

For the First Issue of the *INTERNATIONAL TANKA*

We established the International Tanka Society on January 1st, 2017, in order to publish the journal *INTERNATIONAL TANKA* twice a year. This was a result of the closure of the *Tanka Journal*, which had been published by the Japan Tanka Poets' Society for over twenty-five years. I am very proud of the fact that when this happened, members of the *Tanka Journal* were strongly determined to honor our predecessors' aims and moreover, to further develop them.

Our purpose is to fulfill the wishes of the founders of the 'Japan Tanka Poets' Society' who initiated the publication of the '*Tanka Journal*' in 1992 in order to spread the traditional fixed-form poetry of Japan, tanka (waka) throughout the world.

To achieve this, it is preferable to write tanka in both Japanese and other languages. Furthermore, by including tanka written in other languages in one tanka journal, we wish to deepen our mutual human understanding beyond borders and thus contribute to world peace.

Tanka is the oldest fixed-form poetry with a history that stretches back over 1300 years. Tanka is at the core of the history of Japanese literature and permeates other genres. It is not an exaggeration if we mention that haiku, renga, kyoka, and senryu derived from tanka. Even nowadays we are still writing tanka. We are unable to find other kinds of poetry that have such a long life.

Tanka, the legacy from our ancestors, is poetry based on the rhythms of Japanese, 31 *onji* (sounds and letters). In order to convey those characteristics, we Japanese members make it our rule to write tanka in both Japanese and other languages.

At the same time, we are going to translate tanka from abroad into Japanese using the fixed-form of tanka. There are a substantial number of tanka poets who are not willing to recognize those poems as tanka that are not translated into the traditional structure. Our attitudes concur with this.

In our *INTERNATIONAL TANKA*, the members of domestic tanka poets and those of abroad are almost same in number. In 1992 when they initiated the *Tanka Journal*, only ten Japanese tanka poets, except Fr. Lawrence who lived in Japan, participated in it. But now, I feel very happy that a balanced membership of almost 50 from within our country and abroad, share the same wish for the establishment of this journal and we are able to launch *INTERNATIONAL TANKA*.

Thank you very much for your support.

Yuhki

Aya

President of the International Tanka Society