

Japan between Haiku and Sushi

Gießen, Germany, 29. April 2017



Benedikta Becker



Christine Sato

By Josef Resch

The second International Café to be held this year took place on 29 April in the premises of UPF Gießen. This event was a further contribution to fostering peace by encouraging international understanding. Christine Sato from Austria and a great fan of Japan, introduced us to the traditional poetry, **Haiku**. She, supported by her Japanese husband, has organized several Japanese tea ceremonies and has given many presentations about Japan in ZIBB, Gießen (*Zentrum für interkulturelle Begegnung*-center for intercultural events).

Benedikta Becker gave a short introduction into the goals of UPF, the five principles of peace and the significance of international understanding.

Haiku are short Japanese poems, consisting of 17 syllables arranged as 5+7+5 in three lines. The main topics concern the seasons of the year, but sometimes personal situations are used, and that can sometimes be very amusing. Mrs. Sato, dressed in a kimono, succeeded in capturing nature's different moods, comparing them to life in Japan, and combining this with simple observations of daily life using fitting photos from her trips to Japan. Her words, spoken between the lines of poetry, gave us an excellent picture of Japanese culture and the peculiarities of that country. However: *"Only someone with a vivid imagination or who has really experienced it, can understand the feeling of exuberance generated by seeing the mounds of cherry trees in blossom."*

In closing, Benedikta Becker encouraged the audience to continue their efforts with this kind of international understanding, and announced some upcoming events: the Whitsun festival, (in Camberg), summer festival and World Cafe in August, book presentation in September by one of our most active Ambassadors for Peace, Ali Can (who has established a hotline for concerned citizens), and in October, an event about Finland.

The guests could then sample sushi and other Japanese delicacies, made by our own members and served on tables decorated with a large number of tiny to medium sized origami cranes, along with the more traditional coffee and cake. The guests lingered to enjoy these tasty tidbits; there were lively conversations and new friendships were forged.

