

# THE MEANING OF KIGO IN KYOSHI TAKAHAMA HAIKU: A SEMIOTIC STUDY OF PEIRCE

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**Abstract:** This study examines the meaning of Kigo in Haiku by Kyoshi Takahama through a semiotic analysis of Peirce. Haiku is a Japanese brief poem. The element of Kigo (season indicator) provides Haiku its uniqueness; although the haiku poem is straightforward, it appears beautiful. This prompted the author's interest in Kyoshi Takahama examination of the meaning of Kigo in haiku by Kyoshi Takahama. This study aimed to explicate meaning of Kigo in haiku by Kyoshi Takahama through the lens of Peirce's semiotic theory, namely icons, indexes, and symbols. This research employed descriptive qualitative method. The author's stages include reading the haiku, classifying the Kigo according to their type, analysing and describing the meaning, and concluding with the analysis results. The utilised data source was Haiku, written by Kyoshi Takahama (高浜虚子六百句) and published by Aozora Bunko. Kyoshi Kigo contained in haiku by Kyoshi Takahama comprised the Jiko (weather), Tenmon (astronomy), Doubutsu (animals), Shokubutsu (plants), and Tabemono (food), as determined by the analysis.

**Keywords:** *haiku, kigo, Peirce, semiotics*

## RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Literature conveys the author's ideas and thoughts concerning something new, uses expressive language, and enlightens the reader. The attractiveness of literature is not determined by the elegance of its words or sentences but rather by the story's meaning (Ahyar, 2019). The existence of literary works, including poetry, is not restricted by region and is enduring.

Poetry is a subgenre of literature that consists of an artistic, concrete expression that employs connotative words to convey the poet's thoughts, circumstances or situations, and emotions. According to Sumardi (Lafamane, 2020), poetry is a literary work in which the language is compressed, shortened, and given rhythm, along with a cohesive sound and selection of figurative (imaginative) words. Poetry prioritises form, voice, and meaning by condensing all language elements.

Haiku is a traditional Japanese brief poem with three lines and 17 syllables. Each line contains 5, 7, and 5 digits. The first line consists of five syllables known as *kamigo* or *shougo* 「上五

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」. The name for the second line's seven syllables is *nakashichi* 「中七」. The final line contains five syllables, known as *shimogo* 「下五」 (Fitriani, 2018). There are three components to a haiku: *Kigo* (季語), *kireji* (切れ字), and *kanji* (感じ). *Kigo* (季語) is the Japanese word for the season. *Kireji* (切れ字) is the character that pauses the haiku. According to Haruo, there are 18 *kireji* such as: *kana* (かな), *zo* (ぞ), *ya* (や), *yo* (よ), *ka* (か), *shi* (し), *tsu* (つ), *zu* (*su*) (ず・す), *se* (せ), *ke* (け), *he* (へ), *re* (れ), *mogana* (もがな), *ikani* (いかに), *ji* (じ), *keri* (けり), *ran* (らん), *dan nu* (ぬ) (Shirane, 1998) as well as *nari* (なり) and *kamo* (かも). *Kanji* (感じ) are not kanji characters, however, implied words that characterise the poet's emotions in the haiku. Despite its brevity, haiku has a profound and intricate meaning. Consequently, haiku has become one of the most prestigious types of traditional Japanese poetry. This is the context for the author's desire to delve deeper into the meaning of *Kigo* in Haiku by Kyoshi Takahama. Here is an example of a haiku by Kyoshi:

静さや  
花なき庭の  
春の雨

*Shizukasa ya* (5)  
*hanasaki niwa no* (7)  
*haru no ame* (5)

How peaceful  
The flower-filled patio  
Spring rain

(Kyoshi, 2016)

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Semiotics

Semiotics was derived from the Greek word *semeion*, which translates to “sign”. Therefore, semiotics refers to the study of signs. Semiotics is the study of signs and everything associated with signs, such as the use of signs and sign systems. A sign can be observed (Zoest dalam Salsabila, 2021). Charles Sander Peirce (1839-1914), a philosopher, and Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), a linguist, developed the semiotic theory simultaneously in different locations and fields. Subsequently, based on what Saussure and Charles Sander Peirce had proposed, this semiotic theory developed, according to various experts (Desy, 2016).

### Charles Sanders Peirce's Theory

A literary approach theory, such as semiotic theory, is required (Apriyani, 2018) to comprehend a sign in a poetic literary work. As one of the literary works of poetry, haiku

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necessitates a comprehensive analysis of the language's signs (Meilantari, 2020). In delineating the meaning of Kigo in Haiku by Kyoshi Takahama, the author refers to the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce. Peirce (Shofiani, 2021) asserts that humans can think using signs. Signs enable people to think, establish relationships, and interpret the universe's message. Therefore, people cannot communicate without signs.

Peirce divides the signification process into three categories based on the triadic/trichotomic relationship between the sign (representamen), the sign's object or reference (object), and the interpretant (interpretant). An object is subdivided into emblems, indexes, and symbols.

An icon is a sign that demonstrates a similarity or resemblance between the sign and its signifier, elucidating the meaning of the object's characteristics. For instance, a depiction of a tree signifies a tree (as a sign). For example, the word car is a sign representing something termed a car, even if the object does not exist (Dorianti, 2019). An index is a sign that indicates a causal or cause-and-effect relationship between the sign and its signifier, such as a cloudy (signifier) with rain (signifier), a compass (signifier) with wind direction (signifier), and a sorrowful face (signifier) with sadness (signifier). The symbol is a sign that indicates a relationship based on community conventions that encompass various aspects of society that have become unified. The relationship between the sign and the object is not similar but of accord. For instance, a head nod (marker) and approbation (sign), and specific colours (green, yellow, white, and black), also serve as markers (Apriyani, 2018).

## RESEARCH METHOD

The author employed a qualitative descriptive method in this study. The author read, analysed, described, and concluded the meaning using the qualitative descriptive method. This study is supported by written data sources from the Aozora Bunko-published haiku book by Takahama Kyoshi (高浜虚子六百句).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After analysing 25 Kyoshi Takahama's haiku, the author discovered that 5 Kigo (34%) are categorised as icons, 5 Kigo (33%) are categorised as an index and 5 Kigo (33%) are categorised as a symbol. In addition, there are 2 *Jiko* (weather), *Tenmon* (astronomy), 3 *Doubutsu* (animals), 3 *Shokubutsu* (plants), and 3 *Tabemono* (food) in Haiku by Kyoshi Takahama. The following are the semiotic implications of Kigo in Haiku by Kyoshi Takahama:

Table 1. Research Findings

No	Kigo	Denotative Meaning	Semiotic Meaning							
			Icon	Index	Symbol	Jiko weather	Tenmon astronomy	Doubutsu animals	Shokubutsu plants	Tabemono food
1.	寒燈 (kantou)	Cold light			√	Lonely and gloomy				
2.	翳雲 (iwashigumo)	Cirrocumulus clouds			√		Happiness			
3.	蝶 (chou)	Butterfly			√			Feeling of love		
4.	桜 (sakura)	Sakura flower			√				Beauty	
5.	寒玉子 (kan tamago)	Cold egg			√					Fortune
6.	稲妻 (inazuma)	Lightning		√		Bad weather				
7.	銀河 (ginga)	Galaxy		√			Inspiration			
8.	凍蝶 (koochou)	Frozen butterfly		√				Endure		
9.	竹落葉 (takeochiba)	Fallen bamboo leaves		√					Sincerity	
10.	おでんの湯気 (oden no yuge)	Oden vapour		√						Warmth
11.	萩の雨 (hagi no ame)	Hagi rain	√							
12.	雲の動き (kumo no ugoki)	Movement of clouds	√				Movement of clouds			
13.	牛も馬 (ushi mo uma)	Cow and Horse	√					Livestock		
14.	柊花 (hiragihana)	Holly flower	√						Kindness	
15.	餅花 (mochibana)	Mochi flower	√							Soft

1. *Kantou* 'lonely and gloomy' as in the haiku excerpt:

寒燈にいつまで人の佇みぬ

*Kantou ni itsu made hito no tatazuminu*

How long will people stand under the cold light?

The Kigo is derived from *kantou*, which signifies 'cold light'. The haiku depicts winter at night when the lighting is subdued. Symbolic is the semiotic status of the term *kantou*. Since the cold light represents the desolate and dismal atmosphere, it represents the poet's solitary disposition. The author wishes to convey that one should not linger in seclusion and loneliness for too long since it is associated with sadness. This Kigo belongs to the *jiko* or weather category since it contains the word chilly.

2. *Iwashigumo* 'happiness'

翳雲日和いよ定まりぬ

*Iwashigumo biyori iyo sadamarinu.*

Uncertain cirrocumulus cloud weather

The Kigo is located in *ishiguro*, which means 'cirrocumulus clouds' in Japanese. Autumn is represented by haiku, whose semiotic status is symbolic. Cirrocumulus clouds are always a sign of autumn's pleasant weather and contentment. However, the Haiku contains the uncertain-sounding word *sadamarinu*, and consequently, it means an uncertain or erratic pleasure. This Kigo belongs to the category of *tenmon* or astronomy, as clouds are a celestial phenomenon.

3. *Koochou* 'endure'

凍蝶の翅におく霜の重たさよ

*Koochou no hane ni oku shimo no omotasayo.*

The weight of dew freezing on the wings of a butterfly

The Kigo resides in *koochou*, which signifies the "frozen butterfly." The haiku is symbolic of winter and depicts the struggle of existence through a butterfly that survives the winter. Although the frigid weather causes the butterfly's wings to dew and freeze, it flaps both wings to survive. The semiotic status is indexed since there is a relationship between cause and effect. Ultimately, frigid weather leads to freezing. The poet conveys that despite the difficulty of the circumstances, one should remain resilient, patient, and persistent. This Kigo belongs to the *doubutsu* (animal) category since it refers to insects.

4. *Hiiragihana* 'kindness'

心ひまあれば、柊花こぼす

*Kokoro hima areba, hiiragi hana kobosu*

If you have free time, scatter holly flowers

The Kigo is the phrase *hiiragi hana*, which means 'holly flower' in Japanese. The haiku is about winter. The semiotic status of the word *hiiragi hana* corresponds to an icon that resembles its signifier. Holly flower is always used in the new year's ceremony, as it is believed to ward off evil entities and bring good fortune. Through the haiku, the poet conveys that positive deeds multiply everywhere and at all times. Goodness, according to the context, is the meaning of Kigo. This Kigo belongs to the *shokubutsu* or plant category since the holly flower is one of the plant types.

5. *Kantamago* 'fortune'

寒玉子割れば双子の目出度さよ

*Kantamago wareba futago no medeta sayo*

The twins will be happy together if the cold egg is broken

The Kigo is the word *kantamago*, which signifies 'cold egg'. The haiku is about winter. Symbolic is the semiotic status of the term *kantamago*. It is termed a cold egg since the egg's temperature also drops when the weather is cold. The haiku describes the Japanese belief that consuming eggs during the winter will bring good fortune. If two yolks are in an egg, luck will arrive in multiples when broken. According to the context, Kigo means good fortune. This Kigo falls under the *tabemono* or food category.

6. *Sakura* 'beauty'

松の間の桜は幽かなるがよし

*Matsu no ma no sakura wa kasukanaruga yoshi*

The cherry blossoms in the pine trees are dark, yet they look nice

The Kigo is derived from the term *sakura*, which denotes cherry blossoms. The haiku symbolises rebirth—the symbolic nature of the semiotic status of the term *sakura*. The haiku describes cherry blossoms as a minority surrounded by a preponderance of pine trees, but this does not diminish the beauty of the cherry blossoms. The poet wishes to convey that differences among the majority are not odd; they become their own individuality. According to the context, the Kigo meaning of the Japanese word *sakura* is uniqueness or attractiveness. This Kigo belongs in the *shokubutsu* or plant category.

7. *Chou* 'feeling of love'

夏蝶を見上げて彼女庭にあり

*Natsu chou o miagete kanojo niwa ni ari*

Gazing at summer butterflies in her garden

The Kigo is the word *chou*, which signifies 'butterfly' in Japanese. The presence of the term *Natsu* indicates that this haiku is about summer. The Kigo *chou*'s semiotic status is symbolic. The preceding haiku is written from the poet's perspective, who is admiring someone. There is a *kanojo* kanji character for women. Butterflies represent true love; however, are frequently associated with romantic connotations representing youthful love. Therefore, the feeling is the actual meaning of kigo *chou*. This Kigo belongs to the *doubutsu* or animal category since it

refers to insects.

8. *Inazuma* 'bad weather'

雲間より稲妻の尾の現れぬ

*Kumoma yori inazuma no o no arawarenu*

A lightning bolt appears through the clouds

The Kigo is the word *inazuma*, which signifies 'lightning' in Japanese. The semiotic status is indexed due to the relationship between cause and effect. The appearance of lightning is a portent of rain, and *inazuma* means terrible weather or rain. This Kigo belongs in the *jiko* or weather category. However, since there is no other Kigo, it is unclear what season this haiku represents.

9. *Takeochiba* 'sincerity'

中途よりついとそれたる竹落葉

*Chuuto yori tsuito soretaru takeochiba*

Bamboo leaves that have fallen in the middle of the road

The Kigo is found in *takeochiba*, which denotes "fallen bamboo leaves." The semiotic status is indexed due to the relationship between cause and effect. The Kigo *takeochiba* is used to signify summer. When bamboo is young, new leaves will emerge, causing the old ones to turn yellow and fall off independently. No matter how frequently they are swept, the bamboo leaves will continue falling until the season ends. Through this haiku, the poet conveys that humans must learn to be willing and genuine about letting go of everything that should be let go. *Takeochiba* translates to sincerity. This Kigo belongs to the category of *shokubutsu*, or plants.

10. *Ginga* 'inspiration'

悠久を思ひ銀河を仰ぐべし

*Yuukyuu o omohi ginga o aogubeshi*

Thinking of eternity and looking at the galaxy

The Kigo is located in *ginga*, which denotes 'galaxy'. Status as a semiotic is an index. The Kigo *ginga* is synonymous with autumn. Galaxies are always visible in the night sky, from Autumn to winter. Numerous stars and other astronomical objects illuminate galaxies. In the haiku, the author always conveys the message to remember eternity's fleeting nature and contemplate galaxies as a form of inspiration. *Ginga*'s meaning is inspiration. This Kigo falls under the category of *tenmon* or astronomy.

11. *Oden no Yuge* 'warmth'

戸の隙におでんの湯気の曲り消え

*To no suki ni oden no yuge no kyokuri kie*

Oden vapour bends and vanishes in the door crack



The Kigo is contained in the word *oden no yuge*, which denotes "oden vapour." Status as a semiotic is an index. *oden* Kigo represents winter. Due to the high temperature of freshly prepared *oden*, *oden* vapour is produced. During the winter, Japanese people typically consume to comfort their bodies. In addition to warming the body, *oden* vapour also warms the heart. After a hectic year, warmth and affection are typically forgotten. The poet composed this haiku due to Kyoshi's affection for *Oden*. The meaning of *oden no yuge* is to provide winter comfort. This Kigo falls under the *tabemono* or meal classification.

12. *Ushi uma* 'livestock'

牛も馬も人も橋下に野の夕立

*Ushi mo uma mo hito mo hashishita ni no no yuudachi*

Cows, horses, and people under the bridge, bathing

The Kigo is *ushi uma*, which means 'cows and horses' in Japanese. The haiku symbolises summer. The semiotic status of the word *ushi uma* is that of an icon, meaning it shares something with its signifier. Since there was no shelter, everyone congregated under the bridge to wait for the rain to cease. The bridge served as the only refuge. According to the context, Kigo refers to livestock, which belongs to the *doubutsu* or animal category.

13. *Mochibana* 'soft'

餅花にしひつこめし顔綺麗

*Mochibana ni dashi hitsu komeshi kao kirei*

Her face is pretty like a mochibana

The Kigo is found in the word *mochibana*, which means "mochi flower" The Kigo symbolises winter. The semiotic status of the word *mochibana* is that of an icon that shares something with its signifier. New Year's decorations include *mochibana*. Rice flour is compressed into mochi, then decorated as a mochi flower on a branch. The curved branches resemble rice stalks, believed to be auspicious signs of a prosperous harvest. In the haiku, the poet conveys implicit praise for the beauty of human features, comparing them to the soft, sweet mochibana. Soft is the meaning of mochibana Kigo. This Kigo falls under the *tabemono* or meal classification.

14. *Hagi no ame* 'hagi rain'

暖かき茶を含みつつ萩の雨

*Atatakaki cha o fukumitsutsu hagi no ame*

Hagi no ame with hot tea

The Kigo lies in the word *hagi no ame*, which denotatively means 'hagi rain'. The haiku represents autumn. The semiotic status of the word *hagi no ame* is an icon similar to its signifier. *Hagi no Ame* is one of the novel literary works. In the haiku above, the poet describes the cold atmosphere by relaxing with hot tea and the company of the novel *hagi no ame*. According to the context, the meaning of the Kigo is novel. The Kigo is not included in the *tenmon* or weather classification since it does not refer to rain but the title of a novel.



15. *Kumo no ugoki* 'movement of clouds'

## 立秋の雲の動きのなつかしき

*Risshuu no kumonougoki no natsukashiki*

The nostalgic movement of clouds on the first day of fall.

The Kigo resides in *kumonougoki*, which signifies "cloud movement". The term issue in the haiku represents Autumn. The semiotic status of the word *kumonougoki* is that of an icon that shares something with its signifier. The poet observes clouds floating in the heavens before writing this haiku about the melancholy movement of clouds. "nostalgic" refers to the author's longing for the past. According to the context, *kumonougoki* Kigo refers to cloud movement. The Kigo belongs to the *tenmon* or astronomy category.

**CONCLUSION**

From the analysis result 25 haiku by Kyoshi Takahama, it can be summarized that 5 Kigo (34%) are categorised as icons, 5 Kigo (33%) are categorised as an index and 5 Kigo (33%) are categorised as a symbol. In addition, there are 2 *Jiko* (weather), *Tenmon* (astronomy), 3 *Doubutsu* (animals), 3 *Shokubutsu* (plants), and 3 *Tabemono* (food) in Haiku by Kyoshi Takahama. The meaning of Kigo in Kyoshi Takahama's Haiku through a semiotic analysis of Peirce includes *Kantou* 'lonely and gloomy', *Iwashigumo* 'happiness', *Koochou* 'endure', *Hiiragihana* 'kindness', *Kantamago* 'fortune', *Sakura* 'beauty', *Chou* 'feeling of love', *Inazuma* 'bad weather', *Takeochiba* 'sincerity', *Ginga* 'inspiration', *Oden no Yuge* 'warmth', *Ushi uma* 'livestock', *Mochibana* 'soft', *Hagi no ame* 'hagi rain', dan *Kumo no ugoki* 'movement of clouds'.

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