

# HAIKU for mediation

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I had planned, indeed had partly written, the usual form of blog for this month. It was to be a further comment on access to dispute resolution and justice, picking up on Zbynek Loebli's recent blog on developments in ODR, and my own recent participation in a Forum on digital inclusion, hosted by the Department of Internal Affairs, heading a range of initiatives and collaboration on [expanding inclusion](#). At the same time, I had been thinking about a briefer way of capturing some thoughts on mediation and communication, which the Japanese form of poetry, the Haiku, can do.

The Haiku is conventionally a short form of poem, in three lines, composed of five, seven and five syllables (bearing in mind the necessary transition from the Japanese language to English word structure). The famed Haiku Masters were Matsuo Basho, Kobayashi Issa, Masaoka Shiki, and Yosa Buson, whose work can of course be found on the Internet. Traditionally, Haiku were concerned with ways of looking at nature or reflecting on being itself, though modern Haiku tend not to be so focussed.

In each of these Haiku, I've sought to take one element of mediation . . . but further explanation would defeat the spirit of Haiku.

*On mediation itself:*

Talking seems to help –  
Amazing discovery –  
Newly invented?

*Fear of talking:*

Strange how what we learn,  
That talking makes us human,  
Silences us still

*The mediation space:*

Within this circle,  
Set aside for our meeting,  
Ancient norms shape us

*Certainty and rigidity:*

There's no doubt at all  
That I'll not let doubt enter  
My safe certainties

*Doubt:*

That small grey shadow  
On my shoulder whispers soft:  
It might not be so

*Connection:*

We know that we said  
Things that drove us apart, now  
We seek what connects

*Listening:*

When you heard that bird,  
Were you aware that it said:  
Just hear your own voice.

*Respect and recognition:*

We could hardly be  
More different, you and I;  
That is where we start

*Land and place:*

This place in dispute  
Is not merely property;  
It's what has shaped us

Further examples and any comments in the form of Haiku will of course be welcomed.