

**Area of Study:** Japan

**Title:** The Recent Japanese Disasters and the Connection to Matsuo Basho

**Objectives:**

- Understand the work and travels of Matsuo Basho
- Understand the format and function of Japanese Haiku
- Understand the damage and destruction of the recent Japanese disasters
- Apply the work of Basho to the recent Japanese disasters

**Standards Addressed:**

- Use appropriate data sources and tools to gather, manipulate, interpret and communicate geographic information related to civic/ global issues
- Describe the intended and unintended effects of human modifications to the physical environment and weigh the costs and benefits of alternative approaches to addressing environmental concerns.

**Time:** 2 Class Periods

**Overview:**

As a way to introduce the poetry of Matsuo Basho and the horrific disasters in Japan this lesson will unite those two seemingly unrelated events. Students should use the above links (and their own research if they choose) to familiarize themselves with the destruction of the disasters. They should pay particular attention to the destruction of the land and the effects upon the people. Secondly, students will become familiar with Matsuo Basho, his journey, haiku and his poetry through class notes and reading his book, *The Narrow Road to Oku*. Finally, the students will use the book or the above links to his works to find a haiku that speaks to them about some part of the disaster. When considering a haiku, students think of the totality of the situation, focus on one disaster (earthquake, tsunami etc.) or one particular image, person or area impacted by the disasters. They should then explain what they think Basho meant in his Haiku and then explain how that haiku speaks to their chosen part of the disaster.

**Related TIPS:**

**Haiku of Basho**, Edith Swank, Wooster 07

**Disaster Related Materials/ Resources:**

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/03/13/world/asia/satellite-photos-japan-before-and-after-tsunami.html> - An interactive before and after view of certain places around Japan

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12711226> - A comprehensive description of the tsunami and resulting nuclear crisis complete with maps, explanation and current updates.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12798799> - Commentary on how the disasters have affected Japan's famous "stoic" character.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12771634> - A collection of pictures showing the personal impact of the disasters

[http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/03/11/world/asia/20110311EARTHQUAKE\\_zoomer.html?ref=asia](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/03/11/world/asia/20110311EARTHQUAKE_zoomer.html?ref=asia) - A zoomable collection of photos from around Japan after the disasters

<http://blogs.wsj.com/japanrealtime/2011/03/11/live-blog-japan-earthquake/tab/liveblog/> - A live blog of the earthquake as it was happening, also a collection of 70 photos

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1366898/Japan-tsunami-earthquake-30-children-silent-classroom-parents-vanish.html> - A story about school children whose parents never came to pick them up after school the day of the disasters

<http://www.mediaite.com/online/run-faster-new-video-shows-people-running-just-inches-ahead-of-tsunami/> - Homemade video of people escaping the tsunami's devastation by just inches

<http://newsfeed.time.com/2011/03/18/watch-heroic-dog-wont-leave-his-injured-friend-in-japan-debris/> - A dog won't leave his injured friend after the disasters

<http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/video/moment-of-impact-surreal-new-images-13130772> - ABC News video of the tsunami as it hit

<http://arstechnica.com/science/news/2011/03/understanding-japans-nuclear-crisis.ars/> - An explanation of how a nuclear reactor works and what happened at the Fukushima plant

[http://articles.cnn.com/2011-03-29/world/japan.nuclear.leaks\\_1\\_radioactive-water-radioactive-iodine-radioactive-material?s=PM:WORLD](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-03-29/world/japan.nuclear.leaks_1_radioactive-water-radioactive-iodine-radioactive-material?s=PM:WORLD) - A CNN explanation of what happened at the Fukushima plant

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/31/world/asia/31workers.html> - A profile of the "Fukushima Fifty" and the role in the nuclear crisis

<http://www.asia.si.edu/explore/japan/matsushima/default.asp> - An online exhibition by the Smithsonian of artwork related to Matsushima consistently pointed to as one of Japan's three most beautiful sites and very near the epicenter of the March 11 disasters.

## **Basho Biographic, Travel & Poetry Resources:**

Basho, Matsuo, The Narrow Road to Oku, Kondansha International Ltd., Japan, 1996.

[http://apdl.kcc.hawaii.edu/~roads/basho\\_oku\\_no\\_hosomichi.html](http://apdl.kcc.hawaii.edu/~roads/basho_oku_no_hosomichi.html) - A modern recreation of Basho's journey complete with interactive map and travelogue

<http://www.poemhunter.com/matsuo-basho/> - A wide collection of Basho's Haiku

<http://thegreenleaf.co.uk/hp/basho/00bashohaiku.htm> - Selected Basho Haiku

### **Day One:**

- In a computer lab the students should explore the resources of the Japanese disasters listed above. While they are researching, they should note:
  - o What happened
  - o When it happened
  - o Where it happened
  - o What is the estimated damage done so far? (human, environmental & economic)
- Once they have gathered the above information they should further explore the resources. Students should be looking for particularly moving images or portions of images. This should be done in silence so students can grasp the full impact of the damage.

### **Day Two:**

- Today students will learn about the life and works of Matsuo Basho.
  - o Students will view a PowerPoint (including map from travels) about the life of Basho and Haiku
- Using the works of Basho students will find one that applies to a particular image or portion of a image they viewed yesterday. For homework, they will write out the Haiku and then explain how it applies to the image they selected.