

the heart of a haiku

a space for a little poem
to weave its magic!

part 7 seasonal reference the *kigo*

Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts has a 60-hour course haiku, senryu, tanka, haibun and renku, which I cover in three to four months. This comprehensive course on Japanese short forms of poetry is offered as an elective in their 4 year bachelor's course. As part of their final assessment the students were asked to create their own 'kigo words', suitable for Indian seasons, from their own experience. Here's one brilliant answer from the batch of 2014.

My Own Kigo Word

– by *Nayaneeka Dutta Choudhury*

The kigo word I have chosen to create, using a term used in Indian culture, is **Mango Chutney**.

The word “chutney” has been derived from the Sanskrit word, “*catni*” which means “to lick”. In general terms it is a pickle of Indian origin, made from a family of ingredients such as fruit, sugar or spices, among others.

Chutney is a relish that can be made all through the year, using different ingredients, as and when they are available. Hence, “chutney” in itself is not a kigo word as it is not restricted to a particular season. This is why I have chosen to specify which chutney I am speaking about so as to be able to indicate the season I wish to classify it under.

Mangoes, in India, are available in massive quantities during the summer season when the tremendous heat and seasonal characteristics allow it to grow and ripen. Mango chutney is therefore, a seasonal word, as I am referring to the fresh mangoes available only in summer and not the processed or canned mangoes found all through the year.

I think it is a good kigo word because it clearly defines the season which I wish to highlight. Even though “chutney” is an Indian term, and a pickle of Indian origin, it is known to people all over the world by the same name and is consumed in foreign countries as well. Hence, it is easily comprehensible. Along with that, the word “mango chutney” also allows me to bring forward an age old tradition and introduce to the world the culinary culture of India.

As an on the spot class exercise my 2014 batch of 17 students all under the age of 18, wrote a haiku/senryu on mango chutney, and enjoyed sharing it with others. The most important aspect of haiku writing is to share! Just picked a few, *laughalong or maybe ponderalong!*

a mango chutney sun
blazes over the world ...
lazy siesta

— Mihir Oak

bottled up
like her emotions —
mango chutney

— Simone Noronha

aloo paratha
and khatta mango chutney-
memories come back

— Karishma Sawlani

all he remembers
about his grandmother —
the mango chutney

— Rituparna Singh

he smiles
at his lunchtime dabba —
mango chutney

— Radhika Mohite
(*dabba – lunchbox)

for a moment
she was a child again —
mango chutney

— Prachi Agrawal

breakfast —
my sister explains
what mango chutney is

— Maximilian Markard

A student from Germany on an exchange programme to Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts

he wipes off
the stickiness from his face —
mango chutney

Ankita Datta

Check out the list of 500 kigo words in the link given above. Notice how the Japanese have meticulously collected different events and happenings in one season from all parts of their land. India is a vast country and a person living in the South will experience a different winter from those living in the North or near the Himalayas. Can you create your own season word that describes something quintessentially Indian, something pertaining to your own state or to the region you belong to, something that you've personally noticed or experienced?

After you've studied the manner in which the Japanese have gathered their seasonal words in their 'Saijiki,' try to create your own. It will be a challenge, yes, but can be great fun too!

Gabi Greve, a German who lives in Japan, has collected kigo words from many countries. The link to Gabi's India Saijiki: <http://indiasaijikiworkhaiku.blogspot.com/>

My special thanks to Jenny Angyal for editing and proofreading this column.
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Copyrights of the title and the page rest with Kala Ramesh.

Passionate about taking haiku to everyday spaces, Kala Ramesh initiated the 'HaikuWALL India' project, which encourages graffiti artists to paint haiku on city walls. Kala conducted a taster's session in haiku and haibun at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) on 10th September; which left our future filmmakers, directors, scriptwriters and dreamers clamouring for more! As part of the TRIVENI: World Haiku Utsav 2016, Kala will be holding a full-day haiku & haibun workshop on 22nd September at the Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts, Viman Nagar.