Tradition of Irregular Haiku

The Haiku is the short Japanese poem, of which the regular form is seventeen syllables consisting of three parts, 5, 7, 5.

In the history of the Haiku poetry, however, there often arose the movements to modify this rigid rules of the Haiku versification. The first of such movements was in 1680, the second in 1770, and the third in 1920.

The present author has investigated the various aspects of these movements. What was the circumstances which caused these movements? In what way were they developed? What was the opinion of the men of the times towards these movements?

The present author concludes that these movements of irregular Haiku have always dwindled down at last, yet they had a meaning of their own. They always arose whenever the Haiku poetry fell into stagnation and mannerism, and accordingly they inspired the poets of that times with something fresh and novel, and thus they did not fail to make contribution for the renovation of the Haiku poetry.

Yui-ichi Yamamoto