

### 3.5.6 Practice: Civilizations of East Asia

Read the following poems by Japanese poet Basho. Then, answer the questions below. Note: In their Japanese form, these poems fall into the traditional haiku structure of five syllables in the first line, seven syllables in the second line, and five syllables in the third. But when the poems are translated into English, their form sometimes changes.

Within plum orchard,  
Sturdy oak takes no notice  
Of flowering blooms.  
The moon glows the same:  
It is the drifting cloud forms  
Make it seem to change.  
Yellow rose petals  
Drop one-by-one in silence:  
Roar of waterfall.  
An old pond  
A frog jumps in-  
The sound of water.  
In the falling snow  
A laughing boy holds out his palm  
Until they are white

1. How is Japanese culture connected to the shortness of these poems? (2 points)
  - The shortness of haiku exemplifies the conservatism and emphasis on simplicity and tradition in Japanese culture.
2. How would you compare haiku with other kinds of poetry you've read? (3 points)
  - The haiku's unique emphasis on simplicity and order creates a unique rhythm unique to haiku.
3. Why do you think haiku are often based on nature? (3 points)
  - I think haiku are often based on nature because of the traditional emphasis on the importance of nature in Japanese society.
4. How can different seasons be represented in haiku? (2 points)
  - Different seasons are represented by *saijiki* in haiku.

5. What can we learn about Japanese culture by studying haiku? Explain your answer in a brief paragraph below. (10 points)
- Haiku epitomizes Japanese culture. Its unique emphasis on simplicity and consistent rhythm exemplifies the importance of order and tradition in Japanese culture. Additionally, haiku traditionally include elements from nature, showing the importance of the relationship between the human condition and nature in Japanese culture. Finally, haiku shows the emphasis on ritual by the Japanese by often focusing on issues regarding praying techniques, seasons, and the gods.