," and "capturing a fleeting moment" - it integrates perspectives on observation, the objective correlative, metaphorical shift, sensory transference, and delayed gratification.

Korea Haiku is short poetry. But it is not literature that merely writes briefly. It removes lengthy explanation and compresses objects, sensory experience, and resonance into a single seasonal scene. The aim of this manual is to help beginners learn not simply "what to write," but first "what to see and how to see it."

Core Sentence of This Manual

Korea Haiku does not directly explain emotion. It places before the reader a scene in which emotion can arise.

Translation Note

The English versions of the poem examples convey the meaning of the Korean originals. The 5·7·5 count described in this manual refers to the Korean originals and should not be assumed to apply automatically to the English translations.

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Part I. Foundations of Korea Haiku

Chapter 1. What Is Korea Haiku?

Korea Haiku is a literature that takes the short fixed form of Japanese haiku as a foundation while expressing the Korean language, Korean nature, everyday culture, and sensory experience. If Japanese haiku developed around nature, the seasons, and moments of insight, Korea Haiku places within that formal vessel our mountains and rivers, seasonal customs, food culture, village landscapes, family memories, and the rhythms of Korean.

Haiku is generally known as a three-line structure of 5·7·5, totaling seventeen sound units. It grew as a short, condensed form within seventeenth-century Japanese literature and was established as an artistic mode through the work of Matsuo Bashō. Korea Haiku preserves the advantages of this brief form while placing the sound and rhythm of Korean and Korean seasonal experience at its center.

A Definition for Beginners

Korea Haiku is a Korean fixed-form poem that places “a small scene I actually saw in this season, here and now” into three lines of 5·7·5.

Chapter 2. 5·7·5: The Vessel of Three Lines

The basic form of Korea Haiku is 5 characters in the opening line, 7 in the middle line, and 5 in the closing line. When starting out, it is more important to practice placing one scene inside this three-line vessel than to begin with difficult techniques.

Basic Structure Example

**early-summer yard
between persimmon leaves
one white butterfly**

Within the three lines, the season, place, background, and central object are placed together. The first line opens the scene. The second makes an object or movement concrete. The third is not a conclusion that explains everything, but a place where resonance remains. Once this structure is learned, a scene can become vivid even within a very short form.

Basic Counting Rule

In general, spaces are not counted, and one Hangul character is treated as one unit. When loanwords, numerals, or punctuation are used, the count may be adjusted according to the rules of a course or submission venue.

Chapter 3. Seasonal Words: Words That Call Up Time

In Korea Haiku, a seasonal word is not a mere ornament. It fixes the scene of a poem on the coordinates of time. Even without saying “spring,” cherry blossoms, shepherd’s purse flowers, frogs, and azaleas call spring into the poem. Even without writing “summer,” cicadas, the rainy season, Korean melons, hollyhocks, and fireflies evoke summer.

Seasonal words are not limited to things in nature. Seasonal divisions, customary observances, everyday culture, food, weather, farming, and bodily sensation can all become seasonal words. A seasonal word moves an individual feeling into shared time. A person’s longing, when joined with first snow or visible breath, becomes a winter scene that anyone can enter.

Season	Examples of Seasonal Words	Time and Sensation Evoked
Spring	shepherd’s purse flower, forsythia, azalea, cherry blossom, spring rain, primrose	newness, sprouting, awaited warmth, first movement
Summer	cicada, rainy season, Korean melon, hollyhock, firefly, Sambok days, parasol	heat, humidity, bright light, market, waterside, long days
Autumn	autumn leaves, persimmon tree, chrysanthemum, cricket, Chuseok, silver grass	harvest, coolness, ripening, reflection, bright moon
Winter	first snow, visible breath, roasted sweet potato, kimchi-making, meju, winter solstice, frost	stillness, waiting, cold, storing, family warmth

Chapter 4. Capturing the Fleeting Moment

Korea Haiku captures one instant rather than explaining a long event from beginning to end. Like a photographer pressing the shutter, it suspends the light, movement, and sensation of a single scene within three lines. Yet this instant is not merely “a short amount of time.” Within it are the flow of the season, the state of objects, and the reader’s memory.

The haiku moment is close to “what is happening at that moment, in that place.” When an experience directly seen, heard, or felt becomes the center of a poem, the language becomes clearest. Memory and imagination may also be used, but they should rest on actual sensory experience.

Moment-Capturing Example

**on the jar platform
sitting with folded wings
a red dragonfly**

The poem does not explain the scene; it shows an object briefly at rest.

Part II. How Observation Gives Life to a Poem

Chapter 5. A Season Hides Even in a Single Stamen

The starting point of Korea Haiku is not flashy expression or difficult rhetoric, but observation. We see many things in daily life, yet often fail to look closely. Even when we notice a flower along the road, our gaze may stop at “a flower is blooming.” A writer of haiku, however, pauses one step longer in front of that flower.

Look slowly at the color of the petals, the shape of the stamens, the direction of the wind, and the insects lingering nearby. From a distance it is only one flower; up close, the pollen at the tip of a stamen, the fine fissures in a petal, and a bead of dew sparkling in the morning sun become new discoveries.

The Core of Observation

Good Korea Haiku begins less in extraordinary imagination than in a way of seeing that rediscovers ordinary things. The first step in writing is the willingness to look not only at a whole flower, but at a single stamen.

Chapter 6. Objective Observation and Turning Emotion into Scene

The mistake beginners make most often is interpreting before observing. If one sees a flower and immediately writes “beautiful,” sees rain and writes “lonely,” or sees fallen leaves and writes “sad,” the poem easily becomes an explanation.

Objective observation is not a technique for erasing emotion. It is a way of turning emotion into a scene. Instead of saying “I am lonely,” the writer presents objects, time, and movement through which loneliness can be felt, allowing the reader to generate the emotion independently.

Example: Turning Emotion into Scene

**alley after the rain
beside an empty umbrella stand
wet footprints**

Even without the word “lonely,” the reader can sense absence and waiting.

T. S. Eliot’s “objective correlative” describes a way of evoking a specific emotion through an arrangement of objects, situations, and events rather than stating that emotion directly. Objective observation in Korea Haiku has an affinity with this principle. When the arrangement of objects is clear, emotion arises naturally within the reader’s senses without explanation from the writer.

Chapter 7. Drafting with 5W1H

When writing Korea Haiku for the first time, 5W1H is useful. In haiku, however, it is often better to delay the “Why.” If you begin by explaining why an emotion arose, the poem quickly turns into commentary.

- What is there? - Find the central object.
- Where is it? - Find the place and sense of distance.
- When is it happening? - Find the seasonal word and time.
- How is it moving? - Find its state and movement.
- Why is it so? - Leave this for the reader to feel.

When What, Where, When, and How are sufficiently established, Why can remain the reader's share. This is where the open space of haiku begins.

5W1H Example

**a rainy afternoon
a single teacup by the window
only the warmth remains**

The poem captures the memory and quiet lingering presence after someone has left, showing the condition of the teacup and the passing of time through a simple image.

Chapter 8. Turning the Five Senses into Concrete Scenes

Observation is not performed by the eyes alone. It includes smelling the season, feeling the direction of wind, hearing the pitch of birdsong, and sensing temperature at the fingertips. Yet the five senses should not be reduced to vague sensory adjectives.

Words such as "cold," "fragrant," and "quiet" are not yet concrete enough by themselves. Good observation turns sensation into a scene that can be tested against experience. Instead of merely writing "the sound of water," it matters whether that sound is a drop falling from an eave, a drop striking an aluminum basin, or a current slipping between stream stones.

Making the Five Senses Concrete

**on an aluminum basin
raindrops from the eaves
a round sound**

Rather than simply describing a sound, the poem shows where and how the sound is made.

Part III. Building Scene and Open Space

Chapter 9. When Two Centers of Attention Blur the Poem

Korea Haiku is a literature that establishes one clear scene within a brief form. It is natural for several objects to appear in a poem, but if each is placed as though it were the center, the reader's attention is dispersed.

The problem is not the presence of several objects itself. It arises when two or more objects become protagonists at the same time. When two subjects appear together, consider which is the center and which provides background.

Before

**early-summer yard
persimmon tree and white butterfly
sharing laughter**

After

**early-summer yard
between persimmon leaves
one white butterfly**

Revision Point

In the earlier version, the persimmon tree and white butterfly both become centers, and “sharing laughter” functions as the writer’s interpretation. In the revised version, the persimmon tree becomes spatial background and one white butterfly becomes the central scene.

Chapter 10. Reduce Emotion Words; Leave the Scene

Emotion words should be used carefully in Korea Haiku. Words such as “lonely,” “sad,” “happy,” “beautiful,” and “longing” name the emotion directly. If the name of the emotion is given too quickly, the reader has less room to feel it independently.

Before

**on an autumn evening
with a lonely heart
I watch fallen leaves**

After

**autumn evening path
beneath an empty bench
one dry leaf**

Revision Point

The emotion word “lonely” has been removed. An empty bench and one dry leaf remain, allowing the reader to create the feeling through the scene.

This does not mean that emotion should be eliminated. It means that emotion should not be explained directly; instead, show the objects and situations in which emotion can dwell. The less explanation there is, the more freely the reader’s senses can move.

Chapter 11. Nominal Endings and Resonance

A Korea Haiku does not need to close its final line with a predicate that completes the meaning. At times, stopping on a noun produces greater resonance. A predicate directs the sentence and tends to close meaning; a nominal ending can stop the scene while keeping meaning open.

Example of a Nominal Ending

**on the jar platform
sitting with folded wings**

a red dragonfly

The noun in the final line is not a conclusion but an object the reader can continue to look at.

If the kireji, or cutting word, of Japanese haiku creates open space through grammatical and rhythmic interruption, nominal endings in Korea Haiku can halt the scene within Korean sentence structure. The grammar is different, but the effects can resemble each other in that both place the reader within the gap.

Caution

Ending with a noun does not automatically create resonance. If observation is thin, merely cutting off the poem on a noun becomes stylistic posing rather than restraint. A nominal ending is the decision not to say more after sufficiently observing.

Chapter 12. Delayed Gratification - Language Completed Through Waiting

Literary Critic An Soo Hyun

Korea Haiku is read quickly. But being read quickly does not mean that all meaning ends at once. Rather, Korea Haiku is a literature that slowly blooms again in the mind after reading. A scene remains, and as that scene meets the reader's memory, it gradually deepens.

This quality can be explained as delayed gratification: the attitude of not trying to obtain something immediately, but reaching deeper fulfillment through time and waiting. Korea Haiku does not give the reader an instant answer. It quietly shows a single scene and leaves what follows open.

Within that openness the reader's senses begin to work gradually. Because the poem does not immediately say "sad," "happy," "lonely," or "longing," the reader pauses before the scene and calls up personal experience and memory. Instead of instant comprehension, understanding that seeps in through time completes the poem.

Seasonal words are an important device for creating delayed gratification. "Plum blossom" is not merely the name of a flower; it can call up the feeling of waiting for spring not yet arrived. "First snow" does not mean only the beginning of winter; it can also summon the memory of looking out a window and the tactile sense of a road where footprints remain.

Writing Korea Haiku is also an act of waiting. When a scene appears, wait before immediately writing down the emotion. A flower first felt as "beautiful," when watched a little longer, reveals the grain of its petals, the tremble of its stamens, an ant passing nearby, and a small drop of dew at a leaf tip. In the first glance emotion appears; in the second, the object appears.

A Creative Principle of Delayed Gratification

A good poem does not come from naming emotion quickly. It comes when a scene has ripened sufficiently in the mind. A sensation that arrives a little later, and a scene that continues moving within the mind after reading, are part of the strength of Korea Haiku.

Modern society is steadily losing the ability to wait. Press a button and information appears; post a photograph and responses arrive immediately; short videos pass within seconds. In such an age, Korea

Haiku may be more meaningful precisely because it can be read in seconds while its resonance remains much longer.

Ultimately, Korea Haiku is literature that deals with time. It hides long time within brief language and lets the reader unfold it slowly. The open space of haiku is not empty vacancy but a place where delayed meaning stays. There, the reader rediscovers his or her own senses.

A Scene That Arrives Late in Memory

**road after the first snow
one footprint crossed over
before a closed gate**

The unexplained waiting is slowly completed within the reader's memory.

Part IV. Metaphor and Sensory Shift

Chapter 13. The Principle of Metaphorical Shift

In literature, metaphor is not merely decoration. It is not rhetoric used simply to make the world prettier; it is a device that changes the direction in which we perceive the world. The moment an object is called by something other than its ordinary name, meaning is not merely substituted. The sensory order surrounding that object is rearranged.

Metaphor must be used even more carefully in Korea Haiku. If too many metaphors appear within a short poem, language moves ahead of the scene. Metaphor should not replace the scene as ornament; it should deepen the texture of an object that has already been observed sufficiently.

A Metaphor Rule for Beginners

One metaphor is enough. First observe the actual scene accurately. Then, only where truly necessary, slightly shift the direction of sensation.

Chapter 14. Sensory Transference and Synesthesia

Sensory transference is the movement of one sense into another, creating a new experience. It can generally be discussed as synesthesia: sight calling up sound, sound being felt as color, or smell becoming linked to distance.

For example, the expression "blue bell sound" transfers the auditory experience of a bell into visual color. The reader does not merely hear the bell; the clarity, distance, and cool stillness of the sound can be felt together. The key is not decorative brilliance but the angle of the sensory shift.

Example of Sensory Shift

**temple yard at dawn
blue bell sound spreading**

frosted stone steps

Sound is transferred into color and touch, expanding the sensory field of a winter dawn.

Chapter 15. Slow Sensibility in the Digital Age

Today's literary environment is fast, fragmented, and simultaneous. Within the rhythm of platforms, text circulates in real time and emotion is amplified instantly through comments and sharing. In such an environment, it is hasty to assume that brief literary forms are necessarily shallow.

On the contrary, a short form can increase sensory density by reducing language and can invite the reader to feel the world anew by reducing explanation. Korea Haiku may travel quickly, but it need not stop at immediate consumption. Within short sentences it slows the reader's senses and opens again in the mind.

Korea Haiku in the Digital Age

Korea Haiku is language that restores slow sensibility in a fast age. Where words end, sensation begins; where explanation stops, the reader's mind starts to move.

Part V. Practical Writing and Revision

Chapter 16. A Seven-Step Method for Beginners

1. Choose the season. First identify the present season, or the season in which the poem takes place.
2. Choose a seasonal word. Select one from nature, everyday culture, a seasonal observance, food, or weather.
3. Observe an actual scene. Write down color, shape, position, movement, sound, smell, and touch.
4. Choose one central object. Clearly establish the object that will become the protagonist of the poem.
5. Remove direct emotion words. Try turning words such as beautiful, lonely, and sad into scenes.
6. Arrange the poem in 5-7-5. It does not have to be perfect at first. Refine it to the rhythm of three lines.
7. Check the final line. Does it close with explanation, or leave resonance through a scene or noun?

The Easiest Writing Formula

1 seasonal word + 1 central object + 1 surrounding clue + 1 small movement = a basic skeleton that helps a beginner start writing Korea Haiku.

Chapter 17. Before/After Revision Practice

Before

After

**hollyhocks bloom
beautiful summer day
my heart grows bright**

**beside a cracked wall
a line of hollyhocks rises
midday shadow**

Revision Point

The earlier version directly says that the scene is beautiful. The revision shows summer through the contrast between a cracked wall and hollyhocks, together with the shadow of midday.

Before

After

**on a rainy night
with a quiet heart
I look out the window**

**rainy night street
beneath a streetlamp
one empty umbrella**

Revision Point

Instead of directly explaining a “quiet heart,” the revision leaves emotion through the rainy night street and one empty umbrella.

Before

After

**a friend I miss
watching the first snow
tears begin to fall**

**road after the first snow
of two sets of footprints
one grows faint**

Revision Point

Rather than naming longing directly, the revision creates a scene of longing through the difference between the footprints.

Chapter 18. Revision Checklist

Check	Item	Notes
☐	Does the poem follow the 5-7-5 form?	
☐	Does it contain a seasonal word?	
☐	Is there one clear central scene?	

- ☐ Are emotion words used too directly?
- ☐ Is there a scene the reader can actually see?
- ☐ Are the five senses expressed through concrete objects or movement?
- ☐ Are there too many metaphors?
- ☐ Does the final line leave resonance rather than explanation?
- ☐ Are the objects themselves placed ahead of the writer's interpretation?
- ☐ After reading, does one image remain?

Chapter 19. Exercises and Worksheet

Exercise 1. Find Today's Seasonal Words

Write down five words from things you saw today that made you feel the season. Example: parasol, Korean melon, cicada, hollyhock, rainy season.

Exercise 2. Turn an Emotion Word into a Scene

Choose one of the following - lonely, happy, longing, forlorn, excited - and express it as a scene without using the emotion word itself.

Exercise 3. Build a Central Scene

Choose only one as the center - persimmon tree, white butterfly, empty chair, first snow, jar platform, or red dragonfly - and write a 5-7-5 poem.

Exercise 4. End the Final Line with a Noun

Practice ending the final line with a noun phrase. Leaving an object at the end can allow the reader to keep looking at the scene longer.

Field	Your Notes
Season	

Field	Your Notes
Seasonal word	
Central object	
Surrounding clue	
Small movement	
Draft 5-7-5	

Chapter 20. Mini List of Seasonal Words

The list below is a set of examples for beginners starting to write. Seasonal words are not fixed decorative expressions; they are clues to time discovered in actual life and nature. New seasonal words can continue to be found according to region and everyday culture.

Season	Examples of Seasonal Words
Spring	spring rain, shepherd's purse flower, frog, cherry blossom, azalea, primrose, barley sprout, spring water
Summer	rainy season, cicada, Korean melon, Sambok days, parasol, hollyhock, firefly, sweet flag flower
Autumn	autumn leaves, persimmon tree, chrysanthemum, silver grass, cricket, Chuseok, fresh chestnut, daytime moon
Winter	first snow, visible breath, roasted sweet potato, kimchi-making, meju, winter solstice, frost, ice

Closing. Where Words End, Sensation Begins

The strength of Korea Haiku does not come from the ability to speak well. It comes from the ability to see objects properly. Good haiku does not begin in extraordinary imagination, but in a gaze that discovers ordinary things anew.

The beginning of Korea Haiku is the willingness not merely to see a whole flower but to look at one stamen; not merely to see a whole tree but to feel the wind between its leaves; not to speak of an entire alley but to leave one wet footprint.

To see the world more closely, look more slowly, and feel more deeply: this is the basic spirit of writing Korea Haiku. Korea Haiku is literature in which season, object, and the human heart meet within a brief form. It is not light because it is short; it remains long precisely because it is short.

Sources and References

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- An Soo Hyun, manuscript material: "Korea Haiku and Delayed Gratification - Sensory Language Completed Through Waiting."

Course and Distribution Note

This material is arranged as a manual for Korea Haiku writing education, member courses, and beginner guidance. The poem examples were newly composed for educational purposes. Before submitting work to a publication or contest, writers should check the character count of each line, the appropriateness of the seasonal word, the objectivity of expression, and the originality of the poem.

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