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Sōseki's Development as a Novelist Until 1907, with
Special Reference to the Genesis, Nature and Position
in His Work of Kusa Makura by A.J. Turney.

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**Sōseki's Development as a Novelist Until 1907,
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by
Alan James Turney

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by
Alan James Turner

Submitted for the degree of Ph.D. in the Faculty of Arts

Sōseki's Development as a Novelist Until 1907, with
Special Reference to the Genesis, Nature and Position
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Natsume Sōseki was a student of both Chinese and English literature. From his study of the former he conceived a love for kanshi (Chinese poems) and from the latter a conviction that Oriental poetry was in general superior to its Occidental counterpart. His admiration for Oriental poetry was strengthened as a result of his study of haiku. He was also a man who wished to be of service to his country. His love of poetry on the one hand and his concern with actual social problems on the other account for the two parallel lines which one can see in his early works.

Of Sōseki's three full-length works published before 1907, Wagahai wa Neko De Aru and Botchan are humorous social satire and constitute, with Nihyakutōka, one line, while Kusa Makura may be seen as the climax to the other, the poetic, line. While Kusa Makura has much in common with Sōseki's shorter, poetic works, it is unique in that it is a full-length novel. In tone it is very like a haiku, while both in tone and in structure it resembles a kanshi. It combines discussion on literature and art with poetic descriptions and marks a confluence of Sōseki's love of kanshi and haiku and his study of English literature.

It was in Kusa Makura that Sōseki introduced the

concept of hininjō (objectivity), which epitomized shaseibun (the kind of writing which stood in contrast to Naturalism and which gave Sōseki his entree into the world of letters). In the essay-like passages of Kusa Makura Sōseki expounds the principle of hininjō, while in his descriptions he attempts to put this principle into practice.

Kusa Makura marks the end of a certain kind of writing, even though at the time Sōseki did not reject the view of literature which it represents, for with Nowaki, his next full-length work, which was published in 1907, he moved away from the poetic and embarked upon a series of novels which dealt with egoism. However, Kusa Makura is by no means a dead end. In the sense that it was in Kusa Makura that the concept of hininjō was introduced and that hininjō was later developed into the idea of sokutenkyoshi (literally 'follow heaven and depart from the self') it may be said to presage that line of novels which was to deal with egoism and which began with Nowaki. In short, Kusa Makura occupies a crucial position in the works of Natsume Sōseki.

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Preface

Chapter 1 is a general survey of the development of prose fiction from the end of the Edo Period up until that time in the Meiji Period when Naturalism came to the fore. A knowledge of the prose of this period is necessary if one is to see Sōseki's works in context and, in particular, if one is to appreciate how much of an innovation Kusa Makura was.

Chapter 2 continues the survey of the development of prose, concentrating on the rise of Naturalism and of the shaseibun school, which stood against it. Thus this chapter describes the state of Japanese prose when Sōseki began writing. With the shaseibun section we take a step closer to Sōseki and his early works, since it was as a member of the shaseibun movement that he entered the literary scene, and since Kusa Makura, in common with many of his early works, has much in common with shaseibun.

With Chapter 3 we move from the consideration of Meiji literature to an overall look at Sōseki's life. Although Sōseki's development as a writer up until just after the writing of Kusa Makura is treated in subsequent chapters, such a general chapter as this was thought necessary for the sake of completeness. However, there is little in this chapter that is not

dealt with in the standard Japanese studies of Sōseki, its purpose being to obviate the necessity for having to search out this information in various other sources, and so it is not footnoted in any great detail.

It is with Chapter 4 that the study of Sōseki the writer begins. The years before Sōseki went to England are examined and we see how he studied both Chinese and English literature. His love of kanshi which arose from the former and his uneasiness with regard to the latter are both dealt with, as is his admiration for haiku, an admiration fostered by Masaoka Shiki, the founder of the shaseibun school. It was this love of Oriental poetry and a growing disaffection with English literature which were to play such an important role in causing Kusa Makura to be written, as is seen in later chapters.

Chapter 5 follows Sōseki to London and traces his growing disaffection with English literature and of his discontent at the fact that his studies did not seem to be leading him towards the end he had envisaged, namely the ability to be of some practical use to his country. It is this love of poetry on the one hand and concern for the practical on the other which account for the two different kinds of writing which go to make up his early works and for the fact that his novels changed direction from the end of 1906. We see him taking a 'scientific' interest in liter-

ature in order to justify his study of English literature, and considering also the fundamental nature of literature, an approach which was to find concrete expression in Kusa Makura.

Chapter 6 deals with the two-year period, January 1903 (when Sōseki returned to Japan) to January 1905 (when the first chapter of Sōseki's first novel, Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, was published). A great deal of Sōseki's time at this period was taken up with preparing lectures to be delivered at Tokyo Imperial University. These lectures were based on material which Sōseki had gathered in England. However, while in England, Sōseki had corresponded with Masaoka Shiki and Takahama Kyoshi and had had portions of his letters published in Hototogisu, the organ of the shaseibun movement. During the two years after his return to Japan, Sōseki continued to strengthen his association with the shaseibun writers and the result was that what is now Chapter 1 of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru was produced in response to a request to write a piece of shaseibun and Sōseki became a novelist as a member of the shaseibun camp.

Chapter 7 traces the development of Sōseki as a writer from the time in 1905 when the first chapter of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru was published through the writing of Kusa Makura and Nowaki in 1906 on to the publication of this latter work in January 1907.

We see on the one hand his ideas on literature taking shape as Bungaku-ron and on the other his creative imagination finding expression in two kinds of works: the social satire of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, Botchan and Nihyakutōka and the poetry of such works as Ichiya and Kusa Makura. Particular attention is paid to the close connection between the works of this early period and shaseibun.

So close was this connection, in fact, that it was thought desirable to have an entire chapter (Chapter 8) devoted to a study of Sōseki's relationship with shaseibun. This chapter sets out to examine Sōseki's ideas on shaseibun and traces his association with the shaseibun writers. We see his interest in this kind of writing increase, reach a peak with Kusa Makura (which was thought by some to be the epitome of shaseibun writing) and wane as Sōseki moved off in a new direction with Nowaki.

Chapter 9 examines the structure and the origins of Kusa Makura. We see how in structure it resembles a kanshi, while in mood it owes much to both kanshi and haiku. Kusa Makura is seen to represent the confluence of Sōseki's love of Oriental poetry and his study of the nature of literature. It is also seen to be a natural outgrowth of his involvement with the shaseibun movement. We see how in the descriptive passages he attempted to put his ideas on objective

poetic description into practice, while in the essay-like portion he felt it necessary to expound these ideas--ideas which he summed up in the word hininjō.

Chapter 10 deals with the concepts of hininjō and aware in Kusa Makura, concepts which are seen to be, in a certain sense, reverse sides of the same idea. Insofar as hininjō is an aesthetic concept it is seen to have much in common with the objectivity advocated by the writers of shaseibun. Hininjō is examined in particular detail, since it was a concept which Sōseki continued to develop in his later works and which eventually became sokutenkyoshi.

In Chapter 11 the position of Kusa Makura in the works of Sōseki is examined. It is compared and contrasted with the various works of his early period. We see that Kusa Makura belongs to the poetical works, but that, with Ichiya, it takes its inspiration from Oriental and not Occidental poetry. It is seen to embody Sōseki's view that Oriental poetry is superior to that of the West. It is, moreover, seen to be unique, since it is Sōseki's only attempt at trying to express his ideas on poetry in a full-length novel.

In this final chapter it is shown that Kusa Makura occupies a crucial position in Sōseki's works. On the one hand it marks the climax of his attempt to write poetry in prose and, as such, is the end of a line--a line which began with a love of Oriental poetry,

an academic study of literature and an association with the shaseibun writers. On the other hand, however, it is shown that Kusa Makura, introducing as it does the concept of hininjō, presages a long line of works, beginning with Nowaki, which were to examine the problems and the suffering caused by egoism, as opposed to the works which had preceded Kusa Makura, which had been either purely descriptive or contained vague social satire.

In view of the close relationship between Ichiya and Kusa Makura, it was thought desirable to provide a translation of the former work. This is Appendix 1.

Although the works which Sōseki wrote after he joined the Asahi are, strictly speaking, beyond the scope of this thesis, synopses of these works have been provided in Appendix 2, since it was thought that a knowledge of the subject matter of these novels would help to put Kusa Makura and the other early works more clearly into perspective, and since not all of these works have been translated into English to date.

Chapter 1

1810 Meiji Prose up to the Rise of Naturalism

Before proceeding to a detailed study of the emergence and development of Natsume Sōseki¹ as a writer, it is necessary to take a brief look at the prose of the Meiji Period (1868-1912), for it is only in this context that the significance of Sōseki's works in general and of Kusa Makura² in particular can be seen.

With the coming of the Meiji Period the old forms of literature did not, of course, immediately disappear. Types of fiction such as gōkan, kokkeibon and ninjōbon remained popular and many highly coloured works of sexuality and brutality continued to be produced.

There is a great deal of humour to be found in the writing of the Edo Period (1603-1867), but generally speaking the term, kokkeibon (literally 'humorous books'), is applied to the novel-type works of Jippensha Ikku (1765-1831) and Shikitei Sanba (1776-1822).

The ninjōbon were modelled on the earlier sharebon and, like the latter, were eventually banned. The sharebon grew up together with the yomihon in the Kamigata (present-day Osaka) region during the eighteenth century. However, whereas the yomihon were more like Western Ro-

mances, being tales based upon legends, sharebon were principally accounts of encounters between customers and girls in the brothel quarters. Perhaps the most famous writer of these works was Santō Kyōden (1761-1816). Kyōden's works were realistic, humorous and relied largely on conversation, characteristics which were to influence the development of the novel in later ages.

In 1790 sharebon were banned as immoral by the government, and in the following year Kyōden was indicted for contravening this ban. He thereafter gave up the writing of sharebon. Other authors continued to write after the ban, but the stories no longer confined themselves to the brothel quarters, and the traditional format of describing the events of a period from one evening to the following morning was broken.

Ninjōbon (literally 'books of human emotions') were the successors to the realism of the sharebon. They were still basically stories about low life, but continued the trend seen in the post-Kyōden sharebon to get away from the brothel quarters and to describe love affairs between ordinary men and women. Although, like their predecessors, they relied heavily on conversation, they had far more complicated plots than the old sharebon.

Ninjōbon flourished particularly during the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century. The best-known writer of these works was Tamenaga Shunsui (1790-

1843), who was a pupil of Shikitei Sanba's.

The gōkan developed from kibyōshi, which in turn developed from kusazōshi. The kusazōshi type of literature was variously called akahon (red books), kurohon (black books) and aohon (blue books), depending on the colour of the covers. These books were mainly fairy stories aimed at women, and the emphasis was on pictures rather than text. However, from the kibyōshi (yellow cover) stage, these kusazōshi became more refined and turned into the light literature of the Edo chōnin, a class of society during the Edo Period, consisting of the merchants and artisans of the towns.

The kibyōshi is said to have begun with Kinkin Sensei Eiga no Yume (Maestro Kinkin's Dream of Prosperity) (1775), by Koikawa Harumachi (1744-89). The centre of chōnin literature, however, was Santō Kyōden, who wrote both kibyōshi and sharebon.

Following the practice of the earlier kusazōshi, the kibyōshi had five pages to a volume and generally two or three volumes to a set. The text was confined to an explanation of the pictures. By nature, kibyōshi were humorous and took for their material various aspects of daily life as well as history and tradition.

Like the kyōka and senryū, the kibyōshi were satirical. Theirs was by no means a biting satire and yet it drew criticism from the government. This caused a change in subject matter, and a great number of stories dealing

with revenge and vendettas were produced. The kibyōshi, then, lost their original characteristics and tended to become more didactic and more like the yomihon, which had concentrated more on writing than on pictures from the beginning.

As the kibyōshi turned to vendettas and didacticism, the reading material increased and several five-page books were put together to make one volume. Several of these new volumes made one set. These were called gōkan (composite volumes). It has been said that the gōkan started with Shikitei Sanba's Ikazuchitarō Gōaku Monogatari (The Heinous Story of Ikazuchitarō) in 1806.

The gōkan became popular as the kibyōshi and the sharebon began to wane. It was a form of literature which grew from many sources: from the kusazōshi, which were aimed at women and were mostly pictures, from a sense of poetic justice, from antiquarianism, from the yomihon characteristic of having a complicated plot and from the decadence and excitement of the Kabuki at the end of the Edo Period. Most of the representative fiction writers of the Edo Period wrote gōkan--Kyōden, Bakin,⁴ Ikku, Sanba--but the person who put the most energy into writing this form of literature was Ryūtei Tanehiko (1783-1842).

The popular fiction of the Edo Period is sometimes lumped together under the common heading of gesaku.⁵ If one had to pick a common characteristic of all the types

of writing that fall under this heading it would be the tendency to rely on plot rather than on characterization or descriptions of real life. Of this kind of literature it was the ninjōbon, perhaps, which were to exert the strongest influence on the writing of the Meiji Period, for, as Aston says, "The great service rendered by Shunsui and his fellow-composers of ninjōbon was to recall the attention of writers and readers of fiction to human nature as the proper subject of the novelist's art."⁶

These older forms of literature did not simply die out with the coming of the Meiji Restoration. However, one begins to see subject matter pertinent to the new age presented within the framework of Edo fiction. A good case in point is Kanagaki Robun (1829-94). Such works of his as Seiyō Dōchū Hizakurige (By Shanks' Mare Through the Western World) (1870) and Agura Nabe (Seated Comfortably Around the Pot) (1871) are really no more than gesaku of the kokkeibon line.

It was not only the gesaku type of literature which continued over into the Meiji Period. Some satirical works in Chinese, the language which had been considered as the basis of learning throughout the Edo Period, still continued to be written. Notable among such works were Ryūkyō Shinshi⁷ (A New Record of the Willow Bridge) (1874) by Narishima Ryūhoku (1837-84) and Tōkyō Shinhanjō-ki (A Record of the New Prosperity of Tokyo) (1874) by Hattori Bushō (1842-1908). Gradually, however, this kind

of fiction came to be written less and less.

While, on the one hand, there was a continuation of the old literature, new currents of thought also began to appear in the novel. One influence on Meiji fiction was the Christian ethic. The belief that all human beings are equal before God, a respect for the individual and a strengthening of humanism all played an important role in the development of Meiji literature.

Another current of thought was Enlightenment, the term applied to the mainstream of thought in eighteenth-century Europe. The scientific and intellectual developments of the seventeenth-century--the discoveries of Isaac Newton, the rationalism of Descartes and Bayle, the pantheism of Spinoza and the empiricism of Francis Bacon and John Locke--fostered a belief in natural law and universal order and the confidence in human reason which spread to influence the whole of eighteenth-century life. Although there were many different currents of thought, certain ideas may be said to be pervading and dominant. The proponents of Enlightenment agreed on certain basic attitudes. With supreme faith in rational man, they sought to discover and act upon universally valid principles governing humanity, nature and society. Their desire to improve society by means of natural reason often brought them into conflict with the church.

The centre of the Enlightenment movement in Meiji Japan was Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834-1901). Fukuzawa's basic

aim was the practical one of the importation and dissemination of Western material civilization. His practicality and rationalism gave a spur to the modernization of literature, inasmuch as they were strongly anti-feudal and taught a respect for human beings. His ideas were given literary expression in such works as Seiyō Jijō (The Situation in the West) (1866), Sekaikunizukushi (An Enumeration of the Countries of the World) (1869) and Gakumon no Susume (An Exhortation to Learning) (1872).

Yet another current to have an influence on the development of the novel was the movement to obtain civil rights and liberties. This was no mere intellectual ideal, but was linked with the fierce political movement which had as its aim the democratization of the country and the gaining of civil rights for that broad section of the people which had as yet, in spite of the theoretical abolishment of feudalism which accompanied the Meiji Restoration, to achieve political freedom. This movement gave rise in literature to the political novel, which was written during the second decade (1878-87) and into the third decade of Meiji.^{7a} The writers of these novels were mainly intellectuals connected with the civil rights movement.

It was with the advent of the political novel that literature was taken out of the hands of the gesaku writers. Prose fiction lost its flippant air and began to take a serious look at life. In this sense, the polit-

ical novel can be considered as beginning the modern novel. With regard to its concern with the manner in which the country was governed and in point of style, the political novel is in the line of fiction written in Chinese. But in taking for its setting the countries of Europe and in evincing a certain Romantic emotion, it has a Western flavour.

The works which went to make up this genre were by and large mere expositions of political thought without that fleshing out which is generally held to be necessary for a book to win critical acclaim as a work of fiction. Nevertheless, such works as Yano Ryūkei's (1850-1931) Keikoku Bidan (A Laudable Instance of Statesmanship) (1883), Tōkai Sanshi's (1852-1922) Kajin no Kigū (Chance Meetings with Beautiful Women) (1885) and Suehiro Tetchō's (1849-96) Setchūbai (Plum Blossoms in the Snow) (1886) were widely read.

The popular movement came under strong pressure and this, together with the realization that the opening of the Diet in 1890 (the original object of the movement) was a far cry from establishing general civil rights, caused a loss of hope. This manifested itself on the literary scene in the disappearance of the political novel. With the exception of the proletarian novels of later years, Japanese novels have evinced no real interest in politics since that time.

The second decade of Meiji (1878-87) saw, together

with the appearance of the political novel, the translation of Western works into Japanese. Chief among these were translations of Disraeli's political works and of the works of Bulwer-Lytton. Indeed, it was the translations of these former books which further stimulated the interest of the Japanese intelligentsia in politics and helped to give rise to the political novel in Japan.

The first novel to appear in translation was Karyū Shunwa (A Spring Tale of the Gay World) (1878). This was a free translation by Oda Jun'ichirō (1851-1919) of both Ernest Maltravers and its sequel Alice by Bulwer-Lytton. In a different vein was the translation of Jules Verne's Around the World in Eighty Days, which appeared in the same year.

Modern Japanese literature began to take on a more definite shape from about the year 1885. It was in this year the Tsubouchi Shōyō's (1859-1935) Shōsetsu Shinzui (The Essence of the Novel) appeared. In this work Shōyō gives his ideas on how a novel should be written. He states that literature is not something for practical use and that it is without any concrete aim. Literature has, he says, an independent worth. It is his contention that "the prime object of the novel" is to describe ninjō⁸ and setai⁹. These must be described as they are and not, as Bakin had done, in terms of characters (or perhaps caricatures would be a better word) in the shape of good and evil, for the sake of moralizing.¹⁰

This work pointed the way to the realism of the modern novel and greatly assisted in its development. However, when Shōyō tried to give literary expression to his ideas in Tōsei Shosei Katagi (The Student Turn of Mind in This Day and Age) (1885), he showed that he was more adept at preaching than practising. Although this work does aim for a kind of realism, it still lays great stress on emotional qualities. Moreover, his characterization is weak and he relies strongly on the story line. These characteristics, together with the moralistic tone of the story, are still suggestive of the Edo Period. However, he showed a more realistic bent with his later work Saikun (A Wife) (1899).

In 1886 Futabatei Shimei (1864-1909) published Shōsetsu Sōron (An Introduction to the Novel). In contrast to Shōyō's simple theory of depiction, Futabatei stressed the fact that a writer had to have an essential grasp of the subject matter which he was attempting to portray. It is no surprise, then, that his story Ukigumo (Drifting Clouds) (1887) should be more realistic than Shōyō's Tōsei Shosei Katagi. In Ukigumo we have the portrait of a man trying to remain true to himself, in spite of the bureaucratic and feudal pressures to which he is subjected as a result of his surroundings. The author is not content merely to theorize on ninjō and setai, but deals with problems which he himself has actually faced. This work is generally considered as a

milestone in the development of fiction from Romance to reality.

Futabatei Shimei took great pains with his language and his descriptions are very precise. The writers of Meiji fiction were more and more trying to get away from the traditional written style and to write their works according to the colloquial grammar. It is, in fact, this linguistic difference which, perhaps more than any literary characteristic, defines what is modern. Futabatei Shimei helped to further the cause of unifying the written and spoken languages.

In spite of the tendency towards realism shown by Tsubouchi Shōyō and, more particularly, Futabatei Shimei, it must not be forgotten that at this period such writers of political novels and stories in the gesaku tradition as Kanagaki Robun, Sudō Nansui (1858-1920), Aeba Kōson (1855-1922) and Saitō Ryoku'u (1867-1904) were also writing.

At about the time that Shōsetsu Shinzui, Tōsei Shosei Katagi and Ukigumo appeared, a group called Ken'yūsha (The Association of the Friends of the Inkstone) was formed. This was the first of many literary groups which were to grow up during the Meiji Period. The centre of this group was Ozaki Kōyō (1867-1903) and included among the members were Yamada Bimyō (1868-1910), Ishibashi Shian (1867-1927), Iwaya Saginami (1870-1933), Kawakami Bizan (1869-1908) and Hirotsu Ryūrō (1861-1928). The group

was founded in 1885, and the first of its members to gain recognition was Yamada Bimyō, who wrote such works as Musashino (Musashi Moor) (1887) and Kochō (Butterfly)¹¹ (1889). He tended towards the romantic and his freshness of style helped to further the cause of the modernization of the written language.

The Ken'yūsha put out a magazine called Garakuta Bunko (A Boxful of Literary Bric-A-Brac), which was first hand-written when the members were only meeting together as a hobby, and then came to be printed as they turned professional. Bimyō soon broke away from the Ken'yūsha, but because of Kōyō's great ability, the group became quite a force in the literary world.

The writers in this group have been criticized for their feudal ideas and for pandering to popular taste, characteristics which they undoubtedly inherited from the ninjōbon. However, it was these very characteristics which gave them so wide a following and which caused them to remain a power until approximately the time of Kōyō's death in 1903.

As the title of Kōyō's first work, Ninin Bikuni Iro Zange (The Romantic Confessions of Two Priestesses) (1889) suggests, he had an eye for a popular theme right from the outset. Kōyō was a great admirer of the naturalistic literature. Ninin Bikuni Iro Zange is full of

such feudal concepts as giri (a sense of obligation), ninjō, sui (variously translated as 'gallantry', 'elegance' and 'good taste') and kyō (chivalrous spirit). As far as style is concerned, Kōyō still makes use of such old literary devices as the kakekotoba,¹² a practice which he continued throughout his early works. It is not until the writing of Tajō Takon (Much Love, Much Hate) in 1896 that one can say that his works are in the colloquial style. In this last-mentioned work the influence of English on his style is seen in the short sentences, the great use of personal pronouns and in the use of ideograph combinations whose meanings are not clear until

it is known what English word they are meant to represent.

There is no doubt that Kōyō was a great writer.
Kōyō's reputation as a writer derives from his ability to construct a novel skilfully, as seen in Konjiki Yasha (The Gold-Hungry Devil) (1897); from his description of the customs of his own time in such works as Ninin Nyōbō (Two Wives) (1891) and Sanninzuma (Three Wives) (1892); and from his treatment of ninjō in Kokoro no Yami (The Darkness of the Heart) (1893).

However, in that he regarded ninjō and setai as the principle material of the novel, he did not help to carry that form of writing towards realism. In a word, he was continuing the ideas of Tsubouchi Shōyō's Shōsetsu Shinzui and was not developing the progressive realism

such feudal concepts as giri (a sense of obligation), ninjō, sui (variously translated as 'gallantry', 'elegance' and 'good taste') and kyō (chivalrous spirit). As far as style is concerned, Kōyō still makes use of such old literary devices as the kakekotoba,¹² a practice which he continued throughout his early works. It is not until the writing of Tajō Takon (Much Love, Much Hate) in 1896 that one can say that his works are in the colloquial style. In this last-mentioned work the influence of English on his style is seen in the short sentences, the great use of personal pronouns and in the use of ideograph combinations whose meanings are not clear until it is known what English word they are meant to represent.

~~There is no doubt that Kōyō was a great writer. This is attested to by his description of the customs of his own time in such works as Ninin Nyōbo (Two Wives) (1891) and Sanninzuma (Three Wives) (1892); by his treatment of ninjō in Kokoro no Yami (The Darkness of the Heart) (1893) and Tajō Takon and by his skilful construction of a novel, as seen in Konjiki Yasha (The Gold-Hungry Devil) (1897). Moreover, he has a brilliance of style, which at times shows the influence of Saikaku.¹³~~

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of Futabatei Shimei's Shōsetsu Sōron and Ukigumo.

The other novelist who, with Ozaki Kōyō, is said to be representative of the third decade of Meiji (1888-97) is Kōda Rohan (1864-1947). His novels were romantic and idealistic. They were passionately written in language which was a vigorous mixture of Japanese and Chinese, of the refined and the vulgar. He wrote of a state of Buddhist enlightenment (satori) which transcends love in Fūryūbutsu (The Refined Buddha) (1889) and in Tai Dokuro (To a Skull) (1890). He also wrote about how a man can, by willpower, demonstrate his ability in Ikkōken (A Sword) (1890), a story about a swordsmith, and in Gojū no Tō (The Five-Storied Pagoda) (1891), a story about a carpenter. All his works are strongly anti-vulgarian and stand in contrast to the works of Kōyō.

The literature of the Ken'yūsha, centring upon Ozaki Kōyō, was a great power on the literary scene at the end of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, it contained much in common with earlier fiction, but in striving to describe people's feelings minutely and in helping to unify the spoken and written language, the Ken'yūsha writers attempted to keep up with the changing times.

However, their works did not deal with life as a personal problem, nor did they try to gain an intellectual grasp of what constitutes an individual, preferring instead to use human emotions as expedient material for

the furtherance of a story.

The fiction of the Ken'yūsha writers is generally divided into two kinds: kannen shōsetsu (ideological novels) and hisan shōsetsu (tragic novels), sometimes also referred to as shinkoku shōsetsu (poignant novels). Kawakami Bizan's Ura Omote (Front and Back) (1895) and Shokikan (The Secretary) (1895) and Izumi Kyōka's (1873-1939) (who was also associated with the Ken'yūsha) Yakō Junsu (A Policeman on Night Duty) (1895) and Gekashitsu (Surgery) (1895) are examples of what were called kannen shōsetsu; while Hirotsu Ryūrō's Kurotokage (Black Lizard) (1895) and Heme Den (Ugly Den) (1895) fall into that category known as hisan (shinkoku) shōsetsu.

Both the kannen shōsetsu and the hisan (shinkoku) shōsetsu tend to be rather shallow: the former ~~in the~~ the sense that their observations about life and society cannot be said to penetrate below the surface, and the latter ~~in that~~ they invariably contain plots about misery. However, these works may be seen as a step in the direction of realism, set as they are against a background of the social inconsistencies and injustices which accompanied the development of capitalism ^{during and} after the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5).

The latter part of the third decade of Meiji saw the appearance of works by the one great woman novelist of the period: Higuchi Ichiyō (1872-96). She is perhaps best known for her diaries and for such works as Jūsanya

(The Thirteenth Night) (1895), Takekurabe (Comparing Heights) (1895) and Nigorie (Muddy Stream) (1895).

Higuchi Ichiyō's works are not mere romancing. They are backed up by experiences which she herself had and which are recorded in her diary. She often, for example, depicts women under pressure and in difficult situations. In the plaintive and mournful quality of their resignation and in that they hold out no hope, her works show the influence of the Heian Period and of Saikaku. In Takekurabe she depicts the world of young boys and girls with both admiration and a sigh as a thing of all too fleeting beauty.

While the novels of Kōyō, Rohan and Ichiyō mentioned above are typical of works which appeared during the third decade of Meiji, they are all, to a greater or lesser extent, rooted in the past.

What became, then, of the trend towards a more modern type of realism which the appearance of Ukigumo seemed to promise? Futabatei Shimei was sceptical about his own ability as a writer and almost gave up the writing of fiction to apply himself to the translation of Russian literature. He is particularly noted for his translations of Turgenev. He translated two sections of this writer's A Hunter's Diary as Aibiki (Rendezvous) (1888) and Meguriai (Chance Encounter) (1888) respectively.

His translations succeeded in capturing the freshness and detail of natural description contained in the

original and had a profound influence on such writers as Kunikida Doppo (1871-1908), Shimazaki Tōson (1872-1943) and Tayama Katai (1871-1930), all of whose works were closely bound up with the description of nature, and all of whom, in their early works certainly, may be regarded as Romantic writers.

At about the same time as Futabatei Shimei's Ukigumo appeared, Mori Ōgai (1862-1922) published Maihime (The Dancer) (1890). This is the story of a young man who falls in love with a dancer while studying in Germany. With this love, comes the realization of how narrow his life has been up till now. However, he takes the advice of his friends and, returning to Japan, continues his career in the civil service. Ōgai gives a lyrical account of the young man's sadness at having to put his love aside. He lauds the self-restraint which the young man shows, but does not deal frankly with the repression of human nature by the bureaucratic machine. The work is unashamedly romantic and is full of Ōgai's concept of teinen (resignation).¹⁴ At this period Ōgai did not concern himself with the inconsistencies of life and the injustices of society. Works like Utakata no Ki (Record of the Ephemeral) (1890), Fumizukai (Delivery of a Letter) (1891), Umorigi (A Life of Obscurity) (1890) (a translation of a work by Schubert)¹⁵ and in particular Sokkyōshijin (The Improvisator),¹⁶ translated from a work by Hans Christian Andersen, all have a tendency towards

a romantic sadness and beauty and signal the trend towards Romanticism which occurred during the third decade of Meiji and continued through the first half of the fourth decade, that is to say until approximately 1903.

As a critic, Ōgai supported the romantic trend, attacking his opponents with a philosophy based on the ideas of Hartmann. In particular he engaged in a dispute with Tsubouchi Shōyō in the years 1891 and 1892 in which, against the latter's emphasis on common sense and objective description, he stressed what he called sō¹⁷ (an aesthetic idea of reason, corresponding to the German Vernunftidee) and the subjective view of literature.

As mentioned before, the Christian ethic exerted a great influence on the development of ^{ideas and thus of literature} prose during the Meiji Period. One manifestation of this was the publication in 1885 of the magazine Jogaku Zasshi (Magazine for Women Students) by Iwamoto Yoshiharu (1863-1943). His idea was to spread a Christian viewpoint throughout the ranks of the young and thus achieve the emancipation of women. He was principally concerned with writing about literature, while his wife, Wakamatsu Shizuko (1864-96), pursued the same ends both by writing herself and by translating such works as Shōkōshi (The Little Lord) (1890), which was based upon the novel, Little Lord Fauntleroy, by Frances Eliza Hodgson Burnett.

In 1893 Shimazaki Tōson, Hoshino Tenchi (1862-1950) and Kitamura Tōkoku (1868-94), who had all been associ-

ated with Jogaku Zasshi, published a magazine called Bungakkai (The World of Literature), which became the organ of Romanticism. These writers, together with Ueda Bin (1874-1916), Baba Kochō (1869-1940), Hirata Tokuboku (1873-1943) and Togawa Shūkotsu (1870-1939) may be said to constitute a literary movement. The central figure of this movement was Tōkoku. *same sense that Zola was.*

In Tōkoku did not write much fiction, concentrating to mainly on critiques, essays and poetry, but he had a wide influence on literature. His philosophy, which was passionately expressed in such works as Naibu Seimei-ron (Essay on the Inner Life) (1893), was rather abstract and concerned a state of noble elevation of humanity brought about by a rapport between "the spirit of the universe"¹⁸ and "the inner life"¹⁹ of human beings. In this way the self was to be emancipated and elevated. Tōkoku declared war on anything which it seemed to him inhibited the achievement of this state, particularly attacking feudal elements to be found in the works of Kōyō and Rohan. He was a *undisputed* Romantic and, although tending towards the abstract, was the first writer in Japan to take this fresh approach towards the self.

important literary
Another group of the time with Christian and romantic interests was the Min'yūsha (The Society of the Friends of the People). In 1887 the Min'yūsha published as its organ Kokumin no Tomo (Friend of the People). The guiding light of the Min'yūsha was Tokutomi Sohō (1863-1957),

who was a Christian and laid emphasis on democratic government and the need to resist political power based upon clanship. From this group emerged such writers as Miyazaki Koshoshi (1864-1922), Kunikida Doppo and Tokutomi Roka (1868-1927). Such writers as these are sometimes referred to as Naturalists. However, they were not Naturalists in the same sense that Zola was. In that they tried to describe things naturally and to get away from the older, exaggerated forms of writing, they may be said to be naturalistic, but it would probably be more accurate, at least during the period under discussion at present, to refer to them as Naturist writers, since it was their love of nature which provided a common denominator. Indeed, the early works of Doppo are commonly called shizen bungaku (nature literature) and not shizen-shugi bungaku (naturalist literature). When viewing Doppo's work of the fourth decade of Meiji, it is possible that a reclassification is necessary, but during the third decade he was making a reputation as a nature poet with such works as Doppo Gin (Doppo's Song) (1897). Moreover, Roka's Shizen to Jinsei (Nature and Life) (1900) is a prose poem devoted to the description of nature.

The first half of the fourth decade of Meiji (1898-1902) was a period of prosperity for Romanticism, but it may be fairly said to be best represented by its poetry and its criticism, since apart from the writings of Izumi Kyōka and Kunikida Doppo, there were no great

developments in the realm of prose fiction.

Kyōka started by writing ideological novels (kannen shōsetsu), in common with the other writers associated with the Ken'yūsha. However, he gradually developed a more individual kind of writing which tended towards fantasy and aestheticism. His works abound with such romantic concepts as the supremacy of love and a yearning for a world which was subject to a pure form of giri and ninjō, those old feudal concepts of duty and charity. He wrote many works, including Teriha Kyōgen²⁰ (1896), Yushima Mōde (Pilgrimage to Yushima) (1899) and Kōya Hijiri (The Saint from Mt. Kōya) (1900).

In his feudal morality, his attitude to life and his stress on the emotional, Kyōka may be said to be typical of the Ken'yūsha writers, whose roots were in the soil of Edo literature. However, in his strong opposition to officialdom and capitalism and in the ideas which he held concerning the expression of the self, he more closely resembles Tōkoku and transcends the literature of the Ken'yūsha. To summarize, one might say that he developed into an independent writer of the Romantic school.

In the fourth decade of Meiji (or more strictly from the year immediately preceding it, that is, 1897) Kunikida Doppo began to write romantic fiction. He was greatly influenced by Christianity and by Wordsworth's view of nature, and produced a number of short stories

which marvel at the limitless scope of nature and express an admiration for man, whose short life and eventual death are enacted within it.

Musashino²¹ (Musashi Moor) (1898) is an attempt to describe Japanese nature in a fresh, modern way and shows the influence of Wordsworth's and Turgenev's nature descriptions. Gyūniku to Bareisho (Beef and Potatoes) (1901) is the work which perhaps best embodies his wonder at the vastness of nature, while Gen-oji (Uncle Gen) (1897), Wasureenu Hitobito (Unforgettable People) (1897) and his other early works contain lyrical descriptions of man's tiny existence within this setting.

With Unmei Ronja (The Fatalist) (1902), Doppo turns to a description of the dark fate which controls human life, and his later works such as Kyūshi (A Miserable Death) (1907) and Take no Kido (The Bamboo Gate) (1908) depict the miseries of real life and touch upon the injustices of society, and thus approach Naturalism.

Azamukazaru no Ki (A True Account) (1908) is Doppo's autobiography. *In this work Doppo shows an ability to view himself objectively and present a balanced self-portrait.*

In the field of literary criticism, it was Takayama Chogyū (1871-1902) who represented Romanticism during the first half of the fourth decade of Meiji. He began by speaking of nationalism, but under the influence of Nietzsche, he came to emphasize "an aesthetic life" in such works as Biteki Seikatsu wo Ronzu (On the Aesthetic Life) (1901). He held that the highest happiness lay

in satisfying the self, and more especially in the satisfying of one's instincts. This philosophy, expressed as it was in very elegant language, exerted a wide influence throughout the literary world. Chogyū, unlike Tōkoku, whose ideas of heightening the soul were abstract, had physical satisfaction and the satisfaction of instinct at the centre of his ideas of the liberation of the self, and in this respect has something in common with the leading poetry of the period.

To return to the novel, however. There were, besides the romantic works of such people as Kyōka and Doppo, historical, domestic and social novels during the fourth decade of Meiji; the two best-known novelists being Murakami Namiroku (1865-1944) and Tsukahara Jūshien (1848-1917).

Kikuchi Yūhō's (1870-1947) Ono ga Tsumi (One's Own Guilt) (1899) and Chikyōdai (Suckled at the Same Breast) (1904) and Tokutomi Roka's Hototogisu (The Cuckoo) (1898) are typical of the domestic novels, and stood in contrast to those works which dealt with the tragedies of the demi-monde. The domestic novels dealt with love in a rather sentimental way and were widely read.

Social novels were mainly introduced by the writers of the Min'yūsha, such as Uchida Roan (1868-1929) (Kure no Nijūhachinichi [The Twenty-Eighth Day of December], written in 1898) and Tokutomi Roka (Kokuchō [Black Tide], written in 1902). The reason for this social emphasis

by the Min'yūsha was that they were trying to fill a gap in fiction, since the writers of the Ken'yūsha faction dealt very little with society. However, the social novels of the Min'yūsha failed to show a true grasp of society and, like the historical and domestic novels, did not form the mainstream of literary development.

In the second half of the fourth decade of Meiji (1903-7) a great change occurred in the field of fiction. This was the decline of the Ken'yūsha as the central force after ten years of supremacy and the rise of Naturalism (shizenshugi) to take over this role. If one had to pick a specific date which marked the decline of the power of the Ken'yūsha it would be 1903, the year in which Ōsaki Kōyō died. The transition, however, was quite naturally an overnight occurrence, nor was a naturalistic view of literature something completely foreign to all the writers associated with the Ken'yūsha group. Indeed, some of these writers came quite close to Naturalism in their descriptions.

In Inade Shinjū (Double Suicide at Inade) (1896) and Kawachiya¹ (1896), Kirotan Ryūō, the writer of tragic (nisan) novels, showed great maturity in his psychological descriptions, while Oguri Kyō (1875-1926) perhaps came closest of all the Ken'yūsha writers to realistic character studies in such works as Seishun (Youth) (1905).

In the introductions to Natsunagata (Image of

Freshness (1900) and Hayaruta (Popular Songs) (1902).

Kosugi Bengai (1865-1952), a pupil of Saitō Ryoku'u,

wrote an exposition Chapter 2 ²stic approach to liter-

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In Imado Shinjū (Double Suicide at Imado) (1896) and Kawachiya¹ (1896), Hirotsu Ryūrō, the writer of tragic (hisan) novels, showed great maturity in his psychological descriptions, while Oguri Fūyō (1875-1926) perhaps came closest of all the Ken'yūsha writers to realistic character studies in such works as Seishun (Youth) (1905).

In the introductions to Hatsusugata (Image of),

Freshness (1900) and Hayariuta (Popular Songs) (1902), Kosugi Tengai (1865-1952), a pupil of Saitō Ryoku'u, wrote an exposition of a realistic² approach to literature. In both these works he took Zola as his model and stated that heredity and environment are the two greatest factors in determining the course of a man's life. However, in the works themselves, true to the Ken'yūsha tradition, he subordinated all other considerations to the interest of the story.

Nagai Kafū (1879-1959), for a time a pupil of Ryūrō's, expressed a view of literature similar to that of Zola in the introduction to his work Jigoku no Hana (Flowers of Hell) (1902). However, this work sets the tone for his later writing, in that it shows a lack of real knowledge about the problems of heredity and environment and concentrates on the gloomy side of life, regardless of whatever progress society may have made.

For these writers of the old school it was interest of plot which counted for more than anything else and thus, although in terms of their characterization and in that they struggled manfully to describe the world around them as they saw it they may be said to be realistic in the shajitsushugi sense, they were unable to or, at any rate, did not attain that Realism (genjitsu-shugi) which was attendant upon Naturalism, the rising tide of twentieth-century literature. It would be too harsh to say that they only paid lip service to Zola,

but Zolaism remained to them no more than a literary 'ism'.

The literature of the Ken'yūsha, then, gave place to Naturalism. This latter movement was by and large the result of the influence of European Naturalism and, centred upon prose fiction, spread to the drama, modern poetry, the tanka and the haiku.³

Naturalism took as its basis that self about whose liberation the Romantics had been writing, and in this sense one can see a strong link between the Romanticism of the earlier writers and the Naturalism of the writers of the first half of the fourth decade. Indeed, some typically Naturalist writers, such as Shimazaki Tōson and Tayama Katai (1871-1930), had just passed through their own Romantic periods and their Naturalistic literature was alive with the Romantic self.

Naturalism further followed in the footsteps of Romanticism inasmuch as it resisted conventional morality. Moreover, in its insistence on depicting the actual (genjitsu), it frequently exposed the inconsistencies in society, thus provoking its readers to a social awareness. However, unlike the earlier political novels and the later proletarian literature, it was not associated with any political movement.

It was during the fifth decade of the Meiji Period (which began in 1908)⁴ that Naturalism can be said to have come of age and to have become the prime mover

of the literary world. However, during this period the idea of emancipation of the self, which Naturalism had inherited from Romanticism, rapidly disappeared. As this happened, the misery and ugliness which are to be found in life came to be depicted not as a challenge to the human spirit--as something to be subjugated--but as something over which man has no control. (Candid Des-

In such relatively early Naturalistic works as Tōson's Hakai (Transgression) (1906) and Tayama Katai's Jūemon no Saigo (The End of Jūemon) (1902) one can see quite a lot of social awareness. However, this decreased as the Naturalist movement developed, the subject of fiction becoming more and more the individual (in particular the author himself) with no reference to the society of which he formed a part. This trend led to the shishōsetsu (confessional novels) which are so typical of Japanese Naturalistic literature.

From the point of view of language, one can say that, when the development of literature reached its Naturalist stage, the old literary language had completely given way in fiction to the colloquial style, a process which had been in progress since the beginning of the Meiji Period.

The most representative writers of the Naturalist school are Tayama Katai, Shimazaki Tōson, Tokuda Shūsei (1871-1943), Masamune Hakuchō (1879-1962), Iwano Hōmei (1873-1920) and Mayama Seika (1878-1948), the two first-

mentioned authors being, by far, the most enduring. In the field of literary criticism, the main Naturalist writers were Shimamura Hōgetsu (1871-1918) and Hasegawa Tenkei (1876-1940).

Tayama Katai began by writing sentimental love novels, but he changed to Naturalist writing with Jūemon no Saigo. In his work, Rokotsunaru Byōsha (Candid Description) (1904), he took up the cudgels on behalf of Naturalism, advocating, as the title suggests, complete frankness in description. In Futon (The Bedquilt) (1907) Katai put his ideas into practice by providing his readers with a frank account of his own love life. This work is one of the sources of the trend towards the shishōsetsu. Other works of this period were Sei (Life) (1908), Tsuma (The Wives) and En (Ties) (1910), which were all about his family life, and Inaka Kyōshi (A Country Teacher) (1909).

As well as "frank description" Katai advocated what he called heimen byōsha, literally 'flat description'. He asserted that a writer should avoid both subjectivity and psychological descriptions of his characters. In 'Byōsha-ron' ('Essay on Description') (1911) he says, "One must try to re-express in the written word living scenes just as they passed into the brain from the eye."⁵ This idea was not original to Katai. *In that heimen byōsha represents an objective standpoint it recalls one aspect of John Keats' idea of 'negative capability' and reminds one of Wordsworth's words when speaking of "the powers requisite*

for the production of poetry", namely, ". . . first those of Observation and Description, i.e. the ability to observe with accuracy things as they are in themselves, and with fidelity to describe them, unmodified by any passion or feeling existing in the mind of the describer, whether the things depicted be actually present to the senses or have a place only in the memory."⁶

Shimazaki Tōson moved from poetry to prose and, after gaining valuable experience with Chikumagawa no Suketchi (Sketches of the Chikuma River) (published in 1912, but containing material from about 1900), he published Hakai in 1906. In this work Tōson describes the problems of an untouchable (eta) as he tries to remain true to himself. It is set against the backdrop of the scenery of Shinano Province and precedes Tayama Katai's Futon in showing the Naturalistic trend of literature. Hakai has a breadth of social scope not often found in Japanese Naturalist literature, but in that it depicts an individual who, with regard to society, is unwilling or unable to become master of his own fate, it can be said to project the writer himself to a large degree and to serve notice that his works will progress in the direction of the shishōsetsu.

Other works by Tōson are Haru (Spring) (1908) and Ie (The Home or The Family) (1910), both of which are based on the author's own life, the former dealing with the suffering of a young member of the Bungakkai, which

was under the guidance of Kitamura Tōkoku, and the latter telling of the pressure borne by a member of an old family in the process of collapse.

Let us now take a brief look at what became of Futabatei Shimei and Mori Ōgai, two writers who had begun their careers much earlier, in this age of Naturalist literature.

After Ukigumo Futabatei Shimei wrote very little fiction, confining himself mainly to translation, as has been previously mentioned. The two works of note which he wrote during the Naturalist period, however, are Sono Omokage (But a Vestige) (1906) and Heibon (Mediocrity) (1907), both of which differ from Naturalist literature in that they pursue the problem of whether to opt for the practical world or for the world of the mind, this being a problem which the author himself faced. Futabatei soon left the world of letters and went to Russia, where he remained until 1909. It was while returning to Japan in that year that he died at sea in the Indian Ocean. Mori Ōgai entered the second half of his literary activities in 1909, when Naturalism was at its most flourishing. During his first period, from Maihime, he had written in a romantic vein, avoiding ugliness and the problems of life. However, during the fourth decade of Meiji one can see an approach to the Naturalist view of literature in such works as Wita Sekusuarisu (Vita Sexualis) (1909), Seinen (A Young Man) (1910) and Gan (Wild Goose) (1911). On reading these works, one can

see that his style has changed from the elegant classical bungo (written language) to a concise colloquial type of writing.

Although these works approach Naturalism, there are still some important distinctions. The first of these is that, whereas to the Naturalists ugliness was the whole of reality, a reality directly responsible for the birth of their type of literature, to Ōgai, who believed in the great possibilities of humanity, it was only a part of life, and a part which he could observe from a more objective and elevated level. This elevation, however, was not necessarily an enviable state, since it had inherent in it a great loneliness, which shows itself in such words as teinen, bōkansha⁷ and asobi,⁸ expressions which appear in the works of his second period.

The second point is that Ōgai's works suggest an intellectual approach to writing which is completely at variance with the method of recording events as they unfold, which the Naturalists used. In this respect Ōgai may be said to have influenced such writers as Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892-1927).

Although Naturalism occupied a central position in the stream of literature during the early years of this century, it is not true that all the writers of that time were of a Naturalistic bent, as witness Futabatei Shimei and Mori Ōgai. Ishikawa Takuboku (1885-1912)

for example, was a critic of Naturalism. Indeed, such magazines as Mita Bungaku (Mita Literature) and Subaru (The Pleiades), of which Kafū was the centre, stood as anti-Naturalist organs, carrying works notable for their hedonism and aesthetic qualities. These magazines were supported by Mori Ōgai and Ueda Bin.

The greatest threat to Naturalism ultimately proved to be that group of writers which was associated with the magazine Shirakaba (Silver Birch), first published in 1910. Although the Shirakaba school of writers was greatly influenced by Natsume Sōseki, they are beyond the scope of this present work, since it was the Shirakaba school which proved their main source of inspiration. However, there was another kind of writing which grew up with ^{and in opposition to} Naturalism during the first years of this century and which is closely linked with Sōseki's early works, including Kusa Makura. This type of writing is referred to as shaseibun. The connection between shaseibun and Sōseki's early works is so important that it will need to be dealt with in some detail in a separate chapter, but some consideration of its nature and origins is necessary at this point. However, it was

It is extremely difficult to give a capsule definition of what shaseibun is. On various occasions Takahama Kyoshi (1874-1959), a principal figure behind the shaseibun movement, referred to it as zokujō wo hanarete tatsu haiku shumi (a taste for the haiku-like, removed from

vulgar emotions), hinetsujō shumi (a taste for the dispassionate) and as bionteki (tepid). However, while some shaseibun writers wrote what almost amount to haiku in prose, others were so realistic in their descriptions as to have virtually nothing to do with the world of the haiku.

The term, shasei, itself literally means painting, drawing or sketching from nature. As its name implies, it was originally used with regard to graphic art, but was also applied to waka⁹ as well. The word later came to be used to suggest an objective attitude in observing things and, with this connotation, was applied to certain haiku. Although there are examples of shasei-type haiku as early as the Genroku Period (1688-1704), it was not until the Meiji Period that Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) took this idea and turned it into an 'ism'.

Shiki considered that the haiku had degenerated since the Tenpō Era (1830-44), because of the intellectual and subjective approach which had grown up among writers of this type of poetry since that time. He mainly laid emphasis upon the minute observation of nature and on its objective portrayal. However, it was not merely the appearance of things that the writer had to portray, but the 'shadow' (kage) which lies at the heart of the thing under observation. This 'shadow' is different from the actual object. In other words, the haiku writer should not merely record the world of

appearances but, in the act of writing his poetry, become the creator of a new world.

Besides being a poet, Shiki also wrote prose, and he tried to apply the principle of shasei to some of his shorter pieces, such as Shōen no Ki (Record of a Small Garden) (1898) and Jojibun (Narration) (1900). This trend was taken up by his pupils, in particular Takahama Kyoshi, who wrote such works as Asakusadera no Kusagusa (The Asakusa Temple Miscellany) (1898). The word shaseibun gradually came to be used to describe this kind of prose.

In its inception, shaseibun may be thought of as a kind of realistic literature. However, its haiku origins make it an attempt to portray the essential reality of things, and this sets it apart from genjitsushugi and shajitsushugi, the two words which are generally used to translate 'Realism'. However, as has been noted, some shaseibun writers were so far removed from the world of the haiku that they showed a great deal in common with shajitsushugi in point of description. Indeed, when forming his ideas on the subject, Shiki sometimes used the words shasei and shajitsu interchangeably.

The lines between literary terms are not always drawn with any great precision, but one might say that the words shasei and shajitsu really mean the same thing, and differences only come to be seen when they appear in the literary world as schools of literature in the

form of shaseibun and shajitsushugi. What is clear is that, both in style and approach, shaseibun is diametrically opposed to Naturalism and Romanticism. June 1903

Shiki had formed a literary group called the Yama-kai.¹⁰ The group consisted of Shiki himself and a number of his pupils who wished to brush up their writing. Chief among these was Takahama Kyoshi. After Shiki's death in September 1902, the Yama-kai still continued to meet, sometimes at Kyoshi's house, which was the centre for the publication of Hototogisu (The Cuckoo), the main organ of shaseibun, or at the house of either Kawahigashi Hekigotō, Sakamoto Shihōda or Samukawa Sokotsu. On occasion these meetings were attended by such poets as Itō Sachio (1864-1913), and sometimes these poets held a Yama-kai of their own. cluded Shokun no Kirin ni Ikenaru

In the November 1902 issue of the magazine Kokoro no Hana (Flower of the Heart) the following appeared under the names of Itō Sachio, Katori Hozuma and Morita Girō: "A group called the Yama-kai, in which lovers of belles-lettres can come together once a month for the purpose of producing and criticizing shaseibun will hold its first meeting of the new year on 11th January."¹¹

In the same magazine shaseibun contributions were solicited. several pieces of this kind began to appear

From the above it can be seen that the Yama-kai members, under the guidance of Takahama Kyoshi, were continuing to develop that short descriptive prose known

as shaseibun, while maintaining close contact with poets of the time. A further example of this close alliance is the emphasis placed on shaseibun in the June 1903 issue of the magazine, Ashibi (Andromeda), which had been started as the official organ of the Negishi Tanka-kai (Negishi Tanka Circle). The reason for this emphasis was that the editorial committee numbered among its members Itō Sachio, Katori Hozuma and Morita Girō. In this issue all three of the above contributed pieces, and further shaseibun pieces were solicited.

In the Hototogisu magazine, titles which appeared in Volume 6 (October 1902-September 1903) were selected in turn by Shihōda, Kyoshi and Hekigotō. The works which appeared in this volume had a slightly different flavour than heretofore and included Shokun no Kinrin ni Ikanaru Hito Sumeriya (What Kind of People Live in Your Neighbourhood?), Hakudō Gosen (A Nickel Five-Sen Piece) and Teien wo Shasei Seyo (Describe A Garden).

Every number in Volume 7 (October 1903-September 1904) contained a piece under the title of Kikō (An Account of a Trip). In the Number 5 issue it was announced that "shaseibun on war and its influences" would be collected (the Russo-Japanese War started in 1904), and several pieces of this kind began to appear in the following issue.

Not all of the Hototogisu's readers were overjoyed when the magazine began to go over to shaseibun from

haiku, but more and more shaseibun and less and less haiku began to appear. However, the rapid rise in popularity of this type of writing is attested to by the fact that in Volume 8 (October 1904-September 1905) it was decided to "solicit shaseibun more widely".

Works of shaseibun were not confined to the literary magazines. In May 1903 Sokotsu, at the suggestion of Shihōda, put out a book entitled Shaseibun:Sakuhō Oyobi Sono Bunrei (Shaseibun:How it is Written, With Examples). In December of the same year he also published Nikkibun (Journals), which consisted of journals which had appeared in Hototogisu and to which he had added comments. Both these works were useful in spreading the popularity of shaseibun.

Natsume Sōseki entered the literary scene with his publication of an account of his life in England under the title of Jitensha Nikki (A Cycling Diary). This was published in the June 1903 issue of Hototogisu. On 20th December 1904 Takahama Kyoshi read what is now Chapter 1 of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru (I Am a Cat) at a Yama-kai meeting. This appeared in Hototogisu in the following January, and the subsequent chapters were printed in that magazine until August 1906.

The significance of the publication of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru in Hototogisu is twofold. For the magazine, it meant that the fame which this work brought to Sōseki would act as a stimulus in increasing the readership.

This, of course, was very important to the shaseibun movement. From the point of view of the history of literature, however, the significance was that Sōseki began his literary career in the camp of the shaseibun writers and not in that of Naturalism, which was on the rise at this period. The manner of Sōseki's induction into the shaseibun movement and his views with regard to this form of writing are the subjects of later chapters. Suffice it to say at this point that, had things turned out otherwise, Kusa Makura would probably never have been written.

From February 1905 a group of Sōseki's literary disciples, including Terada Torahiko (1878-1935) and Nomura Denshi, began to gather at his house. Shihōda and Kyoshi were also invited to these literary meetings. In this way Sōseki and his pupils became a supporting group of the shaseibun movement and wrote for the magazines Hototogisu and Teikoku Bungaku (Imperial Literature).

Volume 8, Number 7 of Hototogisu, the issue in which Chapter 3 of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru appeared, happened to be the one hundredth since the magazine had begun publication. To commemorate this event, an extra-large issue was published, containing Torahiko's Donguri (Acorns), Denshi's Gekkyūbi (Pay Day), Kyoshi's Honehori (Gravedigging), Hekigotō's Gengenbana (Chinese Milk Vetch) and, as a bonus, Sōseki's Gen'ei no Tate (The

Phantom Shield). he vulgar, I am confident that they will

All these works, with the exception of Sōseki's Gen'ei no Tate, specifically appeared under the heading of shōsetsu.¹² This marked a significant departure from the essay-type shaseibun which had been the prevalent variety until then. ¹⁴ (April) and Suzuki Miekichi's

¹⁸ The distinction between a shōsetsu and a piece of shaseibun is one that was left to Sōseki to define satisfactorily, and is something that will be considered in detail when Sōseki's relationship with the latter form of writing is dealt with. Like many literary labels, their meaning can vary according to the period one is talking about. However, when the editors of Hototogisu labelled some works as shōsetsu ^{it would seem that} they were considering them as pieces which fell into the broad category of contemporary fiction, while those which they classed as shaseibun did not. The validity of this distinction, however, is open to considerable doubt. ^{their hands at writing comments on}

^{the} Hototogisu, then, took on a new look. And, just as there had been dissatisfaction when haiku gave way to shaseibun, so does there seem to have been dissatisfaction when shaseibun gave way to shōsetsu. However, Kyoshi defended the magazine's position in the following words:

^{Oguri} "If (the readers) realize that, whatever type of prose or poetry we publish, our standpoint is a haiku-like one and that we turn our backs on anything that

is imbued with the vulgar, I am confident that they will appreciate a little the pains to which the editors go."¹³

In 1906 the following shōsetsu, among others, appeared in Hototogisu: Sachio's Nogiku no Hana (Grave of Wild Chrysanthemums) (January), Kyoshi's Hatauchi (Ploughing) (April), Sōseki's Botchan¹⁴ (April) and Suzuki Miekichi's (1882-1936) Chidori (Plover) (May). This does not mean that those works termed shaseibun were neglected, since both Shihōda and Sokotsu wrote such pieces for the magazine. Moreover, Shihōda and Kyoshi published a selection of their works written during the period 1903-5, under the title of Shaseibun-shū Hotategai (Scallops: A Shaseibun Collection) in 1906. However, what one can see during the years 1905-6 is that there is emerging a shaseibun-like shōsetsu--be it novel or short story--which was to challenge the Naturalist variety of that genre of literature.

From July 1904 through into the following year, Kyoshi and Shihōda tried their hands at writing comments on the current novel and drama in Hototogisu. The title which they gave to these pieces was Bungakkai Bijutsukai: Mangan (Light Observations on the Worlds of Literature and Art). Among others, they dealt with such novelists as Izumi Kyōka, Shimazaki Tōson, Ozaki Kōyō and Oguri Fūyō. These works showed the interest which the shaseibun writers took in the world of fiction.

The contemporary view of the relationship between

shaseibun and shōsetsu is perhaps best shown by a passage which appeared in an article entitled 'Meiji 39-nen Bungei Kyōgaku Shiryō' ('Historical Material for the Teaching and Study of Literature in the Year 1906') in the section, 'Bungeikai' ('The World of Letters'), in the magazine Waseda Bungaku (Waseda Literature) of February 1907. It says:

"On the one hand, there is the conspicuous trend towards Naturalism, developed for the most part by Tōson and Doppo, or towards cherishing philosophical and critical concepts about real life, as is the case with the up-and-coming writers of short stories. (On the other hand,) there is what perhaps ought to be called 'a taste for the world of haiku', which is peculiar to Japanese literature and which, since Shiki's time, has remained hidden in a corner of the literary world, having little intercourse with the general stream. At last, however, because of people like Sōseki, it has shown it has the power to permeate the whole of the literary world."¹⁵

Although it was Kyoshi who was the real leader of the shaseibun movement, in the popular eye, it was Sōseki who was seen to be its most active member, as is suggested in the above passage.

Kikuchiō in Shinjuku Ward, Tokyo. As nanushi, Sōseki's father was a retainer of the Tokugawa government and, as such, enjoyed the position of a civil servant of samurai stock who had a certain amount of local prestige.

Sōseki was the youngest child in a family of five boys and three girls. Soon after birth he was put out to nurse. It is generally accepted that he was sent to the family of a second-hand dealer who lived in

Chapter 3

The Life of Natsume Sōseki

Natsume Kinnosuke, who later in life took the pen-name Sōseki, was born on the fifth day of the first month of the third year of Keiō, which according to the modern calendar would be 19th February 1867. This was a time of great social and political turmoil in Japan, being the year before the final demise of the feudal government of the Tokugawa and the onset of the Meiji Era, a period during which Japan was to be thrown open to outside influence for the first time in centuries. It was, in a word, the year before the Meiji Restoration.

Sōseki's father was Natsume Kohei Naokatsu, the nanushi, or ward chief, of Babashita-yokochō in Ushigome, a part of Edo. The present address of this place is Kikuichō in Shinjuku Ward, Tokyo. As nanushi, Sōseki's father was a retainer of the Tokugawa government and, as such, enjoyed the position of a civil servant of samurai stock who had a certain amount of local prestige.

Sōseki was the youngest child in a family of five boys and three girls. Soon after birth he was put out to nurse. It is generally accepted that he was sent to the family of a second-hand dealer who lived in

Yotsuya in Tokyo, although there is a theory that he was taken in by a greengrocer's family in Genbeimura in Totsuka. Be that as it may, Sōseki was only kept out to nurse for a short time and was soon returned to his family.

However, in 1868, when Sōseki was one year old, his parents sent him as a foster child to Shiobara Shōnosuke and his wife, Yasu. Shiobara, who was in his twenties, was the nanushi of Yotsuya Daisōjimon-mae in Tokyo (the present 2 chōme, Shinjuku). In taking this seemingly extraordinary step it is possible that Sōseki's parents may have been motivated by some vague sense of shame at having had a child so late in life, since at the time of Sōseki's birth his father had been fifty and his mother forty-one. To be charitable, however, it is also possible that Sōseki's parents genuinely thought that he would be better off as the only son of the hitherto childless Shiobaras rather than as the youngest child of eight in their own family. Whatever the reason for this move, it proved to be the first of several steps which led to Sōseki's neurosis in later life.

In 1869 the nanushi system was discontinued and the whole system of local government was reorganized. This meant some financial hardship for Shiobara, but he managed to keep a position under the new system and was moved from Naitō Shinjuku to Asakusa Sangenchō, another area of Tokyo, where he remained until 1871.

In this year, when Sōseki was four years old, Shiobara gave up his job and moved back to Naitō Shinjuku. Here he took over the running of a brothel called Izubashi, which had been closed for some time. This brothel, it seems, was owned by Hisa, the immediate elder sister to Chie, Sōseki's real mother. Shiobara continued this job until the following year, when he was again given an official position and put in charge of an area in the chōme Tamachi, Akasaka. However, on this occasion he did not move house, but commuted from Naitō Shinjuku.

It was in this year (1872) that Shiobara had Sōseki registered as his own son and the legal heir of the Shiobara family. This meant, of course, that Sōseki was removed from the Natsume family register, with the result that his name ceased to be Natsume Kinnosuke and became Shiobara Kinnosuke. It is important to note that Sōseki thought that Shiobara and his wife were his real parents and was not aware that he had been adopted.

In 1873 Shiobara was yet again given a new appointment, and the family moved to Asakusa. All this moving about may have been a little unsettling for Sōseki, who was now six. But he had not yet started school, so there was no disruption on that score, and he was living with people he assumed to be his natural parents. It was in Asakusa, however, that the really unsettling part of his childhood began.

In 1874 Shiobara began having an affair with a woman

who lived in the same area. Her name was Hineno Katsu and she was the twenty-six-year-old widow of a former retainer of the pre-Meiji government. As a result of this affair there was trouble between Shiobara and his wife, Yasu, who finally left home, taking Sōseki with her.

Yasu and Sōseki were taken into the Natsume household for a while. However, they soon left there and for some months lived by themselves. Later in the year the seven-year-old Sōseki was taken back by Shiobara, who was living with Hineno Katsu and her eight-year-old daughter, Ren, in Asakusa. On 1st December he was sent to the Kōritsu Toda Gakkō Katōshōgakkō (Toda Public Lower-Primary School).

The following year was an uneventful one for the young Sōseki and he was able to go through the eighth, seventh and sixth grades at school (the grades being in reverse order in those days). Had he been allowed to continue quietly at school while living with the man he assumed to be his natural father, perhaps the effects of his hitherto unsettled childhood could have been minimized. But there was a further traumatic experience in store for him.

In the next year (1876), when Sōseki was nine, Shiobara gave up his job. This he did in the February. In the April he divorced his wife, and some time about May, Sōseki, having just finished the fourth grade, was sent back to the Natsume family house, presumably because

of some misguided idea on Shiobara's part of trying to give him a better life than he could provide in his own financially straitened circumstances.

Although Sōseki was returned to his natural father's house, he was kept on the Shiobara family register. Indeed, he was not returned to the Natsume family register until he was twenty-one. He must have felt rejected, and when, through rumours, he learned that this was his real home and that his real parents had given him away when he was a baby, his sense of rejection must have been complete. To add to his dislocation, he had of course to change schools, entering the Kōritsu Ichigaya Gakkō Katōshōgakkō (Ichigaya Public Lower-Primary School).

In May of 1877 Sōseki graduated from this lower-primary school and entered the Kanda Enrakuchō Kinka Shōgakkō, an upper-primary school, where he remained for a year until entering middle school. While at primary school, at the age of eleven in fact, he wrote a paragraph for a circulating magazine, entitled 'Masashige-ron' ('On Masashige').¹ This short article was signed 'Shiobara'.

The next year of any note in Sōseki's life was 1881, when he was fourteen years old. It was in this year that his natural mother, Chie, died and that he entered the Nimatsu Middle School, where he began to study Chinese literature.

Up to that time Sōseki's education had been in public

schools. He had, of course, learned a great deal of Chinese poetry at his previous schools, even though they were considered 'modern', because the people who taught him had themselves been brought up under the old system, which laid emphasis on the Chinese classical traditions. However, at the Nimatsu Middle School, which was a private school, he began to study Chinese literature in earnest.

Sōseki seems to have taken to Chinese literature very well; so much so that in the following year, when he was fifteen, he expressed a desire to make literature his career, although not specifying in what capacity. His eldest brother, Daisuke, however, expressing the general opinion of the times, said, "Literature is not something of which to make a career. It is no more than an accomplishment." *Today world in religion and, at*

Sōseki temporarily abandoned his ideas of a literary career and decided that he would become an architect, since he had a very real talent for painting, a talent which he developed many years later when he seriously took up the art of painting in water colours. In order to become an architect, it would of course be necessary for Sōseki to study at university and, with this in mind, he entered the Seiritsu School in Kanda, a school which prepared students for university entrance. It was here that he first began to study English (which he disliked), since it was a compulsory subject for university aspirants. *April of the following year the name of Sōseki's*

In 1884, at the age of seventeen, Sōseki moved out of the Natsume house and took lodgings, together with a friend, Hashimoto Sagorō, on the first floor of the Shinpukuji, a temple in Tokyo, from where he commuted to the Seiritsu School. This was the first time that Sōseki had left home of his own accord and *it is possible* that he did not intend to return. He had not, be it remembered, been re-entered in the Natsume register. It is no accident that he chose a temple for his first lodging. He was a very sensitive boy who had a liking for solitude, and in his choosing to live over a temple with just one friend and to do his own cooking and cleaning we can see a tendency which continued throughout his life: namely a tendency to seek relief from the workaday world in religion and, at pay times, in the quiet of a temple. *had a lodging house*

In the September of this year Sōseki entered the university preparatory section of his school and soon after this suffered a bout of appendicitis which, of itself, was not a significant event, but which led two years later to an attack of peritonitis through which he was unable to sit for promotion examinations and thus had to remain in the same grade. *independence,*

In 1885 Sōseki left the Shinpukuji and moved, with about ten other classmates, to a lodging house called the Suetomiya, which was nearer to his school in Kanda.

In April of the following year the name of Sōseki's

school was changed to the Daiichi Kōtō Chūgakkō (The First Higher Middle School). In July of this year Sōseki, as was mentioned above, was unable to take the examinations required for promotion to the next grade, because of an attack of peritonitis. Up until then he had not been a particularly diligent student, but he seems to have had a change of heart at this time and, from then on, threw himself into his studies so completely and to such good effect that he remained at the top of his class until he graduated from the school.

In this year Sōseki took another step in confirming his independence from the Natsume household by taking a part-time job. His father found himself unable to pay his tuition, so Sōseki took a job as a teacher in a small private preparatory school at the princely pay of five yen a month. The school had a lodging house attached to it and Sōseki moved in there as a further economy measure.

In March 1887 Sōseki's eldest brother, Daisuke, died at the age of thirty-one. In June his second brother, Einosuke, who was only twenty-eight, also died. Sōseki himself contracted acute trachoma and was forced to give up his lodgings, and with them his independence, and to return to the Natsume house.

In January of the following year Sōseki was finally re-registered as a member of the Natsume family, possibly as a result of the fact that two of the Natsume sons

had died in the previous year, coupled with the fact that Sōseki had, however unwillingly, returned home. Whatever the reason, he was now, after an interval of sixteen years, once again Natsume Kinnosuke.

In the July of this year Sōseki graduated from the preparatory division of his school and, at the age of twenty-one, he had to decide which specialist course he wanted to enter in the main school. He decided that he wanted to specialize in English literature. His decision to take literature as his chosen career may be explained by the fact that his brother, Daisuke, who had been opposed to such a course when Sōseki had previously made his feelings known, had died in the following year. However, his choice of English appears at first sight to be somewhat of a puzzle, in view of the fact that he was not, to say the least, over fond of it. The reason for this choice will be dealt with in a later chapter when Sōseki's development as a writer is considered.

In 1889 Sōseki met Masaoka Shiki, also a student at the school, for the first time. Shiki was to have a great influence on the revival of the popularity of haiku poetry and on Sōseki's interest in this form of writing. He was, in fact, destined to play a major role in causing Sōseki to enter the world of letters as a writer. Among Sōseki's fellow students there were several other young men who were to become well known in literary circles.

In the same class as Sōseki there was Yamada Bimyō, who was later to become a novelist, poet and literary critic, and among his seniors were such people as Kawakami Bizan, Ozaki Kōyō and Ishibashi Shian, all of whom became well-known novelists. Of all these budding young writers, however, it was Shiki who was to exert a decisive influence on Sōseki's career.

In May Shiki wrote Nanakusa-shū², a miscellany of kanshi (Chinese poetry), kanbun (Chinese prose), haiku and Japanese prose. Sōseki was very impressed with this work and wrote an extremely favourable critique of it, in which he used his pen-name, Sōseki, for the first time. His pen-name was in keeping with his classical literary studies, being taken from a Chinese classic entitled the Tsin Shu (Book of Tsin). It has the connotation of 'a man who is unwilling to admit defeat'. Fittingly, this critique itself was written in kanbun.

In August of this year Sōseki went on a trip to the Bōsō Peninsular. He wrote an account of this trip in a mixture of kanshi and kanbun, which he entitled Bokusetsu-roku³. This he showed to Shiki, asking him for his comments.

In July 1890 Sōseki graduated from the main section of the Daiichi Kōtō Chūgakkō and after a long summer vacation at Hakone, during which time he wrote a large number of kanshi, he entered the Department of English Literature of Tokyo Imperial University. Financially,

Sōseki was enabled to go to the university because of a scholarship which he received from the Ministry of Education. The trouble with this scholarship, however, was that the money he received was only a loan and had to be repayed after graduation. It took him about four years from the time he left the university to repay this loan in full.

Sōseki's time at university was uneventful. He was not at all sure that he had chosen the right career, but he took quite an active part in literary affairs, joining the committee of the university magazine, Tetsugaku Zasshi (Philosophy Magazine), subsequently publishing in this magazine 'Uoruto Hoittoman-ron' ('On Walt Whitman') and 'Eikoku Shijin no Tenchi Sansen ni Taisuru Kannen' ('English Poets' Concepts of Nature'). He also, while a student, produced an English translation of Kamo no Chōmei's thirteenth-century work, Hōjō-ki (Record of a Ten-Foot-Square Hut).

In the summer of 1891 Tose, the wife of the younger of Sōseki's two surviving brothers, died tragically at the age of twenty-four. It is difficult to assess the extent of the influence of Tose's death on Sōseki. It is known that he admired and respected her very much. It has also been suggested that he was in love with her. It is possible that her death and his feelings for her were partly responsible for the unsatisfactory nature of his relationship with his own wife when he

later married. However, the bulk of the blame for his coldness must be laid to his character, which was formed by events which happened long before he ever met Tose--namely the unsettled nature of his childhood.

During the summer vacation of 1892 Sōseki went on a trip to Kyoto with Shiki. This trip provided a well-earned rest, for, on top of his studies, Sōseki had also, in April that year, taken a job as a teacher at the Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō (Tokyo Specialist School). From Kyoto, Shiki went on to his home in Matsuyama on Shikoku, where Sōseki joined him after a stay in Okayama. It was in Matsuyama that Sōseki was introduced to Takahama Kyoshi, the man who, more than anyone else, was responsible for shaping Sōseki's early career as a professional writer.

In July 1893, aged twenty-six, Sōseki graduated from the Department of English Literature and for a time was registered as a post-graduate student. He had now to look for a job in earnest and, through the good offices of the head of his college, he managed to get a job as an English teacher at the Tōkyō Kōtō Shihan Gakkō (Tokyo Higher Normal School), which later became Tokyo University of Education. Sōseki did not relish the idea of teaching, particularly English. But there was no other course open to a young man whose qualifications were a degree in English and a dilettante interest in the writing of poetry.

Sōseki was an unhappy young man in many ways. He was very nervous and given to fits of depression. Once again, in 1894, he sought solace in religion and in the tranquillity¹ of religious surroundings. In October of this year he took lodgings at a nunnery, the Hōzōin, in Tokyo. Then in December he entered the Enkakuji, a temple in Kamakura, in order to study Zen.

Finding out in February 1894 that he had incipient tuberculosis of the lungs could not have helped his mental state. The situation was made worse by the fact that he failed in his attempt to get taken on the editorial staff of the Japan Mail, an English-language newspaper put out in Yokohama, an essay which he had written on Zen (in English) having been refused.

It is thought that the last straw at this time was an unhappy love affair or, rather, a case of unrequited love, since there was no affair; and Sōseki determined that if he could not leave teaching he could at least leave Tokyo, and so went down to Matsuyama in Shikoku (where Shiki lived) to become a teacher at the Matsuyama Chūgakkō (Matsuyama Middle School), even though, professionally speaking, this was a step down for him.

Sōseki taught at the Matsuyama Middle School from 1895 until April 1896, that is to say for one academic year, when he resigned and went to Kyushu, even further from Tokyo, to become a teacher at the Daigo Kōtō Gakkō (Fifth Higher School) in Kumamoto. He remained there

until 1900, when the Ministry of Education sent him to England.

During these years Sōseki studied the writing of haiku assiduously and gradually became well known in literary circles for his composition of this kind of poetry. He also wrote two articles on English literature. The first was 'Eikoku no Bunjin to Shinbun, Zasshi' ('English Writers and Newspapers and Magazines') (April 1899). The second was a review of a novel and was called 'Shōsetsu Eiruwīn no Hihyō' ('A Criticism of the Novel, Aylwin'). His personal life, however, was still far from happy.

In December 1895 Sōseki took advantage of the year-end holidays to go up to Tokyo to meet Nakane Kyōko, the eldest daughter of Nakane Jūichi, the chief secretary of the House of Peers. This meeting between the two was a prelude to an arranged marriage, subject of course to the consent of the two parties concerned. In the event, they became engaged and were married in the following June, when Sōseki was twenty-nine and Kyōko was twenty.

The marriage, not a love match, was never easy and in those early days it must have been especially trying for Kyōko. She was informed by her husband at the outset of their marriage that, being a scholar, he would not have time to devote to her. Other factors also conspired to make life miserable for her. In 1897 she

had a miscarriage. The following year she suffered from acute hysteria and tried to drown herself. In the same year she became pregnant again, and around September we have the pitiful spectacle of Kyōko suffering terrible bouts of morning sickness, while Sōseki himself suffered from nervous debility. This time, however, his Kyōko did not have a miscarriage and their first child, Fudeko, was born.

The only bright spots in Sōseki's personal life were his promotion to professor, with a consequent rise in salary, and an improvement in his financial situation due to the fact that he finished repaying his scholarship money and also due to the fact that he no longer had to send money to his real father (to whose upkeep he had been contributing for some time) since he died in June 1897 at the age of eighty-four.

In the year 1900 Fate, in the form of the Ministry of Education, took a hand in shaping Sōseki's career. In May Sōseki was advised by the Ministry that he had been deputed to go to England to study. His field of study had been designated as English language and not literature, so he went up to Tokyo in July and called at the Ministry to clarify this point. He was told that he need not be too rigid in the interpretation of his orders and that he was free to study literature, too.

On 8th September Sōseki sailed for England from Yokohama, leaving behind a pregnant (as it turned out)

Kyōko and their daughter, Fudeko. Such were Sōseki's financial straits that he was forced to send his wife and daughter to live with his in-laws while he was in England.

Sōseki arrived in London on 28th October. The major problem that faced him was where he should pursue his studies. At first he considered Cambridge and payed a visit to the university there. However, according to his account of this period in the Introduction to Bungaku-ron (On Literature), he decided that what he considered to have been the dilettante atmosphere there made it an unsuitable place in which to study, in view of his small allowance and the short time at his disposal. He rejected the idea of studying at Oxford because he felt that it was probably much the same as Cambridge.

After considering one or two other possibilities, Sōseki finally decided to study at London University. His decision seems to have been largely influenced by the fact that his orders from the Japanese Ministry of Education had been to study language, and he felt that London was the best place to do this. He did not wish to pick up dialect and assumed, erroneously, that here he would only be surrounded by pure English, since this was the capital.

Accordingly, he enrolled at London University as an auditor to study the history of modern English lit-

erature. However, he only attended lectures for two or three months, for reasons which will be discussed later. Soon after beginning his studies at the university, Sōseki also engaged a private tutor, Dr. Craig, a Shakespearean scholar, with whom he continued to study for approximately the first year of his stay in England.

During his second year in England Sōseki studied mostly by himself, compiling notes for what he hoped would be a magnum opus on the nature of literature, a work which he expected to spend about ten years writing after he returned to Japan. It was in January of this year (1901) that Kyōko gave birth to her second daughter, Tsuneko. Tsuneko, who was studying in Berlin, received

These two years were particularly miserable ones for Sōseki for three reasons. The first two were loneliness and lack of money. The money which Sōseki received from the Ministry of Education was very little indeed, and he found it all but impossible to make ends meet. In an effort to economize, he moved from one boarding house to another, each one cheaper than the last. He lodged variously in Gower Street (in central London), West Hampstead, Camberwell New Road, Tooting and Clapham Common, all more or less in the suburbs.

The third reason is that Sōseki finally became convinced that he had made the wrong choice in taking English literature for a career. He did not relish the idea of going back to Japan as a country school teacher,

so in February of his second year he began writing letters to friends in an attempt to get himself transferred from the Daijō Kōkō, where he was still technically on the staff.

During his first year in England Sōseki became rather neurotic, and towards the end of his stay his neurosis worsened. A glance at the correspondence between Sōseki and his wife during this second year shows that their relationship was a contributing factor to this. News of Sōseki's mental problems filtered back to Japan. It was rumoured, in fact, that he was insane. About a month before Sōseki was due to return home, Fujishiro Teisuke, who was studying in Berlin, received a telegram from the Japanese Ministry of Education, telling him to go to London and bring Sōseki home with him at once. Fujishiro went to London and spent the night at Sōseki's lodgings. The first thing that struck him about the room was that a man with as little money to live on as Sōseki should have been able to amass so vast a number of books.

Fujishiro urged Sōseki to return with him to Japan at once, but Sōseki declined, saying that a trip he had just made to Scotland had taken longer than expected and he had had no time to pack his books. He refused to ask anybody else to pack his books for him, so Fujishiro had no alternative but to return to Japan alone.

Sōseki eventually left England on 5th December 1902,

taking with him no very happy memories of the people or the life he had lived there.

He arrived in Kobe on 23rd January of the following year, completely unannounced. The first news that anybody had of his arrival in Japan was the telegram which his wife received from Kobe, telling her what train her husband would be on.

It was almost two years later to the day that the first instalment of Sōseki's first novel, Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, appeared in print. These two years were eventful ones for Sōseki. They saw a marked worsening in his neurosis, caused partly by a deterioration in the relationship between him and his wife, and his gradual transformation from an academic into a novelist, although for some time he was to continue in both roles.

These two years and the years 1905-7 (Kusa Makura was published in September 1906) are treated in detail in two subsequent chapters, since their most important features are concerned with Sōseki's professional life, both as a teacher and as a writer. This chapter, then, will confine itself to a brief outline of Sōseki's life at this period.

When Sōseki left Japan for England he had sold his household effects, and was now faced with the necessity of setting up house from scratch, since all he possessed were his books and the clothes he stood up in. It is impossible that he had any money saved, since he had

gone short of food in England in order to buy books. Kyōko, too, had been unable to save anything from the small allowance which she received while Sōseki was away. In her memoirs, Sōseki no Omoide (Memories of Sōseki), she describes how she had to skimp and scrape to eke out a bare existence. For two months Sōseki, Kyōko and the children were forced to live with Kyōko's family.

However, while Sōseki was in England, two jobs had been arranged for him. The first of these positions was as a teacher of English at the Daiichi Kōtō Gakkō (First Higher School) in Tokyo. The second, obtained through the good offices of Ōtsuka Yasuji⁴, was as a lecturer in English literature at Tokyo Imperial University, a post which had been held by Lafcadio Hearn until then.

Sōseki's neurosis continued to worsen and lasted well into 1904, with the peak coming, according to his wife in Sōseki no Omoide, sometime at the end of the year. Kyōko in fact left Sōseki in July 1903 and, taking the children with her, lived apart from him for approximately two months. She gives as her main reason the fact that Sōseki was subject to paroxysms, throwing things and getting angry if the children cried, and she was afraid that he would hurt them.

Sōseki continued to teach English at the First Higher School and to give lectures on English liter-

ature, using for material the notes he had gathered while in England. His dislike of teaching grew stronger and stronger, but his financial circumstances forced him to continue in this career. interest which occurred

He published very little in 1903, but 1904 saw the publication of some translations from English literature, an essay on Macbeth and some original Japanese poetry.

Shiki had died while Sōseki was in England, but Takahama Kyoshi had kept in contact with Sōseki and persuaded him to write a short non-academic piece entitled Jitensha Nikki for the literary magazine, Hototogisu, which Takahama had more or less taken over after Shiki's death. This work was published in 1903 and marks the beginning of Sōseki's career as a writer of prose outside university circles, although it should be noted that passages from letters written while Sōseki was in England had already been published in Hototogisu.

From October 1904 Sōseki contributed poetry to Hototogisu. Then, at the end of the year, Takahama suggested that he might like to write a piece of shaseibun. Sōseki agreed and produced what is now the first chapter of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, but which at the time was intended as a short piece in its own right. This was introduced to the Yama-kai by Takahama in December. It was published in the January issue of Hototogisu and was an immediate success. Sōseki then wrote what is now the second chapter of the book, and again this

was well-received. It was at this point that he first had the idea of writing a full-length work, and thus truly began on his career as a writer.

Other events of passing interest which occurred in the years 1903 and 1904 are the birth of a third daughter, Elko, in October 1903, *(a second daughter, Tsuneko, had been born in 1901, while Sōseki was in England)* and Sōseki's appointment as a lecturer at Meiji University in Tokyo in April 1904.

Throughout 1905 and 1906 Sōseki continued to lecture on English literature and to put these lectures into some kind of form for later publication. He also continued to write pieces of non-academic fiction and increasingly toyed with the idea of giving up teaching and becoming a full-time writer. 1906 is a particularly noteworthy year, since it was then that he completed the manuscript of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru and also published his second and third novels, Botchan and Kusa Makura. He also wrote his fourth novel, Nowaki (The Wintry Blast), at the end of this year, but it was not published until January 1907.

Sōseki had become quite a celebrated writer by now, and the respect in which he was held in literary circles even as early as the end of 1905 is attested to by the fact that a group of young aspiring writers asked to study under him. In this first group of Sōseki's 'disciples' were Morita Sōhei, Komiya Toyotaka, Suzuki Mie-kichi and Terada Torahiko. Also at this time, December

1905, a fourth child was born to Soseki and his wife.
It was another girl, Aiko.

In 1907 Sōseki finally realized his long-cherished ambition to become a full-time professional writer. Torii Sugawa of the Osaka Asahi (Morning Sun) Newspaper introduced him to the overall editor-in-chief, Ikebe Sanzan. In March Ikebe offered Sōseki a job. Sōseki accepted with alacrity, and it was agreed that he would write two novels a year, each consisting of approximately one hundred instalments. These were to be for the exclusive use of the Asahi. In return he was to receive two hundred yen a month, which represented a marked increase in income, thus adding to the attraction of the position. In April Sōseki resigned from his teaching posts, before the end of the academic year he it noted, and became a member of the editorial staff of the Asahi. He was forty years old.

The years from 1907 to 1916, when Sōseki died, were extremely successful ones when viewed solely from a literary standpoint. With the exception of course of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, Botchan, Kusa Makura and Nowaki, all of his major works were written during these years, first serialized in the Asahi and later published as books. Synopses of these works are provided in Appendix 2, but it may be useful here to take a look at them in chronological order. The dates given are those of the appearance of the works in the Asahi.

Gubijinsō (The Red Poppy) 23rd June-28th Oct. 1907
Kōfu (The Miner) 1st Jan.-6th April 1908
Yume Jūya⁵ (Ten Nights of Dreams) July and August 1908
Sanshirō⁶ 1st Sept.-29th Dec. 1908
Sore Kara (And Then) 27th June-14th Oct. 1909
Mon (The Gate) 1st March-12th June 1910
Higan Sugi Made⁷ (By Just After the Spring Equinox) 1st Jan.-29th April 1912
Kōjin⁸ (The Wanderer) 6th Dec. 1912-7th April 1913
Jinrō⁹ (Evil Passions) 16th Sept.-15th Nov. 1913
Kokoro (The Heart of Things) 20th April-11th Aug. 1914
Michikusa (Grass by the Wayside) 3rd June-10th Sept. 1915
Meian¹⁰ (Light and Shade) 26th May-14th Dec. 1916

Chief among his sketches and essays written at this time are Bunchō (Java Sparrow) (June 1908), Mankan Tokoro-dokoro (Here and There in Manchuria and Korea) (October-November 1909), written after a trip to these countries, Omoidasu Koto Nado (Random Recollections) (October 1910-February 1911), Watakushi no Kojinshugi (My View of Individualism), originally delivered as a talk at Gakushūin University on 25th November 1914, and Garasudo no Naka (Within Glass Doors) (January-February 1915).

Sōseki's works had a great influence on the younger members of the literary world and many aspiring writers approached him with a view to studying under him. Of these, the man who was to become most famous as a writer

was Akutagawa Ryūnosuke.

A measure of Sōseki's fame as a writer is that, in a poll conducted by the Taiyō (Sun) Magazine to celebrate its twenty-second anniversary, he took top place in the literary section. For some reason, however, Sōseki refused to accept the prize of a gold cup. He also refused to accept an honorary Ph D in literature when it was offered to him in 1912. It is thought that in the latter case his reason for refusing was that he considered that the honour had been too long in coming and therefore declined when it was finally made.

If Sōseki's professional life was a great success, his personal life was just the reverse. His marriage never improved, although three more children were born to Sōseki and his wife: two boys, Jun'ichi (June 1907) and Shinroku (December 1908), and a fifth girl, Hinako (June 1910). Tragically, Hinako fell ill and died in her second year.

Sōseki continued to suffer from persecution mania and to have frequent bouts of nervous debility, one such bout lasting for the whole of the first half of 1913. He also suffered from stomach trouble while on a trip to Manchuria and Korea in 1909. It was later found that he had ulcers. These continued to plague him, and on several occasions he was confined to his bed. Indeed, he spent four months in hospital (from October 1910 to February 1911) after having vomited blood and

fallen into a coma while on a trip to Shuzenji, a hot-spring resort. He was also operated on twice for haemorrhoids (once in 1911 and once in 1912) and in his final year (1916) was found to have diabetes. ~~Bunken-in~~

During the forced convalescences of his later years, Sōseki took up the painting of water colours very seriously. He also spent a lot of time in doing calligraphy and in writing kanshi. In fact, when he was writing Meian, he spent the mornings writing the book and the afternoons writing kanshi. Perhaps these activities show a calmer state of mind. Certain it is that towards the end of his life he claimed that he had achieved a state of enlightenment, which he dubbed sokutenkyoshi (literally 'follow heaven and depart from the self'). Although he never explained this idea concretely, it possibly refers to a state of mind which enabled Sōseki as a writer to view life with equanimity and to avoid the suicide or insanity which would seem to be the inevitable end of a man who, like Sōseki in his later novels, looked at life as no more than an arena in which various egos battled one with another. One hopes that he did indeed find some solace at the end.

On 22nd November 1916 Sōseki once again suffered from his ulcers. His condition deteriorated and on 28th November there was extensive internal bleeding. Further internal bleeding occurred on 2nd December and Sōseki was ordered to rest completely and forbidden

to have any visitors. However, this was to no avail and he died at a quarter to seven on the evening of 9th December, aged forty-nine. He was buried at Zōshigaya Cemetery in Tokyo. His Buddhist name is Bunken-in Kodō Sōseki Koji.

The last instalment of Meian that Sōseki wrote was published in the Asahi on 14th December.

Although Sōseki had been exposed to a great deal of Chinese poetry from an early age, he first began a formal study of this subject when, at the age of fourteen, he entered the Nimatsu Middle School.

In 1883, two years later, Sōseki entered the Daiichi School in order to study for the university entrance examinations. It was here that he first began to study English.

It will be seen, then, that Sōseki's first serious study of Chinese literature predates his first contact with English by only two years. Moreover, although Sōseki continued to receive an education in English right up until the time he graduated from university, his formal education in Chinese literature was only for that short period that he was a pupil at the Nimatsu School.

In July 1888, as we have seen, Sōseki graduated from the preparatory department of the Daiichi Kōtō Chūgakkō

Chapter 4

Sōseki, The Writer

(a) Before Going to England

Although Sōseki had been exposed to a great deal of Chinese poetry from an early age, he first began a formal study of this subject when, at the age of fourteen, he entered the Nimatsu Middle School.

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It was facts which struck him forcibly when he was studying in London and found that he was unable to appreciate the value of his love of Chinese poetry, did Sōseki

In July 1888, as we have seen, Sōseki graduated from the preparatory department of the Daiichi Kōtō Chūgakkō

and, resolving to specialize in English literature, entered the main section of the school in September of the same year. Here he remained until his graduation and subsequent entry into the English Literature Department of Tokyo Imperial University in 1890. The most noteworthy aspect of these two years was the establishment of a close relationship between himself and Masaoka Shiki.

One point that must be stressed is that, although Sōseki was embarked upon the specialist study of English literature, he had by no means forsaken Chinese literature. This is shown by the fact that his critique of Masaoka Shiki's work, Nanakusa-shū, was written in kanbun and that a record of a trip which he made to the Bōsō Peninsular in August 1889 was written in a mixture of kanshi and kanbun, under the title of Bokusetsu-roku.

In writing this record, there were three possibilities open to Sōseki. He could have written in prose, in a series of haiku or in Chinese. It is significant that he chose the last of these three forms. It shows that Sōseki had the literary tastes of a traditionalist: the form of literature which attracted him most was poetry, and not poetry written in yamatokotoba (pure Japanese) but in kanbun.

Why, then, with this love of Chinese poetry, did Sōseki choose to study English literature at university? Etō Jun offers the following explanation:

"Both Sōseki's original and foster families had been local administrators under the Tokugawa shogunate, enjoying a social status equal to that of samurai. A boy growing up in two administrative families inevitably received thorough training in Chinese classics embodying Confucian ethics, and in historical studies dealing with problems of government. Sōseki's original concept of literature, like that of many raised under similar circumstances, stressed its public, rather than private function. The study of English literature became, for him, as much a form of service to his nation as work in government would have been. And a scholar, no less than a government official, would have to compete with Western scholars on an equal basis in order to produce work worthy of the new civilization to be built."¹

Etō's point is that Sōseki changed to English literature because he had studied the Chinese classics.

Where some were trying to gain Western technical knowledge to aid their country, Sōseki was trying to gain a knowledge of one of the cultural aspects of Western civilization with the same end in view.

Etō's explanation is a reasonable one. It was, in fact, this objective which caused Sōseki so much heartache while he was in England, since he began to doubt whether his knowledge of literature could possibly have any useful public function.

There is another consideration which may have played a part in Sōseki's decision. It is possible that he may have had some idea that a knowledge of English would enable him to introduce traditional Japanese literature to the West. Whether or not he had any such concrete purpose is open to debate, but it is a fact that he ~~was~~ complied with a request by Professor

J.M.Dixon² to translate Kamo no Chōmei's thirteenth-century work, Hōjō-ki, and write an English commentary to it.

Anyone with a knowledge of the Chinese classics and Western literature may wonder at Sōseki's apparently light-hearted decision to change from one such different subject to another. In order to understand why he was able to do this, one must first realize that, as has been seen already, Sōseki had no intention of deserting Chinese literature in favour of its Western counterpart. Moreover, he did not regard what he was doing as 'changing' at all. In his own estimation he was only extending his studies to another facet of that phenomenon which he had studied and loved for many years-- literature. Differences, of course, he expected. But he believed that, essentially, Chinese and English literature were only two sides of the same coin. His realization that they were radically different only developed very slowly and did not reach fruition until the time when he was in London about ten years later.

"I enjoyed studying the Chinese classics when I was a boy. Although I only studied them for a short time, it was through them that I formed a vague definition of what literature was. I privately thought that English literature would be much the same kind of thing. If this were so, then there could be absolutely no reason, I thought, to cause me to regret devoting my whole life to the study of it. It was for this simple and childish reason that I was led to enter the unfashionable Department of English Literature at the Imperial University. . . . By the time I graduated . . . I had a sense of desolation and felt uneasy, as though I

had been deceived in my study of English literature. I carried this feeling of uneasiness westward with me to Matsuyama, and a year later went farther west to Kumamoto. My uneasiness had still not disappeared when, some years later, I went to London. . . .

"I do not think that my scholastic ability in the Chinese classics is especially good, and yet I am confident that I am able to appreciate them adequately. My knowledge of English is not, of course, profound, but I do not think that it is inferior to my knowledge of literary Chinese. Since I have an equal proficiency in both, my strong attachment to the one and my strong dislike of the other can only be due to the fact that they are essentially very different. What is called literature in Chinese and that phenomenon which is called literature in English are so different as to be impossible to include within the same definition."³

The works which Sōseki produced while he was a student at Tokyo Imperial University show the breadth of his studies. In 1892 he wrote a thesis entitled 'Rōshi no Tetsugaku' ('The Philosophy of Lao-tzu'). In July of the same year he became a committee member of the magazine, Tetsugaku Zasshi, and in the October published a work entitled 'Uoruto Hoittoman-ron' in this magazine. The following year saw the publication of his essay, 'Eikoku Shijin no Tenchi Sansen ni Taisuru Kannen'. His way back to Japan in 1895 he suffered a

In his Introduction to Bungaku-ron, Sōseki states that at this period he was also required to learn Latin, French and German, although judging from the fact that most of the works of Latin, French and German literature that he possessed at the time of his death were in English translation, it is doubtful whether he gained

any great facility in any of these languages. This period, however, was naturally devoted to scholarship, and the works which Sōseki wrote at this time were, therefore, scholarly in nature.

Sōseki graduated from the English Literature Department in 1893, and in 1895 went to teach English for one year in Shikoku. From here he moved to Kumamoto in Kyushu, where he taught for the next four years until he went to England. During his years in Shikoku and Kyushu, Sōseki wrote many haiku and kanshi as well as publishing 'Torisutoramu Shandē' ('Tristram Shandy') in Kōko Bungaku (Literature for the Public) in 1897 and 'Shōsetsu Eiruwīn no Hihyō' in Hototogisu in 1899. Of particular interest with regard to Sōseki's development as a writer are his haiku and his 'Shōsetsu Eiruwīn no Hihyō'.

Masaoka Shiki, who had left university half-way through, had already succeeded in founding the Hototogisu school of haiku writing by this time. He worked as a newspaper reporter and went to the Liao-tung Peninsula as a war correspondent covering the Sino-Japanese War. On his way back to Japan in 1895 he suffered a haemorrhage of the lungs and had to go straight into hospital when he arrived in Kobe. After he had recovered somewhat he went back to Matsuyama (where he had been born, and where Sōseki was teaching at the time) to convalesce. Sōseki invited Shiki to come and live in his boarding house. Shiki accepted the invitation and stayed

with Sōseki for about two months. Thus it was that Sōseki became engrossed in the writing of haiku from the autumn of 1895 and continued to write them during the years he was in Shikoku and Kyushu.

While in Matsuyama, Sōseki wrote six hundred and seventy-nine haiku. While in Kumamoto, he wrote eight hundred and fifteen. (This is only counting numbered haiku from Volumes 15-35 of Masaoka Shiki e Okuritaru Kukō [Haiku Sent to Masaoka Shiki]⁴). This gives a grand total of one thousand four hundred and ninety-four, a truly prolific output, which is two and a half times as many as Sōseki wrote in the last twenty-one years of his life.⁵

Although the fact that Sōseki wrote a series of *sixty-eight* kanshi from the end of 1897 through into the following year shows that he had by no means lost interest in Chinese poetry, sheer weight of numbers indicates that his overwhelming literary passion at the time was writing haiku. The writing of kanshi is undoubtedly a creative literary activity, yet one feels that, for a Japanese, it is either an academic exercise or the work of a dilettante. It might, of course, be argued that the writing of haiku is scarcely a 'professional' activity but, given the fact that, thanks largely to Masaoka Shiki, the haiku was enjoying at this period a great revival as a literary form, one may say that Sōseki's predilection

for this form of poetry evinces a desire to be a 'serious' writer: one whose works would have an impact on the current literary world.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that Sōseki's admiration for both kanshi and haiku helps explain something which appears somewhat of a puzzle at first sight: namely that in his later study of English literature he showed a particular interest in the eighteenth century: that period which saw both the flowering of Neo-Classicism and the revival of Romanticism. His liking for both these forms of poetry makes it easier to understand how he could have admired, on the one hand, poets whose literary ideals were those of ancient Rome and Greece and who had a penchant for composing Latin verse, and yet have responded as he did to the poetry of such poets as Wordsworth and Coleridge.

To return to the main theme, however. Sōseki's years in Shikoku and Kyushu constitute a period in which the scholar is gradually giving place to the writer. Strictly speaking, one ought to say that these two aspects of his work were running parallel, since he continued to write works of a scholarly nature. However, at this time he expressed a desire to give himself to writing, and one may say that this period foreshadows the actual demise of Sōseki the scholar and the birth of Sōseki the popular novelist which occurred some years after his return from England.

"I want to read freely, speak freely and write freely."⁶ (My italics)

As can be seen from the passage from the Introduction to Bungaku-ron quoted earlier, Sōseki's disaffection with English literature was something which gradually grew during his years at university and which continued to increase during his years in Matsuyama and Kumamoto. This, then, is the other side of the coin. Together with his positive desire to be a writer, Sōseki was antipathetic towards English literature.

Another fact which added fuel to the fire of Sōseki's desire to get away from scholarship (insofar as it was concerned with English) and to become a writer of Japanese literature was that he decided he was not suited to the job of teaching. In an article written as early as November 1895 he wrote, "I am not cut out to be a teacher."⁷ This was written only a few months after he had started teaching at Matsuyama, and all the indications are that this conviction grew rather than dwindled. It is possible that there may have been some interplay between his attitude towards English literature and his attitude towards teaching: that, in fact, he regarded his study of English literature as a necessary evil, inasmuch as it was something which he had to study in order to do a job which he did not want to do in the first place.

By 1898 Sōseki's proficiency at writing haiku had

already become sufficiently recognized for him to have attracted a group of followers, chief among whom was Terada Torahiko, who wanted him to teach them haiku composition. This he began to do in the September. In November of the same year he published 'Fugen no Gen',⁸ a short piece about double-entendres in haiku and in Western literature, in Hototogisu. This was followed in the April of the following year by 'Eikoku no Bunjin to Shinbun, Zasshi'.

We have now seen three distinct aspects of Sōseki's contact with literature: kanshi, haiku and the academic study of English literature. It is easy to draw the two threads of his kanshi and haiku together, since they are both poetry, both Oriental in origin and, more important, because they are the sum product to date of his aspirations to be an original creative writer. What, however, of the connection between this facet of his endeavours and his study of English literature?

In his previously-mentioned review of Aylwin, a recently published English novel by Watts-Dunton, Sōseki makes the following remarks:

"The first thing that surprises one when one reads English novels is that they are extremely long-winded. There are of course short ones, but the majority of novels published from the eighteenth century until the present day have been prolix. One feels, at least, that it would have been better to do away with the useless passages and reduce the work by half. . . . There is no doubt that describing a thing from A to Z makes for clarity, but the result is, so to speak, a textbook. This is uninteresting

from the point of view of natural power. . . .
 A writer should set down four-fifths of what
 he wants to say, but leave room for the reader
 to use his powers of imagination as regards
 the remaining fifth. . . . This is an indispen-
 sible method when writing poetry. That is why
 poetry is shorter than prose. Milton's Paradise
 Lost is undeniably long, but were it re-written
 in prose, it would run to at least two or three
 times its present length. Thus, in order to
 make prose poetic, one has to cut out useless
 narration. . . . Aylwin is a long work, running
 to some four hundred and seventy-odd pages.
 It is, it goes without saying, not one of those
 short stories which are so popular nowadays.
 However, considering its complexity of content,
 there is not the slightest prolixity. Having
 read through it, there is not one passage which
 one considers superfluous. . . . Aylwin is,
 for a novel, extremely near poetry."9

This is very significant, for these remarks bring
 together the threads of Sōseki the creative writer--
 the poet--and Sōseki the student of English literature.
 The particular significance of these comments lies in
 the fact that Sōseki seems to be holding up poetic
 conciseness of expression as the hallmark of a good
 novel and that in a later article, entitled 'Yoga
Kusa Makura' (My Kusa Makura'), he said that in writing
Kusa Makura he was trying to write "a haiku-like novel".
 Agreed that there are many other facets to a haiku
 than its conciseness, but conciseness is undeniably one
 of the major characteristics of Japanese poetry in gen-
 eral, as it is of kanshi, too.

The date of this article
 strongly suggests
 (1899) that Sōseki was echoing the ideas of Shiki and
 his followers, since it was at this period (1898-1900)
 that Shiki, in such works as Shōen no Ki, and Kyoshi, in

Asakusadera no Kusagusa, were attempting to apply the idea of shasei to prose writing.

In the year 1900, as we have seen, Sōseki was ordered by the Japanese Ministry of Education to go to England to continue his studies. The most obvious result of this posting was twofold. First, it diverted his energies away from creative writing just at a time when he was beginning to blossom and receive recognition as a poet--as witness the fact that his haiku were beginning to find their way into the newspaper. Second, he was removed from even that peripheral position which he had occupied in the Japanese literary world while in Kyushu, and was thus deprived of all direct contact with what was going on in the field of contemporary Japanese literature.

His move to England, then, entailed not only a complete change of social environment but of literary environment, too. As Sōseki, himself, says in the Introduction to Bungaku-ron, referring to his first teaching job in Tokyo Imperial University on his return from England:

"I was a person who had been a teacher in the country. I had gone abroad from there and had then been catapulted to Tokyo from a foreign land. I knew scarcely anything concerning the workings of the currents in the mainstream of Japanese literature."¹⁰

Before going on to consider Sōseki's years in London,

it is necessary to pause for a moment to consider what influence, if any, Meiji Japanese novelists may have had on him at the time, since so far only his connection with English literature, with haiku and with Chinese literature has been mentioned, and since it has been implied that these three threads, if followed out, will be seen to have had a great influence on Sōseki the novelist, particularly in his writing of Kusa Makura.

~~By the time that Sōseki went to England in 1900 at the age of thirty-three, there is no doubt that he had read novels by contemporary and early-Meiji writers. He had, however, never expressed any intention of becoming a novelist himself. Nor had he dealt with any Japanese novel in any of his writings up to that time. Had he had any interest, either as an academic or as a potential writer of novels himself, it would have been natural for him to have at least drawn parallels or pointed out contrasts between the Japanese and English novel in such works as 'Shōsetsu Eiruwīn no Hihyō' and 'Torisutoramu Shandē'. This, however, he did not do.~~

All this would seem to imply that if Sōseki had any interest in Japanese novels at this time, it was merely as a casual reader. One might argue that even a casual acquaintance with Japanese novels may have influenced his later views of what a novel ought to be. But Sōseki entered the world of prose fiction through the shasei-bun school and not through that of the Naturalists, and

it is necessary to pause for a moment to consider what influence, if any, Meiji Japanese novelists may have had on him at the time, since so far only his connection with English literature, with haiku and with Chinese literature has been mentioned, and since it has been implied that these three threads, if followed out, will be seen to have had a great influence on Sōseki the novelist, particularly in his writing of Kusa Makura.

As an educated man, it is quite within the bounds of possibility that Sōseki had read novels by contemporary and early-Meiji writers by the time that he went to England in 1900 at the age of thirty-three. There is, however, no record of his expressing any intention of becoming a novelist himself. He had not, moreover, discussed any Japanese novel in any of his writings up to that time. Had he had any interest, either as an academic or as a writer of novels himself, it would have been natural for him to have at least drawn parallels or pointed out contrasts between the Japanese and English novel in such works as 'Shōsetsu Eiruwīn no Hihyō' and 'Torisatoramu Shandē'. This, however, he did not do.

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his connection with shaseibun and the process by which he became a prose writer are the subject of later chapters. Such considerations, however, are beside the point as far as the year 1900 is concerned since, as we have seen, at the time Sōseki went to England, his active interest in literature was made up of two complementary parts. His interest in the novel was in the English novel and was the interest of an academic, while his interest in Japanese literature was principally in the haiku, a form of writing totally alien in viewpoint from the Meiji novel in any form to date. Moreover, his interest in the haiku was that of a creative writer. Sōseki's interest in kanshi was another facet of his creative literary aspirations.

The following passage from the Introduction to Bungaku-ron offers an explanation as to why Sōseki adopted this mode of study in the first place and why he gave it up at the end of a year.

"I, of course, had no intention of using this as material for a thesis. Nor did I intend to use it for giving lectures after returning to Japan. My sole intention was to get through as many pages as I possibly could. To tell the truth, although I had graduated in English literature, I did not really have enough knowledge of my speciality to warrant being commissioned to study abroad. Not only had my comings and goings after graduation taken me daily farther away from the centre of the literary world, but also, for personal reasons, I had not had the opportunity to devote myself to reading as much as I would have liked. Thus it was a natural regret that of every ten famous books which everyone was talking about I had only perused six or seven (or sometimes had only heard their names) which decided me to utilise this opportunity. It was, then, with

Chapter 5

Sōseki, The Writer

(b) While in England

The next important phase of Sōseki's literary development took place during the two years he was in England.

In Chapter 3 we saw how Sōseki enrolled as an auditor at London University, only to give up this course of study after two or three months. We also saw how he discontinued his studies under Dr. Craig after about a year. The following passage from the Introduction to Bungaku-ron offers an explanation as to why Sōseki adopted this mode of study in the first place and why he gave it up at the end of a year.

"I, of course, had no intention of using this as material for a thesis. Nor did I intend to use it for giving lectures after returning to Japan. My sole intention was to get through as many pages as I possibly could. To tell the truth, although I had graduated in English literature, I did not really have enough knowledge of my speciality to warrant being commissioned to study abroad. Not only had my comings and goings after graduation taken me daily farther away from the centre of the literary world, but also, for personal reasons, I had not had the opportunity to devote myself to reading as much as I would have liked. Thus it was a natural regret that of every ten famous books which everyone was talking about I had only perused six or seven (or sometimes had only heard their names) which decided me to utilize this opportunity. It was, then, with

no other end in view than to read as much as possible that I decided upon this policy.

"When a year had passed in this way, however, and I examined the number of books I had read to date, I realized how very few they amounted to, compared with those I had not read, and realized that it would be very stupid of me to throw away the remaining year in the same way. At this point I had to change my approach to study."¹

The above quotation seems to show that Sōseki's sole reason for giving up this mode of study was that progress by this means was too slow, given the short time available to him. However, following almost immediately on from the above-quoted section is the passage quoted earlier in which Sōseki tells how his view of literature had been based on his study of the Chinese classics, and how it was the belief that both Chinese and English literature would be essentially the same that had led him to study English literature at university. He continues by saying that an uneasiness with regard to English literature had been growing in him ever since his university days. He then refers to his "strong attachment" to Chinese literature and his "strong dislike" for English literature. He concludes this paragraph by saying, ". . . that phenomenon which is called literature in Chinese and that phenomenon which is called literature in English are so different as to be impossible to include within the same definition."

Sōseki continues two or three lines later, "I decided at this point that I had to find an answer to the,

question 'What is the basic nature of literature?'. Simultaneously, the idea of using the remaining year as the first stage in studying this problem was born in my mind. . . .I swore to find . . .the psychological necessity for literature. . . .I swore to find . . . the sociological necessity for literature."

Another passage relevant to this subject is to be found in 'Watakushi no Kojinshugi'. Here Sōseki is talking of his inability to understand English literature. He describes his state as that of one who is tied up in a bag.

"I was impatient and thought that if I just had one gimlet in my hand I would certainly be able to bore a hole in one place--somewhere. Unfortunately, nobody could give me the gimlet, nor was it possible to find it myself. Deep down, I kept wondering what would become of me in the future, and spent many unimaginably gloomy and melancholy days. I had felt the uneasiness when I graduated from university, and had taken it with me to Matsuyama and to Kumamoto. Now I had finally arrived in a foreign country with the same uneasiness tucked away within me.

"However, once having come abroad, I of course felt a revival of my sense of responsibility to a certain extent. I therefore did my utmost and studied with all that was in me. But, no matter what books I read, I was unable to get out of the sack. And though I walked the length and breadth of London, searching for a gimlet with which to bore through this sack, I could not find one. I stayed in my one-room lodgings, thinking. I thought that it was a cheerless state of affairs. I gave up and decided that I would not be satisfied, however much I read. At the same time, I lost my ability to see the purpose of reading."²

The one thing which emerges clearly from the above quotations is Sōseki's frustration at not being able

to penetrate beneath the surface of English literature and, hence, his dislike of it. This presents an apparent paradox. Namely, why should Sōseki continue to study English literature in depth when he disliked it so?

It may be argued that he did not say that he was going to study the nature of English literature, but the nature of literature itself. However, when one considers that Bungaku-ron, which was the product of his second year's study in England, uses almost exclusively examples from English literature to illustrate characteristics of literature, it becomes evident that, at this period at any rate, the study of the nature of literature meant for Sōseki the study of the nature of English literature.

Such phrases as "the psychological necessity for literature" and "the sociological necessity for literature" in the Introduction to Bungaku-ron and remarks like, "I kept wondering what would become of me in the future." and "I of course felt a revival of my sense of responsibility to some extent." in 'Watakushi no Kojinshugi' provide clues to the answer to this seeming paradox. However, in order to understand this problem fully, it is necessary to trace a thread which ran parallel to Sōseki's reading of English literature during his first year in London. This is a thread that gave rise to his 'scientific' study of literature during his second year.

In May Ikeda Kikunae, a Japanese scientist, came to England from Germany and moved into the lodgings where Sōseki was staying at the time. He remained here until moving on to Kensington on 26th June. Sōseki's diary for this period shows that he and Ikeda spent a great deal of time together, discussing many problems. The following entries will serve as examples.

6th May: Talked with Mr. Ikeda until past midnight.

9th May: Spoke this evening with Mr. Ikeda about English literature. He is a very well-read man.

14th May: Spoke with Mr. Ikeda about views of the world and about Zen doctrine. Mr. Ikeda spoke to me of philosophy.

16th May: Discussed education this evening with Mr. Ikeda. Also spoke of Chinese literature.³

Sōseki's admiration for Ikeda's erudition is shown in a letter, dated 12th September 1901, which he wrote to Terada Torahiko.

"Recently Mr. Ikeda Kikunae (the scientist) returned to Japan. I boarded together with him in London, and we spoke of many matters. He is an extremely fine scholar. I do not know the extent of his attainment as a scientist, but there is no doubt that, as a scholar, he has a fine mind. I believe him to be a friend worthy of respect."⁴

In retrospect Sōseki described one concrete effect that meeting Ikeda had on him.

"Mr. Ikeda was a scientist, but I was surprised to find upon talking to him that he was a first-class philosopher. . . . In his own estimation, to under-

"Meeting Mr. Ikeda in London benefited me greatly. Thanks to him, I first began to think of giving up that ghost, literature, and of taking up a more systematized and palpable study."⁵

A letter to Fujishiro Teisuke, dated 19th June 1901, throws more light on Sōseki's feelings at this time.

"I have recently come to feel that I was foolish to become an English scholar. There must be many others besides me who have the same silly idea that it may be of some good to people, or to our country."⁶

Finally, this passage from the same letter to Terada as was quoted earlier, which was written almost a year after Sōseki arrived in England, makes the twin points of his dissatisfaction with English literature as a career and his desire to become involved with science.

"The only form of scholarship worth pursuing is a cosmopolitan one. It is a thankless task studying English literature. Whether I return to Japan or stay in England, there is no chance of my being able to hold my head up. . . . Today I read in the paper Professor Rücker's lecture to the British Association on Atomic Theory. It was very interesting. I feel that I would like to take up science, too."

When one views the subject from a variety of angles,

then, three facets of Sōseki's disaffection with English literature become clear: First, he found it distasteful. Second, he was unable, in his own estimation, to understand it. Third, he felt that it was not a subject worth studying.

However, the fact that in later works Sōseki expresses a liking for Meredith and Stevenson makes it unlikely that his was a blanket dislike based on aesthetic grounds. It is much more likely that it was a natural byproduct of the second and third facets mentioned above.

The question propounded earlier still remains: Why should a man who did not understand English literature, and therefore did not like it, continue to study it? Why, having decided that Chinese literature and English literature were essentially different and that he preferred the former, did he not leave well alone and return to Japan and the writing of kanshi?

The reason can only be that Sōseki had taken up the study of English literature as a means of serving his country. His general uneasiness about the course he had chosen was greatly aggravated by meeting a man like Ikeda Kikunae who was well versed in the humanities and was also a scientist. Sōseki must have felt that he himself, with his scanty knowledge of English literature, could in no way serve his country to the extent that a scientist could. Hence his gradual interest in science. The result of this sense of inadequacy

was that Sōseki felt compelled to justify to himself his existence as an English scholar.

When Sōseki wrote in his Introduction to Bungakuron that the reason he had changed his method of study at the end of one year was that he was pressed for time, he was not being entirely honest with himself, even in retrospect. His first encounter with Ikeda took place about four months after his arrival in England, and by the time his first year in that country had passed, it ^{have been} must the desire to be of some practical use that was uppermost in his mind.

In order to justify himself, Sōseki had to rationalize away his belief that, no matter how much he studied English literature, he would never understand it. More important, perhaps, he had to find a way of studying English literature that was acceptable to himself. Later, in 'Watakushi no Kojinshugi', he described how he overcame these two problems.

"I now realized that the only way I could be saved was by forming for myself a basic concept of what literature was. I finally saw that the reason for my plight was that up till then I had been rootless, drifting aimlessly here and there like a lily on a pond. I had used the views of others as a yardstick. Let us say that you ask someone to taste your sake for you and then you pronounce it good or bad according to his judgement. This is the kind of copying I am referring to when I talk of 'using the views of others as a yardstick'. Because this sounds stupid when put as simply as this, it is possible that nobody will believe that anyone could indulge in such copying. However, the fact is that it is not stupid. . . . For instance, when we read the criticism by one Westerner of another

Westerner's work, we go around giving out this criticism blindly, without ever thinking of the justice of it or whether we understand it or not. . . . However, I am a specialist in English literature. When the views of an English critic contradict my own ideas I usually lose heart. But I have to consider from where that contradiction stems. There is no doubt that you can trace the cause back to mores, human feelings, customs--to all the characteristics of a people.

"The average scholar confounds literature with science, and has the erroneous idea that what appeals to nation A will contain that which will necessarily cause it to receive the acclaim of nation B. This is a mistake. The contradiction is irreconcilable, but it can nevertheless be explained. And this mere explanation sheds a shaft of light into the Japanese literary world. . . . After (realizing) that, I began to read books completely unconnected with literature, to give my 'self' a firmer standpoint in the literary arts or, rather, to build such a standpoint anew. In a word, my thoughts at last turned to self-reliance, and to substantiate my self-reliance, I gave myself up to scientific study and philosophical contemplation. . . . I became very strong once I had a firm grasp of the word self-reliance. . . . At that time all my uneasiness disappeared. . . . To reiterate, it was as though up till now I had been wrapped in a fog, but that now, in a certain quarter, I had been clearly shown the road which I should follow."?

From the above passage it will be seen that Sōseki's answer to the problem of incomprehensibility was to admit that he would never understand English literature in the way that it was understood by native scholars, but to assert that pointing out differences between his views and those of the English was to perform a service to the Japanese literary world. To further his sense of usefulness, Sōseki decided to formulate his own concept of literature, which was to be arrived at after a scientific study of the subject. (It is

interesting to note in passing that Sōseki himself was bent on a scientific study, although he accused "the average scholar" of "confounding literature with science".) the longer he stayed in England, it is clear

How closely the above passage reflects Sōseki's actual thought process at the time is somewhat open to question. However, the following excerpt from a post-card to Suga Torao, dated 16th February 1902, shows that he did in fact adopt a scientific approach to the study of English literature.

"Recently I have not been reading literature. I have been avidly reading psychology and the theory of evolution. I have an idea of writing a book but, knowing me, nothing may come of it."⁸

This passage also shows that Sōseki did have some notion of writing up the results of his studies in book form. This appears to be contrary to what he wrote later in the Introduction to Bungaku-ron, where he said, "I, of course, had no idea of using this as material for a thesis." But on closer examination one finds that this statement was made about his studies during his first year in England. Hence we see that the idea of writing a book first came to him during his second year. Although Sōseki did, then, decide to write a book about the results of his research, he was not anxious to rush into print. He states in another part of the Introduction to Bungaku-ron that it was his intention

to spend about ten years in collating and writing up his material after returning to Japan.

In spite of the fact that Sōseki became progressively neurotic the longer he stayed in England, it is clear that during the latter part of his stay he was satisfied that he was at last engaged in meaningful research and that his studies were progressing well.

"The six or seven months after the advent of this determination (to study the nature of literature) was a period during which I pursued my studies more zealously and more truly than at any other time in my career."⁹

As we have seen, it was the encounter with Ikeda Kikunae which changed the course of Sōseki's studies. Ikeda's knowledge impressed him greatly and he derived a great deal of pleasure from their conversations. However, after Ikeda's departure, he became depressed at the meaninglessness of his own studies. Nevertheless, it was clearly Ikeda who stimulated Sōseki to take a fresh look at his chosen field and to come to terms with it.

Sōseki's collected works contain eleven poems in English, spanning the period from 1st August 1901 to April 1904. (Two of these poems are, however, undated.) It is interesting to note that the only one of these poems which Sōseki wrote while he was in England was written during the latter part of the first year of his stay, a period when his disenchantment with English

literature was at its height. The writing of this poem suggests that, although his primary efforts were directed towards the academic study of literature, he still retained an interest in creative writing--poetry, be it noted. However, might it not also suggest that English poetic form held some attraction for him and that, as mentioned earlier, the real root of his discontent was not so much his dislike of the subject in which he had chosen to specialize as a feeling of frustration at the lack of possibilities for applying his knowledge for the benefit of his country?

The poem in question is entitled Life's Dialogue and is the longest one that Sōseki wrote in English.

It runs as follows:

There is FIRST SPIRIT.

Out of hope and despair,
Man twists the rope of life,
As beautiful and fair,
As born of passion and strife.
He twists and twists and twists.
Forever twisting he dies,
Then his eyes are glazed with mists,
Then cold and naked he lies.

Called SECOND SPIRIT.

The rope of life is not
The rope of sand; 'tis long,
'Tis strong, 'tis knotty, 'tis hot.
Let man cling to it right or wrong,
Let man cling and cling and cling,
Forever clinging go,
Till the funeral bell we ring
To call him away ho ho!

THE MIND FIRST SPIRIT.

Out of laughter and tears,
Man weaves the web of time.
With motley paint he smears
The simple texture sublime:

Woof of hatred, warp of love,
Tints of heaven and hues of hell,
Venom of snake and meekness of dove,
An angel in an infidel.

SECOND SPIRIT.

Inch by inch the web he weaves,
And inch by inch he sees it grow;
Yet nothing behind him he leaves.
How and why no mortals know.
Unlike Penelope
His labour has an end.
This only he shall see,
As Death comes all to rend.

FIRST SPIRIT.

In sorrow let him weep:
Sweet are the tears of relief,
Sweeter than pearls 'o th' deep,--
Drop by drop melting grief.
Then light up and laugh in glee,
With breast as white as the snow,
With heart and forehead free
To the wind that listeth to blow.

SECOND SPIRIT.

If blood is boiled with fire,
There is the poison to cool:
If bones are eaten by ire,
There is the dagger to fool.
If 'tis of hope he speaks,
There are the Gospel's teachings:
If it is peace he seeks,
There are the Buddha's preachings.

FIRST SPIRIT.

Go on, then, little creature
Called man, in mind deranged,
(The image of God in feature)
Revening and revenged,
And loving and beloved,
To be hated and to hate!
Thy hands alas! steel-gloved
Are too weak thy passions to abate.

SECOND SPIRIT.

The world is wide; as wide
The mind thou callest thine own.
Learn over thyself to preside,
Thou art the master alone!
The world itself is in thee,
Not thou in the world dost live.
Then twist and weave and be,
To sleep, to forget and forgive.

August 1, 1901¹⁰

Read as English poetry, the above leaves a great deal to be desired. Unfortunate expressions like the "ho ho" in the last line of the second stanza do not help to endear the poem to a native reader. Moreover, Sōseki's overall conception of the poem seems to be somewhat confused, since he wavers between the view of life as being preordained ("Till the funeral bell we ring" in stanza two) and a matter of free will ("Thou art the master alone!" in the final stanza). Nevertheless, when viewed as a piece of English written by a man who had studied the language at school and university in his own country and who, at the time of writing, had been in England for something under a year, it stands as a testament to a high degree of linguistic skill. Phrases like "an angel in an infidel" have an authentic ring, even though Sōseki may possibly have intended something in the nature of 'devil' rather than 'infidel'. And the use of the word "knotty" in stanza two in both its literal and figurative senses shows a close familiarity with English usage. One is also forced to admire the apparent ease with which a classical allusion such as "unlike Penelope" is introduced into the poem. However, the main interest of this poem does not lie in Sōseki's erudition or use of the English language, but in its content, which hints at a view of life that was to crystalize as the years passed and was to be expressed in some of his major novels. Stated simply,

this view of life is that man is a slave to his ego and that only death can end the constant struggle which constitutes his life.

To Sōseki, life was an unceasing and lonely struggle against circumstances and against one's passions and one's ego. The lines "Thy hands alas! . . . Are too weak thy passions to abate" express an awareness of a situation which he was to develop at greater length in Kusa Makura. In this work the protagonist desires to achieve a state of hininjō, a state in which one can transcend one's own passions and view the world objectively.

The concrete results of giving in to one's passions are examined in Mon, in which we are shown the anguish of Sōsuke, a man who had run off with the wife of his best friend. Perhaps it was this kind of situation which Sōseki had in mind when he wrote in Kusa Makura, "Give free rein to your desires, and you become uncomfortably confined."¹¹

In Kokoro the situation dealt with is similar to that in Mon although, as Itō Sei points out,¹² the former is a more abstract and psychological work. We again have an intellectual, referred to in the book as 'Sensei',¹³ who is the victim of his passions and his ego. His source of anguish is similar to that of Sōsuke, inasmuch as he feels guilty at having taken unfair advantage of a friend to get a woman--in this case not the friend's

wife but his girl friend. In Life's Dialogue Sōseki offers the solution of suicide to those whose "blood is boiled with fire" and whose "bones are eaten by fire". This is, in fact, the way out that Sensei takes, for, unlike in Mon, where O-Yone's former husband survives, the friend (simply referred to as 'K') in Kokoro takes his own life. This adds another dimension to Sensei's sense of guilt and, after years of trying to find peace, he finally commits suicide himself.

It may seem strange that in Life's Dialogue Sōseki offers the solution of suicide while at the same time advocating that man struggle: "Let man cling to it right or wrong, / Let man cling and cling and cling,". However, the paradox disappears if one takes Sōseki to mean not that one should struggle, but that one has no choice but to struggle, since there will be no respite in this world. This idea that any pleasant situation is only temporary, that there can be no final arrival at a state of happiness, is also worked out in Mon. It is summed up in the last few lines of the book where, in reply to O-Yone's optimistic remark that, "Spring is finally here.", Sōsuke replies, "But it will soon be winter again."

One is struck in stanza six by the juxtaposition of the idea of suicide as a means of ending one's torment with that of hope and peace being attainable through religion. The references to "the Gospel's teachings" and "the Buddha's preachings" seem at first sight

strangely out of place in this poem, sandwiched as they are between fairly pessimistic observations. It must be remembered, however, that Sōseki was constantly searching for some religious faith which would prove a viable alternative to death as a solution to man's problems. As early as 1894 he went to the Enkakuji in Kamakura, where he stayed for ten days from the end of December into January of the next year. During this period he practised Zen meditation in an attempt to gain peace of mind. He continued, in fact, to study and practise Zen throughout his life. Sōseki finally summarized his philosophy, as was stated in Chapter 3, in the expression sokutenkyoshi.

In Mon we find the following passage:

"As he (Sōsuke) walked along, the word 'religion' came again and again to mind, but receded quickly each time. Like the curls of smoke one thinks of to capture in one's hand only to find when the hand is opened that they have disappeared, so the word 'religion' had for him but a fleeting reality.

"'Religion' brought to mind zazen (Zen meditation). Long before, when he had been in Kyoto, a number of his classmates went to the Shōkokuji to practise meditation. He had laughed at them at the time. 'In this day and age' he had thought. When he saw that, for all their meditation, they bore themselves in no way differently from others, he had thought their efforts all the more ridiculous. Now he reflected that it might have been from a higher motive than he in his scorn had assigned to them that they had not hesitated to take precious time to go and sit at the Shōkokuji, and he felt deeply ashamed of his scornful attitude. If it were true, as people from olden times had believed, that it was possible to reach the stage of calm resignation through the power of meditation, then he thought that he would like to try it himself."

Sōsuke does, in fact, go to a temple in Kamakura in order to practise meditation, but he finds that he is not helped by it.

Life's Dialogue, then, although its thought is fragmentary and sometimes inconsistent, hints at least at Mon and Kokoro, novels in which Sōseki pursues the theme of the loneliness of the intellectual who is aware that man is "an angel in an infidel" and "in mind deranged", and is forced to seek some means of living with himself, knowing that his real enemy is his own egoism. One is reminded of the cry from the heart of one of Sōseki's characters,¹⁵ who said, "Death, madness or religion, these are the only three possibilities left to me."¹⁶

Sōseki, as we have seen, embarked upon a scientific study of literature during his latter months in England. When one reads chronological tables of the events of Sōseki's life, one often comes across such statements as "he continued trying to write Bungaku-ron, which he had started the previous year" with regard to this period of his life. However, Sōseki makes it clear in the Introduction to this work that he was only compiling notes while he was in England.

"The notes which I assembled while studying abroad amounted to a pile five or six inches high, each sheet covered in extremely fine writing. I returned to Tokyo with these notes as my sole possessions."¹⁷

These notes were the basis of his later published

works, Bungaku-ron and Bungaku Hyōron (Criticism of Literature). Although these works were not published until Sōseki returned to Japan and delivered them in the form of lectures at Tokyo Imperial University, it is necessary to consider something of their content at this point, since they show quite clearly what Sōseki had in mind when he spoke of a scientific study of literature. The notes mentioned above yielded Bungaku-ron and Bungaku Hyōron, but the latter work need not concern us, since in its final form it turned out to be a survey of literature in England in the eighteenth century and, as such, does not contain material germane to the point at present under discussion.

It is Bungaku-ron which shows the trend of Sōseki's consideration of the nature of literature. It is here that we are shown a writer's credo with regard to literature, before he became a professional writer. The first two chapters are particularly enlightening and deserve careful consideration.

Just how scientific Sōseki was attempting to be in his study of literature can be seen from the fact that in Chapter 1 he states that literature may be summed up in the formula $(F+f)$. Since Sōseki is at pains to explain this formula in the opening paragraphs, and since these same paragraphs are indicative of the sum of Sōseki's study of literature while in England, it would be as well, perhaps, to quote them as

they stand. says that, since there is no F factor in-

Book 1 is entitled 'Classification of Literary Content', and Chapter 1 is headed 'The Form of Literary Content'. It begins:

"The form of literary content may be roughly summarized as (F+f). F stands for focalized impressions and concepts, while f stands for the emotions which accompany them. Thus we can say that the above formula shows two elements bound together: F, the cognitive element, consisting of the dual facets, impressions and concepts, and f, the emotional element. The impressions and concepts which we experience in our everyday lives may be broadly divided into three types.

1. Cases where F is present but f is not: that is to say where the intellectual element exists but the emotional element is absent. One example would be our concept of a triangle, which is not accompanied by any emotion at all.

2. Cases where F is accompanied by f--concepts of things like flowers and stars, for example.

3. Cases where only f exists--where we fail to discern the corresponding F. An example of this is 'fear of everything and fear of nothing'. That is to say, cases in which, for instance, we feel fear without any reason belong to this category. . . . The content of literature should be 2 above. i.e. it should contain the formula (F+f)."18

Sōseki continues by saying that 1 (i.e. F alone) has no place in literature. He quotes as an example Newton's Principle and Law of Motion. He states that such writing has no emotion attached to it and only involves the intellect of the reader. He concedes that there may be emotion attached to a discovery, but says that this is only joy caused by the success of making the discovery. He reaffirms that there is no emotion in a scientific law itself.

Of 3 he says that, since there is no F factor involved, there are no intermediary concepts which f can span. He does make the point, however, that the very often aimless emotion of lyrical poetry is expressed in this form. He then, by way of illustration, quotes Shelley's A Lament:

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more--Oh, never more!

Sōseki says that there are three ways of reading this poem. The first is for the reader to supply his own concept, since there is no mention of the cause of the sadness. The second is merely to absorb the sadness expressed in the poem until one feels an affinity with it. And the third is to use a combination of the two former methods. He then says that the two former methods return to the formula (F+f). The difference between (F+f) in these two methods, however, is that in the former the formula equals (Cause+sadness), whereas in the latter it is (The concept of sadness+sadness).

The foregoing is, of course, highly argumentative and, as Sōseki readily admits in the Introduction, "removed from pure literature".¹⁹ However, regardless of the merits or faults of Bungaku-ron as a series of lectures on literature, the opening passages of this work show very clearly that when Sōseki was doing the groundwork in England he did indeed intend to take a scientific view

of literature. He has, in fact, reduced literature to a formula, and throughout this work he seeks to show that this formula is, in various forms, applicable to pure literature.

Nor was he content merely to state his formula and let it stand without examination. Anyone reading the first few pages of Bungaku-ron could be forgiven for receiving the impression that Sōseki had come up with an interesting hypothesis which was no more than the basis for interesting, though probably pointless, speculation--an academic party game, in fact. However, after the section dealt with above, Sōseki immediately sets out to define his terms.

He first seeks to clarify his definition of F as "focalized impressions and concepts" by defining the word 'focalized' more closely. But in order to do this, he states, it is first necessary to talk about the word 'consciousness'. Most of what Sōseki has to say on this subject is based upon Introduction to Comparative Psychology, written by Conway Lloyd Morgan (1852-1936), the British zoologist and psychologist.

The basic argument is that, in any given moment of consciousness, various mental states continuously appear and fade and, however short that moment may be, its contents never remain stagnant. The example Sōseki cites is that of a man looking at St. Paul's Cathedral. His eye travels up from the pillars to the parapet to the

dome. While he is looking at the pillars he cannot perceive anything else. Everything else is only vaguely in his field of vision. All he is clearly conscious of are the pillars. However, at the moment when his eye switches from the pillars to the parapet, his consciousness of the pillars begins to fade and, at the same time, his consciousness of the parapet begins to come clearer. Sōseki then relates this to the arts by saying that the same can be said of someone reading poetry or listening to music.

The idea, then, is that one's consciousness of anything is in the form of a wave, and that it will reach a peak before beginning to decline. It is this peak which Sōseki refers to as "the focal point" or "F".

Sōseki expands the wave idea by saying that there is also an F in a stream of consciousness of even an hour in length. Following this through, there is also, he says, an F in a ten-year span or even in a lifetime. Moreover, just as there is an F for an individual, so there is an F for an age, and it is this latter which is termed 'Zeitgeist'. As a Japanese alternative to the word 'Zeitgeist', Sōseki offers ikioi, which may be variously translated as 'force', 'energy', 'life', 'momentum', 'stress' or 'impulse'.

History, then, according to Sōseki, is merely the record of the natural succession of F's from period to period. As an aside, it is interesting to note that

Sōseki defined the F at the time of the Meiji Restoration as being composed of three concepts: jōi (the exclusion of foreigners), sabaku (adherence to the shogunate) and kinnō (loyalty to the Emperor). These three things, he says, formed the focus of consciousness, and even had as great a writer as Shakespeare lived at this time, he would not have received due recognition, since there would not have been room for him within the scope of F.

As an example to show that the wave theory is correct with regard to the arts, Sōseki cites literature (the reading of it and not the writing of it, however). Let us assume, he says, that a man reads a Chinese poem assiduously and with interest for a certain period. He then lays it aside and does not look at it for years. One day he happens to read the poem again. At that moment, although he understands the meaning, both his impressions and the scope of the poem will be vague. Therefore, his interest will be slight. However, if he once more studies the poem for a while, the sentiment of the poem will take shape in his mind and his interest in it will rise to a zenith, from which point, as he continues to read, it will gradually decline. Sōseki's conclusion is that one can say that this phenomenon is based on the fact that man's consciousness rises from unconsciousness to a zenith and then declines into unconsciousness again.

The above is the basic content of Chapter 1, which is, to summarize, a statement of Sōseki's formula and not an examination of the nature of consciousness.

In Chapter 2, 'The Basic Components of Literary Content', Sōseki begins his analysis of literature. The first part of the chapter is concerned with the simple sense elements which form its basis. These are listed as: touch, temperature, taste, smell, hearing and sight (this last being subdivided into lustre, colour, shape and motion). Such an examination is, of course, by no means an original approach to literature, merely being a study of imagery. What is interesting, however, is that here again we have proof of Sōseki's scientific approach, since the order of sense imagery which he follows is, he tells us, the order of sensuous enjoyment which children find in toys, as set out by Groos in his Die Spiele der Menchen (The Games of Human Beings).

As a comment on Sōseki's taste in English poetry, it is interesting to note what he says about a passage from Shelley's Prometheus Unbound. The lines in question are lines 236-68 from Act 4. This is a section in which the whole gamut of sense imagery appears. Sōseki describes it as "dazzling" and "enthralling", but sums it up in the following words: "For it, one can say that it is like seeing a pantomime at Drury Lane. Against it, one can say that it is like a too-strong perfume that makes your head reel and nearly causes you to faint."²⁰

The choice of an English-style Christmas pantomime as a simile is one that perhaps Shelley would not have been overjoyed at. However, one understands that Sōseki is referring to the almost physical assault on the senses, and we can attribute this comparison more, perhaps, to a desire on the part of a professor to show off his erudition to his students than to a conviction of its suitability.

The next stage to which Sōseki moves is a consideration of what he terms "secondary f's". These, he says, come from such things as the association of ideas when something is experienced. He then goes on to give an example of the mixture of primary and secondary f's. This example is an account given by the French philosopher, Jean Marie Guyau (1854-88), of a trip he took in the Pyrenees.

Guyau says that he was walking in the Pyrenees on a hot summer's day, when he felt thirsty and asked a farm worker for a glass of milk. The man took the milk from some he had stood in a stream running beneath his hut. The milk was ice-cold. Guyau says that, while he was tasting the milk, which seemed to contain the fragrance of the whole mountains, he felt several sensations throughout his body which could not be described by merely saying that he felt good. He was, for example, able to taste the whole concert of farm sounds. These sensations, over and above the physical wellbeing at

the taste of the milk, are what Sōseki terms "secondary f's".

It will be noticed that the terminology which Sōseki uses--primary f's and secondary f's--is more reminiscent of a present-day linguist, ^{and hence of a scientific approach,} than of a turn-of-the-century man of letters.

Sōseki next considers how emotional states come into literature. As with the senses, he classifies the general emotions and gives examples of works in which they appear. Whereas, however, he uses Groos' classification for the senses, he turns to the French psychologist, Ribot (1839-1916), for his classification of emotions into simple and complex; simple emotions being, fear, anger, sympathy, sense of self and male and female instincts, and complex emotions being, good and evil and religious feeling.

The foregoing glance at the content of the first two chapters of Bungaku-ron is enough to show the direction in which Sōseki was moving with regard to English literature. We see here the immediate results of his decision to become scientific in his study of literature. It may be said that this scientific approach and his idea of jiko hon'i²¹ were both engendered by his need to justify his role as a scholar of English literature.

To say that Sōseki's studies during the latter part of his stay in England were motivated by a need for

self-justification is not to sneer at him, but to comment on his own view of himself as a scholar of English literature vis-a-vis the development of his country. The immediate result of these studies was the knowledge gained from a large number of books on many subjects. (Even a cursory glance at the works cited in Bungaku-ron is sufficient to show just how wide the scope of Sōseki's reading was.) Further concrete results of these studies were the series of lectures which later became Bungaku-ron and Bungaku Hyōron. However, these works represent the views of Sōseki the scholar and whether they were put into practice in his novels is something which is open to question.

While in London, Sōseki did not completely lose contact with the world of Japanese literature, through writing to both Shiki and Kyoshi. These letters contained descriptive passages which constitute the slender thread of his creative writing in Japanese at this period, since they are, the one to Kyoshi in particular, in a shaseibun vein.

Chapter 6

Sōseki, The Writer

(c) Up to the Writing of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru

As we have seen, Sōseki intended to spend many years in digesting the material which he had gathered in England and in writing it up in the form of a thesis. Circumstances, however, were to decree that this should not be.

While in England, Sōseki had expressed his fear that he would be prevented from getting on with his writing.

"All I want is time and money. I am afraid that I will be kept so busy teaching language when I get back to Japan that I shall have leisure neither for contemplation nor for writing. I sometimes have the foolish dream that I find ¥100,000, with which I build a library, where I can write."¹

His fears were, unfortunately, realized, but not entirely for the reason he had envisaged. In the financial sense, Sōseki was fortunate since, on his arrival in Tokyo, he found that two jobs had been arranged for him. The first of these positions was as a teacher at the Daiichi Kōtō Gakkō. The second was as a lecturer in English literature at Tokyo Imperial University.

This latter position in particular was also a piece of good luck in that, besides the help it provided to Sōseki's financial situation, the prestige attaching to it gave him an entree into the Japanese literary world at its very hub, Tokyo. Neither of these jobs carried enough salary by itself, so Sōseki had no option but to accept both.

The language job was not one which would take up too much of Sōseki's time, since he would have been able to teach at that level without a great deal of preparation. But the university position was a different proposition. It is ironical that the very job which should have put Sōseki in a position to crystallize his thoughts on the subject of literature and set them down on paper over a long period of years, as he so desperately wanted to do, should in fact have prevented him from doing just that.

The post which Sōseki was to take over at the Imperial University had been held until that time by Lafcadio Hearn. ^{must surely have} Sōseki felt that, since he was succeeding a Westerner (and a very famous one) he would have to make the utmost effort in putting together a set of lectures. This, however, raised a problem. He had not returned to Japan prepared to give lectures on English literature at a university. From the letters he wrote while he was in England, it is clear that he expected to be teaching English language at a

high school. The letter quoted above suggests that he did not want such a job. However, passages from other letters show that what he was principally referring to was a reluctance to be a school teacher in an out-of-the-way country place like Kumamoto. He wanted to be in Tokyo and, in fact, asked Kanō Kōkichi to give him a job at the Daiichi Kōtō Gakkō.

"I do not want to go back to Kumamoto. When I return, will you give me a job at the Daiichi?"²

"I have written to Kanō, asking him to give me a job at the Daiichi Kōtō Gakkō, but I have had no reply. I do not want to go back to Kumamoto."³

"When I return, I do not want to go to Kumamoto. If possible, I would like to be in Tokyo."⁴

Sōseki would have rather been a writer of scholarly works than a school teacher, but it is equally certain that, if he had to teach, he wanted to be in Tokyo.

However, to return to his teaching at the Imperial University. The preparation of his lectures was a time-consuming job and prevented him from turning his attention to much other writing. But it was in a more subtle way that this work prevented him from producing his great work on literature. The material that he had to hand was what he had collected in England. He therefore had to use this as the source of his lectures. This meant that, instead of becoming a definitive work on

literature, the material was dissipated into a series of lectures for undergraduates. Nor did Sōseki have the leisure to put his thoughts on paper as he had hoped, since the lectures had to be prepared in a hurry (the first ones at approximately one month's notice). Although these lectures were later gathered together and published as Eibungaku Keishiki-ron (On Form in English Literature), Bungaku-ron and Bungaku Hyōron (plus a short piece on Silas Marner) Sōseki was never satisfied with the result and felt that he had only scratched the surface of a subject which he had intended dealing with in depth.

"As I said above, I have made the most assiduous efforts in putting this book together. However, as a result of reducing a projected ten years to two (two years in name but, in fact, excluding the time spent on correction when the book was published, only two summers were given to it) and as a result of changing the original structure so that it would meet the expectations of students of pure literature, this work is still incomplete. Indeed, it was inevitable that it should have been so. In the very busy world of literature I am twice as busy as anybody. . . . If there should be any of the public reading this work who, having read it, encounter something problematical or raise some doubts or show the road upward by breaking ground and advancing one or two steps beyond what I have been able to say in the book, I can be said to have attained my goal."5

The two sentences which immediately follow the above quotation seem to suggest that Sōseki was resigned to not being able to treat literature more fully.

"The Hall of Learning cannot be built in one morning, nor by one person. I feel that I have done my duty

if I have but contributed a little effort to its construction."

The reason why Sōseki started his lectures with the comparatively short Eibungaku Keishiki-ron was that, unlike at the present time, the third term began in April and went on until June in those days. The new academic year began in September. Thus Sōseki decided to present what was to become his Bungaku-ron to the new students in the autumn. It was to this end that he spent the summer writing up his notes.

In June 1903 Sōseki stated categorically, "I like the high school."⁶ The university, however, was a different matter. Since returning from England, Sōseki had scarcely written anything. (The only thing which he published during the entire year of 1903 was Jitensha Nikki, which came out in Hototogisu in June.) In a letter to Hosogai Katsuitsu⁷ in March he says that he has hardly written any haiku at all since returning from England, and gives pressure of work as his reason. There can be ^{little} doubt that all his efforts were going into the lectures for his first term at the university.

It cannot be stressed too often what the material which Sōseki was going to present to the students meant to him. It was supposed to have been the basis for a definitive work on literature. Eibungaku Keishiki-ron was an attempt on the part of Sōseki to impart to his students his hard-won ideas on form in English literature.

Sōseki has often been said to have been a cold man. He was, however, a man who sought to have his love received and who became extremely melancholy when he thought that it was being rejected. This desire to be loved and to have his love accepted *most probably* stemmed from his unstable life as a child. Moreover, his relationship with his wife did nothing to improve matters. This feeling carried over into his professional life and, although he had confidence in the value of his ideas and of what he wrote, he was susceptible to criticism and liable to feel that he personally had been rejected if his works were not well received or understood.

Thus it is that his lecturing at the university during the first term led to a worsening of his neurosis, since the students were unable to understand what he was trying to say.

"They do not understand my lectures at the university and have a low opinion of them."⁸

"I am very proud of my lectures at the university, but it seems that the students do not understand them."⁹

"For me to continue giving lectures of this sort would be hard on the students."¹⁰

This rejection, together with the unsatisfactory state of his personal life, produced in Sōseki a state of lethargy and melancholy. He was unable to write anything. An examination of his collected works shows that, as far as is known, he was not even keeping a

diary or making jottings at this period. At times like this, as his letters show, Sōseki would take to his bed during the daytime. In the letter to Suga Torao quoted above he says:

"There has recently been a recurrence of my daytime 'sleeping sickness'. I do nothing. I just sleep. I am discontented, but I am not ill. I merely sleep because I want to."

Again in the same letter Sōseki announces what he intends to do.

"I shall give an examination this term and, depending upon the results, I shall decide on a plan. . . . I am resolved that I shall resign. If that should happen, I intend to go on with my studies as planned."

Sōseki did indeed give the examination, and the results made it quite plain that his students had not understood his lectures at all. This led him to tender his resignation, as he had said he would do.

"I went to see the Chancellor with the intention of resigning."¹¹

This, however, was not to be, for the next sentence continues:

"I expressed my humble opinion, but was withered by the vehemence of the Chancellor's words. I gave in and retreated. Such loss of face!"

The sentence "If that should happen, I intend to go on with my studies as planned." is interesting,

since it shows that, insofar as Sōseki had any interest in literature at this point, it was in the setting down of his literary theories. That is to say, although he was unhappy as a teacher of literature, Sōseki was still a scholar at heart and had, as yet, no aspirations to becoming a professional writer of fiction. It further shows that he retained faith in his ideas, even though he was disappointed that they had not been well received by his students.

As has been noted, Sōseki frequently expressed a wish to become a writer. In view of the fact that he finally became a novelist, it may be thought that this is what he was referring to. However, as will be seen later, his entry into the world of the novel was not the result of a direct wish or of a positive course of action on his own part. At this period and for some time to come, the word 'writer' meant to Sōseki a person who, on the one hand, engaged professionally in literary criticism while, on the other hand, producing poetry for its own sake.

In the year 1903 Sōseki was clearly in no mood to write poetry, which until he went to England had been his only form of creative writing. Throughout the whole year he wrote only twenty-two haiku, and it is not possible to date two of these with any certainty. It was not until 1904 that he began to write more poetry, and this took the form of shintaiishi¹² and kanshi.

In October 1903 Sōseki began to lecture on Bungaku-ron at the university. At this period he also began to devote himself to painting water colours. In later years, particularly when he was writing Meian, he would write haiku and kanshi as a means of relaxing but, as mentioned above, he seems to have had little taste for writing poetry at this period and turned to painting as a relief.

In 1904 Sōseki produced slightly more work than in the previous year. In January he published 'Makubeshu no Yūrei ni Tsuite' ('On the Ghosts in Macbeth') in Teikoku Bungaku and, in February, translations of Ossian's poems, The Song of Selma and Carriac-thura¹³ in Eibungaku Sōshi (Booklet of English Literature). These were followed in May by Jūgun-kō (Campaign Song)¹⁴ in Teikoku Bungaku. This is a poem in the modern style. The summer vacation was taken up by the preparation of Bungaku-ron. The next work which Soseki produced was the first chapter of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, which was read to the Yama-kai literary circle in December and published in Hototogisu in January 1905.

The question obviously arises as to why a man of thirty-eight who is a university lecturer and whose written works to date have consisted in the main of scholarly pieces and Chinese and Japanese poetry should suddenly produce a novel. Yoshida Rokurō offers the following hypothesis to account for the writing of

Wagahai wa Neko De Aru:¹⁵ as many of his later novels were. Sōseki, he says, was desperately trying to "grasp the spirit of a woman" and could not be happy until he was the possessor of her spirit. In proof of this he offers quotations from Kōjin and Michikusa. In Sōseki's case the woman was his wife. At first he could not understand what was causing his neurosis, then he came to believe that it stemmed from his wife's failure to accept his love, and finally realized that the problem lay within himself. At this point, says Yoshida, the old Sōseki died and a new Sōseki, an artist who was able to view himself objectively, was born. Yoshida concludes that Wagahai wa Neko De Aru is "the flower that bloomed from his illness" and that "it could not have had any other content", since it is a direct result of Sōseki being able to view himself objectively.

Although one would not quarrel with Yoshida's description of Sōseki's views as to the cause of his neurosis, nor with the idea that he must have needed a degree of objectivity in order to write Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, one would certainly question the assumption that it was Sōseki's ability to view his relationship with his wife clearly which gave rise to this work, since such an assumption overlooks several things.

First and foremost it overlooks the subject matter of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, which is not a study of egoism and human relationships, particularly the relation-

ship between man and wife, as many of his later novels were, but a satire on intellectuals and on society in general. If this book can be said to be at all the result of Sōseki's objectivity, then surely it must be from an objectivity directed at himself as scholar and not as husband.

It is difficult to believe, however, that Wagahai wa Neko De Aru is the result of any startling enlightenment which came to Sōseki. For one thing, what is now the first chapter of the book was published in Hototogisu as a finished work and was not, therefore, meant to be a novel at all. This portion is a light piece of comical satire and can scarcely be said to be the expression of an artist's discovery of his soul. To make any case at all for this work being the result of some deep enlightenment, one would at least have to view it as a whole, when it was not in fact originally conceived as such.

Although most of Sōseki's novels can be said to contain an autobiographical element, in that they portray some aspect of the author's state of mind, only Michikusa is generally regarded as being completely so, covering the period from his return from Europe to the time when he began to write Wagahai wa Neko De Aru. Michikusa was written over ten years after the period of Sōseki's life which it purports to portray. Had Sōseki experienced some enlightenment with regard to

his relationship with his wife and his life in general which he felt constrained to express immediately in the form of a novel, surely it is Michikusa which would have been written in 1904 and not Wagahai wa Neko De Aru.

In considering why Sōseki wrote Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, two separate, though closely connected, questions have to be answered. The first is why he turned to writing novels at all, and the second is why his first work turned out to be this particular book. Yoshida's theory seems to ignore the first question entirely and only attempts to answer the second.

The answer to both these questions is rather prosaic. Wagahai wa Neko De Aru was, one might say, an accident or, rather, the product of circumstances. We have seen that Sōseki, from before he went to England, had written several pieces for publication and that, largely due to his friendship with Masaoka Shiki, he had pursued his poetic activities and had had several pieces published in Hototogisu. We have also seen that Shiki died while Sōseki was in England and that the Hototogisu was taken over by one of his pupils, Takahama Kyoshi. Sōseki had, however, maintained his connections with this magazine and in the year 1904 contributed haiku to its pages.

Two shasei-type pieces by Sōseki, Rondon Shōsoku (London News) and Jitensha Nikki, had appeared in Hototogisu in 1901 and 1903, respectively. In Volume 8 of

Hototogisu (October 1904-September 1905), as was mentioned in a previous chapter, it was decided to "solicit shaseibun more widely". And it was in line with this editorial policy that Kyoshi approached Sōseki at the end of the year and asked him to write another piece of shaseibun for the magazine. Sōseki agreed and produced what is now the first chapter of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru. This was an immediate success, and Sōseki wrote the present Chapter 2, which again was well received. It was at this point, and not before, that Sōseki first had the idea of writing a full-length work.

Although one might accept Yoshida Rokurō's point that Sōseki came to terms with his feelings concerning his relationship with his wife and that this might have caused his neurosis to abate, the most one can say of the connection between this situation and the fact that Sōseki wrote Wagahai wa Neko De Aru at that time is that he was perhaps more relaxed and in an easier frame of mind, which enabled him to indulge in creative writing, since it has been shown that he began to write this work only because he was asked to. Moreover, what he was asked to write initially was not a novel but what might be described as a short story or a light essay. It might be argued, though, that from the third episode he had indeed decided to write a novel and that from this point on the work was conceived as a whole. However, this is not a work with one grand design.

In considering why Wagahai wa Neko De Aru is the kind of work that it is, one must differentiate, as the above clearly shows, between the first two chapters and the remainder. The first chapter was meant to be a piece of shaseibun and is said to have been developed from some jottings which Sōseki made concerning a stray cat which actually did find its way into his house. The second chapter was merely a sequel to the first and, again, was meant to be an independent piece. It is also generally accepted that Sōseki was influenced in his choice of a cat as a character by Die Lebensansichten des Katers Murr (Tom Cat Murr's View of Life) and Johannes Kreislers, des Kapellmeisters Musikalische Leiden (The Musical sufferings of Johannes Kreisler, Band Master), written by the German Romantic, E. Hoffmann. Although there is no evidence that Sōseki actually read Hoffmann, he certainly knew of his work, since he mentions Murr in Wagahai wa Neko De Aru.¹⁶

Another possible source is the autumn 1904 meeting of the Chogyū-kai¹⁷ (Chogyū Association). It is known that at this meeting Kuroyanagi Kunitarō, a friend of Sōseki's and a teacher at the Daiichi Kōtō Gakkō, gave a talk entitled 'Neko ni Tsuite' ('About Cats') in which he referred to Le Maistre Chat ou Le Chat Botté,¹⁸ written by Charles Perrault in 1697, and to Der Gestiefelte Kater,¹⁹ written by (Johann) Ludwig Tieck²⁰ in 1797. It is highly possible that Sōseki attended this meeting

and received some ideas for the writing of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru.

Sōseki the student of English literature is also in evidence in the writing of this work. A perusal of the section of Bungaku Hyōron which deals with Swift's Gulliver's Travels, a book of which Sōseki was very fond, reveals that he considered Book 4, 'A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms' at some length, and it is likely that he took the idea of humans being critically viewed by animals from here. It also seems likely that the satire on scholars which appears in Wagahai wa Neko De Aru may have been suggested to Sōseki by the events which take place at Laputa in Book 3.

The construction of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru is strongly reminiscent of the type of novel common in England during the eighteenth century (the period in which Sōseki specialized). These novels were episodic, the plot moving from one adventure to the next, often with nothing more than the characters to provide continuity. In particular, much has been made of the fact that Sōseki's novel resembles Sterne's Tristram Shandy in its formless rambling. Senuma Shigeki points out²¹ that Sōseki in his article on Tristram Shandy refers to Sterne's novel as having no protagonist and as being like a sea-cucumber, in that it has no head, tail or middle²² and that in the Introduction to Volume 1 of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru he refers to his own work in

the following words: "This book has a style just like a sea-cucumber, the head and tail of which are indiscernible."²³

Senuma further points out that Tristram Shandy is mentioned in the section on noses in Chapter 4.

The point is clear: the form or, rather, the lack of it in Wagahai wa Neko De Aru follows that of Tristram Shandy. This is true, but only consciously from Chapter 3 onwards, since Sōseki had no idea of writing any kind of novel when he wrote Chapters 1 and 2. It was at this point (Chapter 3) that he was faced with the problem of giving some rationale to his book if it was to become an extended work and, fortunately, the precedent of Tristram Shandy came to mind. It would be an exaggeration to say that Sōseki could not have written this first major work if Sterne had not written Tristram Shandy, since the popularity of the first instalments makes it certain that he would have continued to write. However, the result would probably have been something like a series of anecdotes, which is a very different thing from a novel, however formless. And there lies one of the most important points about Wagahai wa Neko De Aru: fortuitous or not, it introduced Sōseki to the literary world not just as a writer of literary criticism but as a novelist. And so it paved the way for him to move away from scholarly writing and, further, let him see that in the realm of creative writing he need not confine himself to short descriptive pieces, anecdotes and poetry.

Chapter 7

Sōseki, The Writer

(d) January 1905-January 1907

The two years from January 1905, when the first chapter of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru was published, to January 1907, when Nowaki appeared in print, were productive ones for Sōseki. During this period he produced twelve prose works, including Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, gave a series of lectures at the Imperial University on eighteenth-century English literature, which were later to become Bungaku Hyōron, and worked on finalizing his manuscript of Bungaku-ron.

Simultaneous with the publication of the first chapter of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, Rondon-tō (The Tower of London) was published in Teikoku Bungaku. This is a short story cum light essay in which Sōseki blends fact and fancy. It is a mixture of his experiences while in London and legends of the Tower. Sōseki also uses this work as a vehicle for showing his knowledge of English literature.

A little later in the same month, on 15th January, Kārairu Hakubutsukan (The Carlyle Museum) appeared in Gakutō (The Light of Scholarship). This piece makes no

pretence at telling a story, but is more clearly a descriptive light essay. It describes, in the main, a conducted tour which Sōseki made of Carlyle's house. The tone of the piece is generally light and it contains a certain amount of humour, as for instance his description of the woman who guides him through the house. However, the whole seems to contain an underlying satire which is based on Sōseki's surprise that Carlyle could have written in such surroundings. One cannot help feeling that this work, like Rondon-tō, is in part an expression of Sōseki's dislike of London. They are both, however, of the shaseibun type, although at the end of Rondon-tō Sōseki apologizes for having been "subjective".

In February Chapter 2 of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru was published, and in April Chapter 3 appeared, together with his next complete work, which was Gen'ei no Tate. This latter work was published in Hototogisu along with Wagahai wa Neko De Aru. Gen'ei no Tate is the first of two works which are in the form of the mediaeval Romances of English literature. It is a fusion of legends and visions and reflects the interest in the supernatural which Sōseki had at this period.

In May Koto no Sorane (The Sound of a Japanese Harp) was published in the magazine, Shichinin (The Seven). This is a short story concerning the premonition of his fiancée's death which a young man has as a result of talking about ghosts and such with a friend. Despite

its topic, the piece is mainly humorous. Indeed, the long conversational passage which opens the story sometimes puts one in mind of rakugo¹, a form of entertainment of which Sōseki was particularly fond. The meandering of the story and the descriptions of things which have no direct connection with the development of the plot show clearly that it, again, is in the shaseibun tradition. However, unlike many shaseibun pieces, it has a beginning, a middle and an end. It has, in fact, not only an end but a happy ending, since we are told that the young man's premonition was unfounded. Of all the works, long or short, in which Sōseki dealt with the relationship between men and women, it is Koto no Sorane which is the most light-hearted and which alone, perhaps, shows a pair of lovers in circumstances of unqualified happiness. In what is almost the last line of the story, the young man says, "It may be my imagination, but it seems to me that since then Tsuyuko has been even more loving to me than before."²

June saw the appearance of Chapter 4 of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru. During this month Sōseki was engaged in giving lectures on Bungaku-ron at the Imperial University. Chapter 5 of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru appeared in July, after which there was a gap of three months until the publication of Chapter 6 in October.

In September Sōseki began a course of lectures at the university, entitled Jūhasseiki Eibungaku (Eighteenth-

Century English Literature), which was later published as Bungaku Hyōron, and it was the preparation of these lectures which prevented him from writing anything of any length at this time other than the sixth chapter of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru. He did, however, produce one short piece, Ichiya (One Night), which was published in the monthly Chūō Kōron (The Central Review) in September.

Ichiya has no story line at all and is thus completely in keeping with the shaseibun way of writing. The scene is a room at an inn where two men and a woman find themselves on a rainy night. The whole object of the piece seems to be to describe the scene and to try to capture the prevailing mood. In describing this, Sōseki uses an elegance and detail of description which foreshadow the descriptive passages of Kusa Makura, as a reference to the appended translations will show. There is also something about the woman in Ichiya which reminds one of O-Nami, the woman in Kusa Makura.

In October all the chapters of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru which had appeared up until that time were collectively published as Wagahai wa Neko De Aru (Part 1) by the Ōkura Shoten (The Ōkura Bookshop). The popularity of this work was reconfirmed when the entire first edition was sold out in twenty days.

The last work which Sōseki published in 1905 was Kairo-kō (Funeral Song). This was the second of his

stories to derive from mediaeval English literature. This time, however, the connection was more direct because, as Sōseki explains in the lines which he wrote to introduce the story, he took the idea from Mallory's Morte D'Arthur, but was influenced in its presentation by Tennyson's Idylls of the King.

During the latter half of this year Sōseki repeatedly expressed his desire to give up his teaching jobs and become a full-time professional writer. As early as July he wrote:

"The other day a man came from the Nihon (Japan) Newspaper. He asked me to write something for them-- anything I liked--from time to time. This set me to thinking. If I could write an article a day and receive ten yen for each article, it would be better to give up teaching and become a newspaper man. However, the Nihon would never agree to that, so I shall stay within the red gate³ and earn my living by saying strange things."⁴

Sōseki's feelings at this time are perhaps most succinctly expressed in one sentence of a letter written in September.

"Anyway, to be a teacher is what I do not want, and to write is what I do want."⁵

However, Sōseki's financial situation, despite the success of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, precluded his giving up teaching, as the following passage shows.

"The first edition of Neko has been sold and the other day I received my royalties. My wife asked me how much would be left after we had got things out of pawn, paid the doctor's bills and made preparations for the birth of the baby. The answer was that there would probably be nothing left at all. Oh dear!"⁶

Although Sōseki could not see his way clear to becoming a full-time writer, he continued to produce prose works during the year 1906. His first published works of that year were Chapters 7 and 8 of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, which appeared together in the January issue of Hototogisu, and Shumi no Iden (The Inheritance of Taste), which came out in the same month in Teikoku Bungaku.

Shumi no Iden is a rather protracted short story in three parts, each of which is only tenuously connected to the others. The first part of the story begins with a fanciful description of the gods going mad, of black clouds, tides of blood and dogs eating flesh and gnawing bones, all of which we are to understand as a reference to the Russo-Japanese War. The mood abruptly changes and we learn that the writer had been musing while he was walking towards Shinbashi Station in Tokyo. The story proper begins with a description of the crowd waiting at the station to meet a troop train bringing soldiers back from the front. In this section the mood alternates between humour and pathos. The writer

remembers his friend, Kō, at the end of Part 1. Kō, it seems, will not be returning, as he was killed in battle.

Part 2 is mainly a description of how Kō died, as imagined by the writer. At the end of the section, however, the writer goes to Kō's grave, where he sees an unknown young woman, whom he conjectures may have been the dead man's fiancée. This last scene provides the connection with Part 3.

It is from Part 3 that the work takes its title, and this section could stand as a short story in its own right. The narrator takes the highly ingenious method of applying his ideas on heredity in order to trace who the young woman is. In short, he goes to an old retainer of Kō's family and asks him if Kō's grandfather had been involved in a romance. On being told that he had had an ill-fated love affair with a certain young woman, the narrator then asks whether there is not some present-day young woman who resembles her. The old retainer tells him that there is and names her. At this he concludes that she must be the same woman he saw, since Kō would have fallen in love with her, having inherited his grandfather's taste in women.

The description of the ginko tree in Part 2 is rather like the description of the cactus in Kusa Makura, something which will be dealt with at length in the following chapter, although the description in Shumi no Iden is perhaps less objective and therefore

not quite so much in the shaseibun style. However, the dissertation on contrasts in Macbeth is also very like the passages given over to the discussion of scholastic topics in Kusa Makura, and show that at this period Sōseki had by no means abandoned his role as scholar, even in his own mind.

Some remarks of the narrator of Shumi no Iden seem to echo the attitude which Sōseki himself had towards scholarship and literature at this time. In Part 2 we have, "I am not a writer. I am a scholar and live in Nishikatamachi, a street of scholars."⁷

In Part 2 he says, "I am neither a doctor nor a biologist really."⁸ But then a few lines later he mentions Mendel, Weismann, Haeckel, Hertwig and Spencer all in the same sentence. A little farther on in this piece, he compares himself to Darwin on the discovery of evolution and Hamilton on the conception of the Quaternion Theory.

In Shumi no Iden Sōseki seems to be trying to justify his penchant for the romantic by showing that what we tend to think of as a romantically coincidental train of events is in reality the result of the working of a scientific law. This desire to be analytical and scientific reminds one of his attitude towards literature while he was in England.

In March Chapter 9 of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru was published, followed in April by Chapter 10 and by Sōseki's

second novel, Botchan, all in Hototogisu. A translation of Botchan is appended to this thesis.

From the point of view of length, Botchan was Sōseki's most ambitious work to date, excluding Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, being 143 pages in length, as compared to the 25 pages of Rondon-tō, the 11 pages of Kārairu Hakubutsukan, the 35 pages of Gen'ei no Tate, the 39 pages of Koto no Sorane, the 11 pages of Ichiya, the 35 pages of Kairo-kō and the 49 pages of Shumi no Iden.⁹

The novel, Botchan, takes its title from the protagonist, a young Tokyoite, who is both impetuous and prone to get into fights. The early part of the book tells how the young Botchan is the despair of his parents, but how a great bond of sympathy grows up between him and Kiyo, an old serving woman. When he grows up, Botchan becomes a teacher and leaves Tokyo to take a job down in Shikoku. The majority of the story tells how the straightforward Botchan fights against the pretensions of the other teachers and what he considers the oafish behaviour of the boys he has to teach.

This is a humorous work and the characters who appear in it, Redshirt, The Clown, The Porcupine, etc., are, as their names suggest, akin to Professor Sneeze in Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, in that they are caricatures. Botchan, it seems, was intended as a work of social satire, as was Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, and in this differs from

the romantic shorter pieces of Sōseki's early period.

In July Sōseki finished the final chapter (Chapter 11) of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, and this was published in August. During the summer he had also been at work on his third novel, Kusa Makura, and this, following hard on the completion of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, was printed in Shin-shōsetsu (New Novels) in September. Since Kusa Makura is the focal point of this present thesis, it will be dealt with at length later. Suffice it to say at this point that, like Botchan, it was a work of medium length, running to 161 pages. It was, however, entirely different in content and form from his two previous novels.

It is worth mentioning in passing that from 11th October Sōseki decided to receive visitors every Thursday afternoon. This developed into a conversation group of Sōseki and his literary followers which was called the Mokuyō-kai (The Thursday Group) and which continued until 16th November 1916, just before Sōseki's death.

The last work that Sōseki was to publish in 1906 was Nihyakutōka (The Two Hundred and Tenth Day), which appeared in the October issue of Chūō Kōron. Although this work runs to eighty pages, it cannot really be described as a novel. It is more by way of being a short story, but even this epithet does not really fit it. One is tempted to call it a play, since it is composed almost entirely of dialogue. There are very few des-

criptive passages and hardly any story. What story there is is contained in Part 4, in which the two protagonists, Kei and Roku, get lost in the mountains. The other four parts of the story (Parts 1, 2, 3 and 5) are, in the main, conversations (very often humorous) between the two men, which have little or no bearing on what happens in Part 4.

In character, Kei is something like Botchan, and they both represent what Sōseki considered to be an admirable attitude towards contemporary life. Kei speaks of a "revolution of the mind" and delivers a bitter criticism of social ills. It is the setting down of Kei's views which seems to be the main object of the work, and Roku is really only there as a foil, rather like a confidant in classical drama or the waki (supporting actors) in a Nō play.

Of Kei's character Sōseki had this to say:

"I think that Kei is the kind of person we need nowadays. All modern young people could learn from him. They should, therefore, try to understand as much as Roku does."¹⁰

A fourth novel, Nowaki, was written in the space of ten days at the end of the year and was published in Hototogisu in January 1907. However, the period from October 1906 through to the early part of the following year was largely given over to preparing Bungaku-ron for print. It was finally published in May 1907 by

the Ōkura Shoten.

In Nowaki we have the "purely human" piece that Sōseki said he wished to write in a letter to Morita Sōhei.¹¹ The main character in this novel is Shirai, a man whose outspoken views have made him unpopular in one provincial school after another where he has taught. He finally gives up teaching and takes a poorly paid job on a magazine in Tokyo.

There are two other central characters in the story: Takayanagi, a poor young man who has just graduated from university and aspires, as does Shirai, to becoming a novelist, and Nakano, a rich young man. Both Takayanagi and Nakano are younger than Shirai. Takayanagi is attracted to Shirai because of the latter's poverty and because of his forthrightness. In terms of the story line, Takayanagi acts as a kind of bridge between Shirai and Nakano, being poor like the former and young like the latter. When he discovers that he has tuberculosis, Nakano gives him some money so that he can leave Tokyo. To salve his pride, Takayanagi says that he will only accept the money if he can repay it by giving Nakano a novel which he is going to write. Although he will not admit it to himself, however, it is clear that the novel will never be written.

Before he leaves Tokyo, Takayanagi goes to see Shirai and discovers him with a money lender. When he realizes that Shirai cannot pay his debts he gives him the money

he has received from Nakano and takes the manuscript of a novel which Shirai has completed in order to hand it over to Nakano. He thereby finally admits that he himself will never write.

Although Takayanagi is central to the drama of the work, it is Shirai's book, and there is no doubt that Sōseki wrote it as a vehicle for the moral and social views which Shirai holds to a degree bordering on the fanatical, ideas which Sōseki himself held.

Nowaki, then, marks Soseki's departure from the romanticism and the humorous satire of his early works and his entry into the realm of realism.

Sōseki had delivered his lectures on Bungaku-ron at the Imperial University for approximately two academic years, from September 1903 to June 1905. From September 1905, however, he changed the content of his lectures and began teaching eighteenth-century English literature. It would appear, then, that he had been working on Bungaku-ron for two years. However, as previously pointed out, he had really only spent two summers in its preparation, because of the pressure of work. It must also be borne in mind that Sōseki was preparing a course of lectures and not a book. Thus, when he at last came to put it into book form, a great deal of work needed to be done on the manuscript.

For what, in the Introduction to Bungaku-ron, Sōseki describes as "personal reasons" (presumably, once again,

pressure of work) he was unable to undertake the editing of the book himself and asked his friend, Nakagawa Yoshitarō, to do it for him. In the Introduction he thanks Nakagawa warmly and explains that he chose him from among all his acquaintances for his "breadth of learning" and "the quality of his sincerity" as well as for the fact that Nakagawa had attended some of the lectures in question.

The fact remains, however, that Sōseki was far from satisfied with Nakagawa's work and it was the rewriting of nearly half of the manuscript that kept him occupied from about the middle of November 1906 through into the early part of the following year.

The question presents itself as to why Sōseki chose this time to turn Bungaku-ron into a book. He had said that he wanted to spend ten years writing up the ideas on literature which he had gained in England. Why did he not wait and do this at his leisure? The basic answer is that, in the course of being delivered as lectures, Bungaku-ron had assumed a certain shape. It was more general and not as deep as its author had originally intended, but its outline existed. To turn it into the major work that Sōseki had once envisaged would almost have necessitated going back and starting from scratch and marshalling all his thoughts afresh. This would have needed a depth of interest in the academic aspects of literature which it is clear that Sōseki did not

feel at this period, although, as some things like 'Bungei no Tetsugaku Kiso' ('The Philosophical Basis of Literary Art'), which he wrote for the Asahi, show, he had not lost it entirely.

Sōseki was less than enchanted with the academic life and wanted to become a full-time writer. Although he was not to realize this ambition until 1907, he was already established as a popular writer by the end of 1906. Just how popular he had become is shown by the fact that in May the Ōkura Shoten collected together Rondon-tō, Gen'ei no Tate, Koto no Sorane, Ichiya, Kairo-kō and Shumi no Iden and published them under the title of Yōkyo-shū.¹² Part 2 of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru was also published by the same company. On 1st January 1907 (not in December 1906 as stated by Etō Jun)¹³ Shun'yōdō published Botchan, Kusa Makura and Nihyakutōka under the collective title of Uzura Kago (The Quail Basket).

The truth is that, while he had been in England, Sōseki had quite naturally been unable to foresee that he would become a famous writer of fiction and had expected to have to devote himself to the teaching of English and English literature, as far as his professional life was concerned. During the years 1905 and 1906, however, he found that he had increasing opportunity to express his ideas on literature in a more practical form, that is to say by writing himself. Thus it was not so important for him to write a great tome on lit-

erature. he years 1903 and 1905. It is interesting to

As will be seen later, there is a definite connection between Bungaku-ron and Kusa Makura, and it cannot be considered as a mere coincidence that Sōseki chose to work on the manuscript of the former for publication so soon after having published the latter. More than a year had elapsed, after all, since his last lectures on the subject at the time he decided to make those lectures into a book.

Thus, limited, on the one hand, by having been given as a set of university lectures and, on the other, by the fact that Sōseki's thoughts on literature were channelled into his own works, Bungaku-ron appeared as a miniature of its author's original intention. However, the fact that Sōseki chose to publish it at all would seem to indicate that he still agreed with the ideas expressed therein, and that those ideas were not just the result of a course of study which he had undertaken merely to justify his existence in the academic world while he was in England. Of Bungaku-ron Sōseki says:

"Although, when compared with the work of other scholars, (this book) can by no means be considered to be important, nevertheless I am extremely satisfied to have completed even such a work as this."¹⁴

With all this activity in the field of prose, it is hardly surprising that Sōseki produced little poetry

during the years 1905 and 1906. It is interesting to note, however, that what he did write was, as far as is known, either haitaishi (a single poem, longer than a haiku, consisting of five- and seven-syllable lines) or haiku. The only poems which were written for independent publication were the haitaishi, Dōyō (Children's Song), Aru Uguisu no Naku wo Kikeba (On Hearing a Nightingale Sing) and Aru Onna no Uttauru wo Kikeba (On Hearing a Woman Lament), published in Hototogisu in 1905, and two haiku published in the magazine, Nihon Bijutsu (Japanese Art), in 1906.

In addition to the above, there is one other untitled and unpublished haitaishi, written in 1905, and a number of haiku, written in 1905 and 1906.

It is further interesting to note that the only poetry written during the year that Kusa Makura was written was haiku and that, of the thirty-one haiku written during this year, seventeen were written in Kusa Makura itself, the others appearing for the most part in letters and postcards or on the flyleaves of books given to friends.

Before proceeding further, it would perhaps be useful to see in chart form the relationship in time between the publication of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru and the other prose works of the period now being considered.

<u>Wagahai wa Neko De Aru</u>	Other Works
1905 January: Chapter 1	<u>Rondon-tō</u>

	<u>Kārairu Hakubutsukan</u>
February: Chapter 2	
April: Chapter 3	<u>Gen'ei no Tate</u>
May:	<u>Koto no Sorane</u>
June: Chapter 4	
July: Chapter 5	
September:	<u>Ichiya</u>
October: Chapter 6	
November:	<u>Kairo-kō</u>
1906 January: Chapters 7&8	<u>Shumi no Iden</u>
March: Chapter 9	
April: Chapter 10	<u>Botchan</u>
July: Finished <u>Neko</u>	
August: Chapter 11	
September:	<u>Kusa Makura</u>
October:	<u>Nihyakutōka</u>
1907 January:	<u>Nowaki</u>

In April 1907 Sōseki became a member of the editorial staff of the Asahi. In May Bungaku-ron and the third and final part of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru were published by the Ōkura Shoten and, one is tempted to say, so ended a stage in Sōseki's life. This is true in a sense, since many of the ideas on literature that Sōseki had formed in England at last appeared in print for the first time, and his first novel, Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, was now completely in book form. It is also true that after Sōseki became a full-time writer all his novels from

that time on, Gubijinsō, Kōfu, Sanshirō, Sore Kara, Mon, Higan Sugi Made, Kōjin, Jinrō (the continuation of Kōjin), Michikusa and Meian, were serialized in the Asahi. This is important because, without even considering the content of these novels, the manner of their writing sets them apart from his four earlier novels: Botchan, Kusa Makura and Nowaki were written to be published as complete works and even Wagahai wa Neko De Aru was not written on a day-to-day basis.

However, in dealing with Sōseki's development as a writer, one would have to say that the turning-point occurred some months earlier, when he wrote Nowaki at the end of 1906 and published it in January 1907, since this is the first of Sōseki's works in which he took up the problem of the suffering of the Japanese people in the age in which he was living and, as such, marks the beginning of novels which, to use a broad classification, may be said to be realistic, inasmuch as they deal with everyday, real life. The only work that Sōseki wrote after entering the Asahi which resembles the work of his earlier period is Yume Jūya, and this is not, strictly speaking, a novel.

With Nowaki, gone is the sweeping Swiftian satire of society which we see in Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, gone are the humorous, almost cartoon-like characters of Botchan, gone is the 'unreal' and 'poetic' world of Kusa Makura, to be replaced by the sufferings which

people inflict on one another in daily contact because of egoism, by the mental anguish that the infliction of that suffering brings to intelligent, sensitive people, and by the struggles of such people to achieve salvation from their egos. In a word, Nowaki is the beginning of a series of novels in which Sōseki was trying to express his ideas on egoism, ideas which seem to have had their roots in his reading of Meredith.

To say that Nowaki marks a new departure for Sōseki would seem to imply that the course of his writing suddenly changed after Nihyakutōka, since this was the work which immediately preceded Nowaki. It would also seem to imply that all the works up to and including Nihyakutōka are ^{of} the same ^{type}. Neither is, in fact, the case. The nature of Sōseki's early works has already been referred to to some extent and will be the subject of more detailed discussion later. It will also be shown that Kusa Makura marks, de facto, the end of a certain kind of writing, even though at the time Sōseki by no means rejected the view of literature which it represents, and that the emergence of a more realistic type of writing is foreshadowed in Kusa Makura itself.

Chapter 8

Sōseki and Shaseibun

In his article, 'Yoga Bunshō ni Hieki Seshi Shoseki' ('Books From Which My Writing Has Profited'), which was written in 1906, Sōseki says:

"Broadly speaking, I do not like writing which is soft and sloppy, as writing in Japanese is, and I do like writing which is powerful, that is to say pithy, as writing in Chinese is. I also like writing which is sha-seiteki in nature."¹

While there is no doubt that Chinese (as did English) exerted a great influence on Sōseki's writing, it must be remembered that Sōseki the writer, as opposed to Sōseki the scholar, started off in the world of shaseibun. In view of this, it is necessary to consider in some detail Sōseki's ideas on shaseibun and his association with the movement.

It is commonly accepted that Sōseki's first prose work of a non-academic nature was Jitensha Nikki. However, strictly speaking, Sōseki's career as a writer of shaseibun may be said to have begun with the letters which he wrote from London to Masaoka Shiki and Takahama Kyoshi. One such letter to Shiki, dated 18th Decem-

ber 1901, appeared in Hototogisu on 10th February 1902, while one to Kyoshi, dated 1st December 1902, was published in the 15th February 1903 issue of this same magazine. More important than these two, however, are three letters, dated 9th, 20th and 26th April 1901, addressed jointly to Shiki and Kyoshi. At this time Shiki was ill in bed and Kyoshi had taken over most of the editorial duties of Hototogisu.

In the first of these letters, Sōseki mentions that he has been asked by Kyoshi to write something, "anything at all", for the magazine, and then continues:

"I will write for your perusal what has happened since I got up this morning until I began to write this letter. I will write in the diary style solicited by Hototogisu."²

From November 1898 titles for short pieces had been allotted to members and the resulting works published in Hototogisu. However, the editorial policy was changed after a time, and in the July 1900 issue the following appeared under the title, Notification.

"We are looking for descriptions (shasei), either of what you have seen or heard, in the form of a diary running from the 20th of one month to the 20th of the next, or of hobbies which you yourself perform."³

Diaries selected as a result of this were published from October 1900. It was with this in mind that Sōseki wrote the three above-mentioned letters in the form of

a shaseibun-like diary. These letters were published under the title of Rondon Shōsoku in Hototogisu in May and June 1901. This, then, was Sōseki's first venture into shaseibun. It later appeared as an appendix in Shaseibun-shū (Shaseibun Collection), edited by Kyoshi for the September 1903 issue of Hototogisu. Shiki was very pleased with this account of Sōseki's life in London. In a letter to Sōseki he wrote, "When I read your letter I felt as though I had gone abroad. I was delighted."⁴

On his return to Japan, Sōseki continued his association with the Hototogisu group, although Masaoka Shiki was now dead, and in June 1903 published Jitensha Nikki, a work in similar vein to Rondon Shōsoku. As previously stated, the first chapter of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru was also intended as a piece of shaseibun. Moreover, the following passage from Chapter 5 suggests that he still regarded himself as a shaseibun writer even after he had decided to write a work of considerable length.

"If I wrote down everything that happened in a twenty-four hour period in complete detail, it would take twenty-four hours to read. Advocate of shaseibun though I am, I must confess that this is a feat for which a cat is no match."⁵

One may take it that making the cat an advocate of shaseibun reflects Sōseki's own opinions.

After he started writing Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, Sōseki began to gather his pupils together, along with such members of the Yama-kai as Kyoshi and Shihōda, for what were termed bunshō-kai (writing meetings). These meetings were not necessarily always held at Sōseki's house, however. It seems to have been the practice at these meetings for someone to read a work aloud and then for everybody to discuss it. (It will be remembered that Kyoshi read Sōseki's first instalment of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru to the Yama-kai.) Terada Torahiko's diary tells us that Kyoshi read Sōseki's Gen'ei no Tate at a meeting held on 25th February 1905.⁶ In a letter to Noma Masatsuna, dated 30th April, Sōseki wrote, "I read a novel⁷ called Koto no Sorane."⁸ referring to a meeting held the previous evening. Another meeting was held on 3rd June, which Sōseki attended. However, after this he seems to have cooled towards these meetings. In reply to a letter from Kyoshi asking his convenience with regard to a forthcoming meeting, Sōseki wrote:

"I find that recently I have grown tired of reading pieces aloud, so please go ahead and hold the meeting without me. . . . Properly speaking, things should be read to oneself and not out loud. I find it near impossible to tell good from bad when I hear someone reading."⁹

Sōseki also declined an invitation to attend a

meeting at Kyoshi's house on 9th December, saying that he was busy. However, several entries in Torahiko's diary make it plain that Sōseki continued to hold bunshō-kai at his own house and that it was these that, from October 1906, turned into the Mokuyō-kai. Both Kyoshi and Shihōda attended these meetings on occasion, so contact with the shaseibun movement was not lost. Indeed, in 'Menkaibi' ('Receiving Day')¹⁰ Kyoshi says that at one meeting the subjects under discussion were 'Shaseibun-ron' ('Ideas on Shaseibun') and 'Shōsetsu-ron' ('Ideas on the Novel'). Sōseki was, in fact, to maintain a close association with writers of shaseibun even after he entered the Asahi and could by no stretch of the imagination be said to be one himself.

It is evident that Sōseki received a great deal of influence from this contact with the shaseibun writers. Of Kyoshi he wrote, "He has an eye for style." and "In Certain respects he is far more skilful than I." These statements were made in a letter to Nomura Denshi.¹¹ The whole tone of this letter is one of encouraging Denshi to listen to Kyoshi's views on his (Denshi's) writing. It is therefore clear that he respected Kyoshi's opinions and probably listened to them himself. In spite of all this, however, there is a difference in tone between Sōseki's writing and that of the shaseibun school, even when what he is writing is undeniably shaseibun. In order to see this clearly it is necessary

to reconsider his early works.

The first instalment of Rondon Shōsoku is a description of a day in Sōseki's lodgings. Parts 2 and 3 tell of a drive he took with the family where he lodged and quite naturally have more semblance of plot to them. All three parts are, however, objective accounts of the writer's surroundings. Nevertheless, this work contains something which one would not expect to find in shaseibun and that is caricature, the maid with the nickname of Pen being a case in point. In his next work, Jitensha Nikki, it becomes very plain that Sōseki is caricaturing himself. And so we come to Wagahai wa Neko De Aru.

Although there is a strong case for considering this work as a series of shaseibun strung together, it must also be noticed that it contains a collection of caricatures: Sneeze, who is supposed to be Sōseki himself, the poet Beancurd, in fact all the main characters. There is a strong element of satire in this work. Admittedly, humour is an important part of shaseibun, as will be seen when Sōseki's ideas on the subject are considered, but it is not the humour of caricature or of satire. It is in this sense that Sōseki's works differ from other shaseibun.

The elements of caricature and social satire carried over into Botchan and later into Nihyakutōka, and one can see in these two works, as well as in Wagahai wa

Neko De Aru, a certain didactic standpoint with regard to society. And it is this, however heavily disguised as buffoonery, that further sets them apart from the normal run of shaseibun.

Another point of difference between certain of Sōseki's works and those of the other shaseibun writers is what one might describe as the romantic element. The romantic interest in history, specifically in that of the Tower of London, which is shown in Rondon-tō is removed from the shaseibun of the time, in which imagination and fancy had no place. This probably accounts for Sōseki's apologizing for the subjectivity of the piece. There is also an element of romance in the empathy which Sōseki expresses with Carlyle in Kārairu Haku-butsukan and in the way he reminisces about Carlyle's day.

In Gen'ei no Tate and Kairo-kō we have two more obviously romantic pieces. Indeed, as has been pointed out, they are perhaps best described as Romances in the sense that the word is used when speaking of mediaeval English literature.

Koto no Sorane and Shumi no Iden differ from the above two works in that they deal with the Japan of the writer's day and in that they are written in a more realistic style. However, they too, in that they deal with the spiritual bond that comes with love, may be said to fall into that broad category which we term romantic.

Ichiya, with its talk of love and dreams, has a very poetic atmosphere and this, with the occasional Zen-type language and the fact that the realm which the people occupy is neither clearly that of reality nor dream gives it a resemblance to Kusa Makura.

It should be stressed that there is nothing intrinsically incompatible with shaseibun in the romantic or the poetic. Shihōda, in fact, thought that Kusa Makura, the most poetic of all, was the epitome of shaseibun writing and that the word hininjō, which Sōseki coined in this work to express an objective approach to things, was the word that above all others gave the shaseibun writer's attitude to life in a nutshell. Nor was satire a necessary bar to something being considered to be a piece of shaseibun. The fact remains, however, that until Sōseki came along, neither kind of writing was a part of the shaseibun writer's repertoire, and even after Sōseki's advent upon the literary scene, satire and social consciousness remained foreign to the movement. More, it was Sōseki's increasing predilection for applied rather than pure literature, as it were, which gradually drove a wedge between him and the other shaseibun writers.

Shihōda, who took hininjō as being almost synonymous with shaseibun, was, predictably, not happy with Nihyaku-tōka, calling it daraku bungaku (degenerate writing). Kyoshi did not like it either, as can be inferred from

the following remarks which Sōseki made to him in the letter previously quoted in Chapter 7.

"Thank you for reading *Nihyakutōka* and giving me your views on it. I am sorry you feel no sympathy for the argument. You really should."

It goes without saying that Nowaki, that "purely human piece", widened the gap between Sōseki and the shaseibun writers.

Let us now turn to Sōseki's ideas on shaseibun. In 'Natsume Sōseki-shi Bungakudan' (Mr. Natsume Sōseki's Discourse on Literature'), published in Waseda Bungaku in 1906, Sōseki remarks that shaseibun resembles the writing of such authors as Daudet. He goes on to say that "the Hototogisu writers do not copy Daudet, but they are very similar".¹² Speaking of a novel by Daudet (referring to Old Folks, the English translation) he says, "This is very far from a usual novel and very close to a usual piece of shaseibun. In places, however, it is rather closer to a novel than is a usual piece of shaseibun. Although the narrative is no more than the straight line of a travel journal of a half a day or one day's duration, the feelings which one gets from this are full and rounded."¹³

The above is interesting for the distinction it makes between novels and shaseibun. Sōseki elaborated on this distinction in his essay, 'Shaseibun',¹⁴ a synopsis of which follows.

The basis of shaseibun, says Sōseki, lies in the writer's state of mind. Everything stems from this. Although everybody has his own view of life, there is a similarity between the works of shaseibun writers and a difference between what they and other people write. They regard things from a common viewpoint.

A shaseibun writer does not look at people as a nobleman looks at a person of humble birth, nor as a wise man looks at a fool, nor as a superior looks at an inferior, nor as a man looks at a woman, nor as a woman looks at a man, but as an adult looks at a child. His is the attitude of "a parent to a child". People at large do not realize this, nor does the shaseibun writer, but it is a fact.

A parent who cries when his child cries is mad. The parent's position and that of the child are different. A parent who stands in the same position as the child and who is governed by the same degree of emotion as the child must cry whenever the child cries. This is the usual novelist. He writes as a member of the society he is describing, so he cries when he describes someone who is crying. To cry while writing about someone who is crying and not to cry while writing about someone who is crying are to write about the same thing, but the attitude in each case is different.

A shaseibun writer "describes other people crying, without crying himself". One may think that the shasei-

bun writer is without sympathy, that he is cold and cruel,¹⁵ but this is not so. A parent is not cold towards his child. He is sympathetic, but his sympathy is not of a kind which makes him cry with the child. Neither is that of the shaseibun writer. He views things from the side, from "one pace back". He feels sympathy, but his sympathy "contains an underlying smile". He is not cold, but he does not scream with the world. For this reason, most shaseibun works lack depth (i.e. they do not pierce things to the depths) and, the attitude of the writers being what it is, there is generally an element of humour in the writing.

Shaseibun has yutori.¹⁶ It is not under pressure, nor is it careworn and worried, and so the reader can read it in a relaxed way. He can feel at ease. This is because the writer, when he is describing human affairs, does not lose his whole mind to it. Shaseibun is objective, in the sense that it describes 'him' and not 'me'. Writers of shaseibun are impartial, therefore their view of life evolves naturally and their pens move without their consciousness.

Many shaseibun have no plot. The reason that shaseibun writers give for this is that there is no plot to the world, and that you cannot try to impose a plot on something when one does not exist. They describe "a panorama". Sometimes they go out of their way to destroy a plot. This attitude has developed from haiku.

It is not a foreign import, says Sōseki, for, as far as he knows, no foreign writers have written with this attitude. Some works in Western literature show this attitude to a certain extent, but not exactly: Jane Austen's novels, for example, Mrs. Gaskell's Cranford, Dickens' Pickwick Papers, Fielding's Tom Jones and Cervantes' Don Quixote.

At the end of 'Shaseibun' Sōseki writes: "Both haiku and shaseibun are interesting. There is no doubt that they are interesting, but today in the twentieth century it is a mistake to confine oneself with a triumphant air to such a standpoint, scorning all else." One must, he says, sometimes change one's standpoint.

It should be noticed that in 'Shaseibun' Sōseki was only echoing Kyoshi to a large extent. Kyoshi had previously written, "In literature, haiku and shaseibun are without passion. They are dispassionate literature."¹⁷

It was pointed out in an earlier chapter that during the years 1903 to 1905 the shaseibun was moving towards the realm of the shōsetsu. A passage was also quoted from the February 1907 issue of Waseda Bungaku to show that by then the shaseibun school, of which Sōseki was considered to be a leading light, was held to be a major rival to the Naturalists. Further, in the next (March) issue of that same magazine this school was dubbed the Haikai-ha (The Haiku School), a reference both to the

haiku-like quality of the works produced and to the large number of haiku poets associated with the school. In the light of all this, it may seem strange to find Sōseki in 'Shaseibun', which was written in January 1907, still trying to make a distinction between shaseibun and novels. However, things become clear if one understands novels (shōsetsu) to refer to novels as written by the proponents of Naturalism. He was, in effect, talking about two different kinds of novel rather than two different kinds of writing.

After Sōseki entered the Asahi and began serializing Gubijinsō in 1907, his name, with two short exceptions in 1908, disappeared from the pages of Hototogisu. However, he did not lose touch with its members, since he wrote prefaces to some of their works and reviewed others in newspapers. In his preface to Kyoshi's Keitō (Chicken Heads) in November 1907 he makes some comments which are pertinent to the distinction mentioned above. He says that novels can be divided into those which have yoyū and those which do not. Kyoshi's work, he continues, belongs to the type which has yoyū. Critics took this statement of Sōseki's as being an indication of his views on literature and promptly lumped him, Kyoshi and a few other writers into what they called the Yoyū-ha, another nickname for writers of the shaseibun kind of novel.

Sōseki explains what he means by yoyū in the follow-

ing words: "A novel which has yoyū is, as its name implies, a novel which is suave and graceful (not under pressure). It is a novel which avoids the word hijō.¹⁸ It is a novel in everyday clothes. To borrow a recently fashionable word, (choosing) between what some people call fururu¹⁹ and furenu,²⁰ it is a furenai²¹ novel."²²

It was the fururu kind of novel, be it noted, which the Naturalists set great store by.

When speaking of Naturalism and shaseibun, Sōseki wrote:

"Therefore there is a tendency for Naturalists to represent²³ the kind of life which can be reduced to one phrase. . . . Both of them (shaseibun and Naturalism) are objective. Both are description(s) of actual life. However, when one reads shaseibun one does not for the most part get one proposition. Although it (shaseibun) represent(s) life, one does not get the feeling that it has grasped life in one phrase. In point of being 'true to life', there is nothing to choose between them.

"It is because they (the Naturalists) express life in one phrase, that they have to make a construction which represent(s) life. You cannot sum up all life, just as it is, in a phrase. Thus, although the works of Naturalists are supposed to be a true representation of life, they cannot help showing the marks of clumsy hewing and polishing. This is because they contrive a plot to give things a deep meaning.

"Shaseibun may not sum up life in a phrase, but it is a true representation. It is genuine."²⁴

We have seen that Sōseki said that shaseibun lacked depth. He also said, "The Hototogisu school of shaseibun is able on many occasions to describe a person's hand or leg skilfully, and while this alone is sufficient technically speaking, the feeling one gets from it is not,

artistically speaking, whole."²⁵

On yet another occasion he wrote, "Providing that the descriptive art is good (true), it does not matter how mediocre the subject matter might be. To put it plainly, there is a tendency to have uninteresting subject matter well described. That is why some people, while admiring it, also feel a great dissatisfaction with it."²⁶

It is clear, then, that while Sōseki was basically on the side of shaseibun, he did not always agree wholeheartedly with its exponents. However, it is equally clear where his preference lay when it came to choosing between shaseibun and Naturalism.

One thing which Sōseki set great store by in writing was naturalness. He said that he liked Shimazaki Tōson's Hakai because Tōson was not "eccentric", did not "ornament his sentences" and because there was no air of "paint and powder" about the work.²⁷ Conversely, he said that he disliked Izumi Kyōka's Gintanzaku (A Strip of Silver Paper) because it was "extremely unnatural."²⁸ On a postcard to Nomura Denshi, Sōseki said, "It seems that shaseibun is alive because it is not forced."²⁹ This would suggest that it was the naturalness of shaseibun which Sōseki found attractive.

In a letter to Kyoshi, Sōseki refers to Shihōda as writing "hakushi (blank-paper) literature", himself as writing "daraku literature", Miekichi as writing

"oiran-uishiki (courtesan-gloom)³⁰ literature" and Kyoshi as writing saboten (cactus) literature".³¹ The fact that it was the custom for the shaseibun writers to refer to their own works and the works of others in this variety of figurative ways shows that there were considerable differences within the shaseibun movement itself.

In 'Menkaibi' Kyoshi says that Shihōda used the term "daraku literature" with regard to Sōseki's Kusa Makura and that "hakushi literature" was used disparagingly about Shihōda's own shaseibun.

It is not clear who first used the term 'saboten shumi' to describe Kyoshi's works, but in a letter to Morita Sōhei, Sōseki describes Kyoshi as "the leader of the cactus party".³² In the same letter we have: "(Kyoshi) asked me to explain shaboten³³ shumi to you, but I said that you would not understand it for some time to come and that 'Russianism'³⁴ would be all right for you. To this, Kyoshi said in his reply, 'I do not dislike sociology and psychology myself, and I would like to take an interest in this area. In exchange for which, I would like Morita to study saboten shumi.'"

The expression, saboten shumi, refers to the following passage from Kusa Makura and may have come to be applied to Kyoshi as a result of his praising this passage.³⁵

The passage in question comes from Chapter 11 and runs as follows:

"Beneath the overhang of the eaves I could see a line of weird shadowy forms. They did not look like trees, and yet they were obviously too tall to be flowers or clumps of grass. The impression they gave was that the 'Praying Spirits' painted by Iwasa Matabei had ceased praying and begun dancing. They danced in a well-ordered row which extended from one end of the main hall to the other, accompanied by the equally well-ordered line of their own shadows. They had probably found the beauty of the evening irresistible and paused only long enough to persuade each other before abandoning their gongs, bell-hammers, and records of sacred offerings and coming here to dance.

"When I drew closer, the forms proved to be great cactus plants about seven or eight feet tall. Their green gourds, which were the size of sponge cucumbers, resembled in shape large flattened soup spoons with the handles pointing downwards. The plants were, in fact, composed of a series of these gourds, each sprouting from the stem of the one beneath, and stretching up and up into a spatulate progression which would eventually end Heaven only knew where. It seemed likely that these cacti would, this very evening, break their way through the eaves and emerge on to the roof above. Undoubtedly the 'spoons' suddenly materialized out of thin air fully grown, for I could not imagine the older ones giving birth to young which gradually grew to maturity in the fullness of time. This persistent sticking of one 'spoon' upon the other seemed somehow eccentric. There can be few plants as comical as the cactus, and yet it affects an air of composed indifference. A certain Zen priest when asked by a pupil, 'What is Buddha?' is said to have replied, 'That oak tree in the garden.' If, however, I were asked the same question, I should answer without a moment's hesitation, 'That lord of all plants, a cactus in the moonlight.'

"When I was a boy I read an account of the classical Chinese writer, Ch'ao Pu-chih of a journey he once made, and there is one passage I can still quote from memory. I repeated the words over to myself. 'It was the ninth month of the year. Not a cloud obscured the vault of heaven. The dew lay pure upon the ground and the mountains were deserted. The moon was bright and the stars, which shone brilliantly, seemed to have been casually scattered across the sky. Cast on the shōji were the shadows of a thousand bamboo stems from which the passing wind drew a

ceaseless rustling whisper. Between the bamboos could be seen a host of plum and palm trees, like hobgoblins with hair in spiky disarray. My companions discussed this with each other, and it so disturbed them that they were unable to sleep. The next morning we departed.'

"Suddenly I burst out laughing. Given the right combination of time and place, I too might have been disturbed by these cactus plants and gone scuttling down the mountainside as soon as I had caught sight of them. I touched the spines and felt them prick my fingers."³⁶

This mixture of humour and Zen appealed to Kyoshi and it seems that his mode of writing gradually came to be referred to as saboten shumi.

At the time he was writing Kusa Makura, Sōseki's ideas on literature were in a state of flux and, while not repudiating the view of literature which this work represents, he felt it necessary to broaden his scope and to move off in a different direction, a direction that was to take him away from the shaseibun movement.

Apart from the statement in the letter quoted earlier that he wanted to write something purely human, we also have, "In the new year I want to write something that is the opposite of hininjō (non-human), that is to say junninjōteki (purely human)."³⁷

However, the sentence continues, " . . . but whether I will do it, fail to do it or fail to complete it I do not know.", showing that Sōseki was by no means confident of his ability to branch out onto a fresh course.

Further evidence of the unsettled state of Sōseki's ideas at this time is contained in the letter to Morita Sōhei dated 21st October 1906, part of which was quoted

above. Sōseki writes:

"I am neither a member of the Cactus party nor of the Russian party. The Cat party consists of humour + 'beancurdmakerism'.³⁸ It is said to be unartistic by the Cactus party and shallow by the Russian party. I feel as though I were drowning in a pisspot. I myself am not clear as to what it will become in the future. To take the name of a Westerner as a figure-head and say, 'Let's try to write like him.' is a terribly unnatural thing. If you look at the photograph of an oiran (courtesan), just saying, 'I³⁹ wish I had a face like that.' will not make it happen, will it? All of the present writers are atai types. Some people say that my tastes are English. Let them eat shit! If there is one Sōseki who exists as Sōseki between heaven and earth, then Sōseki as Sōseki cannot eventually become someone else. If I have English tastes, it is not that Sōseki is like the English, but that the English are like Sōseki."

This letter shows that Sōseki had great confidence in his own taste and indicates quite clearly the fact that he wished to develop an independent literary style, but it also reveals a sense of confusion with regard to just what that style should be.

It was stated earlier that Kyoshi said that it was with reference to Kusa Makura that Shihōda used the phrase daraku bungaku (degenerate literature). However, as Kitazumi Toshio points out,⁴⁰ he must have been mistaken, because Shihōda remarked that he thought the term hininjō in Kusa Makura was very interesting and that he had often wanted such a word when trying to explain the qualities of shaseibun to people. A further point that Kitazumi makes is that Kusa Makura is similar in tone to Ichiya and of this latter work Shihōda

said, according to what Sōseki told Kyoshi in a letter, "Sōseki was all right while he was writing Ichiya, but since then he has gradually become more and more degenerate."⁴¹

It is far more likely that Shihōda used the term daraku bungaku to refer to Nihyakutōka and Nowaki, since the latter work in particular marks a sharp divergence from the shaseibun kind of writing, and since even Nihyakutōka is very different from Shihōda's hakushi bungaku (a term apparently coined by Sōseki to describe what he considered to be the insipid nature of Shihōda's writing), from Kyoshi's saboten shumi and from the oiran-uishiki bungaku of Miekichi.

Chapter 9

The Origins and Structure of Kusa Makura

A first reading of Kusa Makura leaves one with the feeling of having read something beautiful, but one may be forgiven perhaps for wondering just what Sōseki had in mind when he wrote the book. If there is any story in Kusa Makura it is that of an artist who sets out on a walking tour in the mountains in an attempt to get away from the vulgar, everyday world and to attain a state of mind in which he can view everything in a 'non-human' way. While staying at an inn, he meets a beautiful young woman called O-Nami and decides to paint her picture. It is not until the last scene, however, that he sees an expression on her face which makes her a suitable subject for the picture he wishes to paint.

The book is made up largely of highly descriptive passages interspersed among sections which appear to be short essays on the subject of beauty. At first sight, the book appears to have been put together in a very haphazard way and to have no point at all. Much has been written about why Sōseki wrote Kusa Makura and why the work turned out as it did. However, before

proceeding to such speculation, it would be as well to let Sōseki speak for himself. His most detailed remarks on the subject appeared under the title of 'Yoga Kusa Makura'. This was published in the magazine Bunshō Sekai (The World of Writing) in November 1906 and was based upon an interview given to a reporter from that magazine. The full text of the article follows.

"I wonder whether there is an established definition of a novel. Looking around, one sees that there are psychological novels, which examine the real state of the world; tendency novels, which express one philosophy, and novels, also a kind of tendency novels, which mainly expose all that is bad in an age. Again, there are those which, without plot at all and in a kaleidoscopic fashion, describe events in the world just as they happen. There are various other kinds besides these, but the object of what one usually calls a novel does not appear to be necessarily founded on a sense of beauty. There seems to be complete indifference as to whether something is dirty or disagreeable. It would seem that they are only concerned with making the reader understand that people at large are such and such, that there is this amount of dirt in the world, this amount of evil, that this is how frightful people are. Over and above this the only thing which they convey is, 'That is why one must work. That is why one must be honest, why one must resist bad people. The world is a hard place, but one must bear it. Everything is discordant and one constantly comes to despair and despondency, but one must always go on in hope.' That is to say, they mainly expound how one should live in this world.

"If we accept that this is all that present-day novels are, then it follows that there is no need for them to aim at the portrayal of beauty. Providing that they reproduce reality, it does not matter if they do not impart the slightest feeling of beauty.

"However, if literature is a part of man's expression of beauty, then the novel, which is a part of literature, should convey a feeling of beauty. This, of course, depends on one's definition. But if my definition is not wrong,

and the novel is something which must not be separated from beauty, then it would be strange if one were to find a masterpiece among those works of the present day which do not care if they smash beauty. This is something which I doubt can be.

"My Kusa Makura was written with completely the opposite object to what people normally call novels. All I wished was that one feeling--a feeling of beauty--should remain in the reader's mind. There was no other object at all. It is for this very reason that there is no plot and no development of events. Here, when I say 'no development of events', I mean that in Kusa Makura an artist who has an unusual and strange way of looking at things happens to meet a beautiful woman. He observes her, but this beautiful woman, that is to say the character who should be the centre of the story, always stays in the same place--she makes not the slightest move. The artist just observes her from various quarters--front, back, left and right. That is all. Since the person who is supposed to be the central character does not move at all, there is no possibility of there being any development of events.

"If this were an ordinary novel, however, the heroine would move from position A to position B. So there would, in fact, be a development of events. In this kind of case the reader stands in the third position and observes the development of events from the side. But with Kusa Makura the exact opposite is the case. The central character in the piece does not move at all. It is the observer who moves. For this reason, those who think that a novel is no more than a development of events may not understand Kusa Makura. They may find it dull. But that does not matter. I will be content if a feeling of beauty remains with the reader. Thus, if Kusa Makura conveys no feeling of beauty at all it is a complete failure and if it conveys it in some part it is a partial success.

"My work (Kusa Makura) has also been criticized for being apt to fall into argument. But this is deliberate. If it is a hindrance to the work's having a good effect on the reader then it is wrong. But if, on the other hand, it is a help, one may use argument or anything else. In short, all is well if one avoids the dirty and the disagreeable completely and causes the reader to experience a sense of beauty.

"What are usually referred to as novels, namely those works which give the reader a

taste of the reality of life, are all very well in their way, but at the same time, I think that there ought also to be novels which forget the trials and tribulations of life and which are a consolation. Needless to say, my Kusa Makura belongs to this latter category.

"There have been no novels of this type up till now, and it may well be that it is not possible to write many such. But I think that, in one part of the world of novels, there should be works which are written with this purpose in mind.

"Let me illustrate simply what I mean. Conventional novels are like senryū (short, witty poems). They aim at being true to life. But I think that we also need novels which are like haiku, in that they take beauty as life. One cannot say of course that this element is entirely absent from conventional novels. There are, indeed, times when a sense of beauty is conveyed. But that is not the main objective. They quite happily portray the squalid and make no attempt to avoid it.

"If this haiku-like type of novel--it is a strange name, but still--if it should materialize it will break new ground in the realm of the novel. There does not seem to have been such a novel in the West to date, and it does not of course exist in Japan. Should this type of novel come about in Japan, we shall be able to say that a new movement in the field of the novel started here."¹

The one fact that stands out more clearly than any other from the foregoing is that Kusa Makura was written as an anti-Naturalist novel. It is a logical outgrowth of Sōseki's connection with the shaseibun writers. The most obvious thing which Kusa Makura has in common with shaseibun is that it has "no plot and no development of events". Moreover, the objective approach which Sōseki takes when describing people and things is the basis of the shaseibun attitude of description. It should also be kept in mind that in 'Yoga Kusa Makura' Sōseki said that he wanted to write a haiku-

like novel and that shaseibun had its roots in this kind of poetry. Indeed, Shihōda, remember, is said to have thought that Kusa Makura was the very epitome of shaseibun writing and to have stated that hininjō was the word to use when explaining the special characteristics of shaseibun.

The following passage from Kusa Makura makes it clear that not only was Sōseki trying to write something which went against the modern novel in his own country, but he was also opposed to Western concepts of writing.

"I seem to remember that Lessing argued that poetry can only be concerned with those events which are relevant to the passage of time, and thus established the fundamental principle that poetry and painting are two entirely different arts. Looked at in this light, it did not seem that poetry was suited to the mood which I had been so anxiously trying to express. Perhaps time was a contributory factor to the happiness which reached right down to the innermost depths of my soul. There was, however, no element in my present condition which had to follow the course of time and develop successively from one stage to another. My happiness was not due to the fact that one event arrived as another left, and was in turn followed by a third whose eventual departure heralded the birth of number four. It was derived from the atmosphere which pervaded my surroundings: an atmosphere of unvarying intensity which had remained with me there in that one place from the very beginning. It is those words 'remained in that one place' that are important, for they mean that even if I should try to translate this atmosphere into the common medium of language, there would be no necessity for the materials which had gone into creating it to be placed in any chronological order. All that would be necessary, surely, is that they be arranged spatially as are the components of a picture. The problem was what features of my surroundings

and what feelings I should use to represent this vast and vague state. I knew, however, that once having selected these, they would make admirable poetry--in spite of Lessing's contentions. How Homer and Virgil may have used poetry is beside the point. If you accept that it is suitable for expressing a mood, then it should be possible, providing that the simple spatial requirements of graphic art are fulfilled, to produce a verbal picture of that mood without making it the slave of time, and without the aid of events which follow each other in a regular progression."²

It is this getting away from a narrative which relies upon the passage of time and trying to put people and events into a spatial relationship which gives rise to the apparent aimlessness of Kusa Makura's structure.

Yoshida Seiichi states³ that Kataoka Ryōichi is of the opinion that Sōseki wrote Kusa Makura because he was trying to get away from reality, because he was suffering with his nerves, because he was caught between the feudalism of the past and the permissiveness of the present and because of a sense of loneliness and impotence. Unfortunately, Yoshida does not mention where Kataoka says this. However, he takes him to task, pointing out three things. First, Sōseki was not alone in feeling isolated; the Realists, who were diametrically opposed to him, had the same feeling. Second, Sōseki was certainly not the only writer who suffered from nervous debility. Third, the problem of feudalism and permissiveness was not unique to Sōseki's age; indeed, it still exists today. In spite of all this, however, none of the people who might have done so wrote, or could have written Kusa Makura.

Yoshida's points are valid. A perusal of the first page of Kusa Makura shows that not only did Soseki have no idea of trying to get away from reality, he realized that it would be futile to try.

"Approach everything rationally, and you become harsh. Pole along in the stream of emotions, and you will be swept away by the current. Give free rein to your desires, and you become uncomfortably confined. It is not a very agreeable place to live, this world of ours.

"When the unpleasantness increases, you want to move to some place where life is easier. It is just at the point when you first realize that life will be no more agreeable no matter where you move to, that a poem may be given birth or a picture created. . . . You may think this world created by ordinary people a horrible place in which to live, but where else is there? . . . There is no escape from this world. If, therefore, you find life hard, there is nothing to be done but settle yourself as comfortably as you can during the unpleasant times, although you may only succeed in this for short periods, and thus make life's brief span bearable. It is here that the vocation of the artist comes into being, and here that the painter receives his divine commission."⁴

It is clear that Kusa Makura does not represent any idea of escaping from reality, even though it is very different in tone from the satirical Wagahai wa Neko De Aru and Botchan, his two previous novels. The following passage from a letter to Kuroyanagi Kaishū, written in the same year as Kusa Makura, is interesting, since it makes the point that the writing of Kusa Makura, far from stemming from a negative desire to escape from reality, is an expression of one positive aspect of the author's ideas on literature.

"Beancurd and Sneeze speak arbitrarily and

for this reason they are idlers. I wonder what would become of their philosophy in real life. You are quite right to oppose it. I oppose it, too. What they say is all true, but it is only one facet of the truth. It is by no means an author's complete view of the world. Please understand that. It is all satire. At the moment I feel that that kind of satire is the most suitable and have used it throughout Neko. If I were to write my own individual views in essay form, I would argue the opposite side and argue the interplay of both sides.

"This coming September a novel which represents a part of my views on art and life is supposed to appear in Shin-shōsetsu. Do please read this and let me have your views on it. I would repeat that this is by no means the whole of Sōseki's tastes and opinions."⁵

The novel referred to is Kusa Makura.

Yoshida Seiichi points out⁶ that, thanks to an introduction from Sōseki, Suzuki Miekichi managed to have his short story, Chidori, published in Hototogisu. Sōseki had seen the manuscript in January of that year (1906). Chidori is a romantic story of the shaseibun type. In this story a student who is convalescing on an island in the Seto Inland Sea meets a girl called Fuji. They fall mildly in love with each other, but their affection is never anywhere near turning into a grand passion. Yoshida says that this may have given Sōseki his idea for Kusa Makura.

It is possible that Yoshida got this idea from Morita Sōhei, who says⁷ that he thinks that Sōseki was influenced to some degree by Miekichi's Chidori in planning Kusa Makura. However, he then says that 'influenced' is perhaps too strong a word and amends it to 'suggested by'. But he still feels that this is too strong and again

dilutes 'suggestion' to 'hint'. Morita further admits that both works are different in quality and quantity. He then says that Chidori provided a hint for Kusa Makura in that it was an "un-novel-like novel" and "a haiku-like novel which equates beauty with life".⁸ He finally gets down to specifics and says that once, when he went to the Oama spa (the setting of Kusa Makura), the colour of the oranges set against the green of the leaves suggested the adjective 'cal_ico-patterned', a word used in Chidori. It was probably this, he says, that made him connect the two works.

Whatever the direct source of Sōseki's inspiration, it is evident that Kusa Makura is the fruit of his interest in shaseibun, haiku and kanshi. Komiya Toyotaka makes the point that Sōseki thought that hininjō ran through all three of these forms of writing and that they provided, therefore, the basis for Kusa Makura.⁹ He also says,¹⁰ rather vaguely, that another reason for saying that Kusa Makura is a kanshi-like novel is that the kanshi which the artist writes set the keynote of the book.

A much more concrete and interesting connection between Kusa Makura and kanshi is made by Koide Hikaru.¹¹ He shows that Kusa Makura is far from being the haphazardly written work that it appears to be at first sight. It is, in fact, a highly structured work. Looking at a cross-section of the thirteen chapters which make up

Kusa Makura, one can say that the first chapter is by way of being an introduction, Chapters 2-12 form the main body of the text and Chapter 13 is a coda. The main body may be further divided, since Chapters 3-7 describe the leisurely hininjō world in which O-Nami lives, while in Chapters 8-12 one aspect of her tragic ninjō world is shown. Thus Kusa Makura takes the form called kishōtenketsu in Chinese poetry, where ki is the part in which the theme is first mentioned, shō receives the theme, ten develops it and ketsu brings it to a conclusion.¹²

Chapter 1 contains an introduction to Sōseki's idea of hininjō which runs throughout the book. It is mostly argument and is interlarded with very little narrative or scenic description, whereas in the main body of the book and in the coda we mainly have narrative and scenic description interspersed with argument--argument which extends the idea of hininjō introduced in Chapter 1. Moreover, the first part of the main section reaches a climax with O-Nami in a long-sleeved kimono in Chapter 6 and then naked in Chapter 7, while the second part reaches a climax when O-Nami meets her ex-husband in Chapter 12. Thus there is correspondence in the fact that it is O-Nami who gives rise to these climaxes. There is also agreement in the fact that Chapter 5 (the chapter at the barber's), which precedes the climax to Part 1, and Chapter 11 (at the temple), which precedes

the climax to Part 2, are both humorous. In either case, however, their humour is in contrast with the following chapter.

There is also agreement in the scenes in which O-Nami appears. There is the scene with a woman leaning against an aronia tree (Chapter 3), a woman leaning against the first-floor rail opposite (Chapter 4), a woman in a long-sleeved kimono (Chapter 6), a naked woman in the bathhouse (Chapter 7), a woman playing with a dagger (Chapter 12) and a woman handing over a purse (Chapter 12). Each of these scenes is both graphic and dramatic. There is further agreement in the fact that each of these dramatic scenes is preceded by a section of argument (on hininjō and ecstasy, on Oriental and Occidental civilization, on painting and poetry, on nude paintings, on art and painting and on the aesthetic life and art respectively). There is of course contrast in the fact that each dramatic scene is preceded by a polemic passage.

Another connection between Kusa Makura and kanshi is suggested by this use of contrasts and varying of the pace, since both techniques are commonly used in Chinese poetry, the former being referred to as tsui-kuhō¹³ and the latter as yokuyōtonza.

The greatest element that gives unity to Kusa Makura is the gradual evolution in the artist's mind of a picture which he wishes to paint. In Chapter 2 the artist

listens as the old woman in the tea-house talks with Genbei about the bride on horseback (who later turns out to be O-Nami). On hearing the conversation the artist writes:

"Wise is the bride who goes horseback
After the blossom has all fallen from
the bough.

"Strangely enough, although I had a clear impression of the clothes, the hair-style, the horse and the cherry tree, the one thing I just could not picture was the bride's face. I was searching my mind for a face that would fit, trying now one type, now another, when suddenly the face of Millais' Ophelia came to me, and slipped neatly into place beneath the high 'Shimada' hair-style. 'No, that's no good,' I thought, and immediately allowed my carefully built up picture to disintegrate. The clothes, the hair-style, the horse and the cherry tree all completely disappeared in an instant from the scene I had created. Somewhere deep within me, however, the misty figure of Ophelia being carried along by the stream, her hands folded in prayer, remained."¹⁴

In this same scene the old woman tells the artist about the Maid of Nagara and how she threw herself into the river to escape from an intolerable situation involving two lovers. She also tells him that two men wanted to marry O-Nami. Here we have the juxtaposition of Ophelia, who threw herself in the river after going mad as a result of being caught between love and duty, the Maid of Nagara, who drowned herself to get away from two lovers and O-Nami, who was loved by two men and is said to be rather strange. These three elements run together throughout the novel.

In Chapter 3 the Maid of Nagara appears in the

artist's dream. . . Perhaps very soon."

"There was the Maid of Nagara with her long billowing sleeves, riding a white horse through a mountain pass, when out leapt the two men, Sasada and Sasabe, and each tried to drag her off. Suddenly the girl turned into Ophelia; first climbing out along the branch of a willow, and then being carried away by the stream."¹⁵

In the same chapter the artist hears O-Nami singing the Maid of Nagara's song, completing the circle.

The next stage in the development of the picture in

the artist's mind comes in Chapter 7, where we have:

"There is certainly something aesthetic in the sight of a figure being carried along by the current, free from all pain, whether it be floating, beneath the surface, or rising and sinking by turns. Moreover, it will undoubtedly make an excellent picture if both banks are decked with many kinds of flowers whose colours blend unobtrusively with those of the water, the person's clothes and her complexion. If the facial expression is perfectly peaceful, the picture becomes almost mythical and allegorical. A look of convulsive agony will destroy the whole mood, while one which is absolutely composed and devoid of all passion will fail to convey any of the girl's emotions. What expression ought one to portray to be successful? It may well be that Millais' Ophelia is a success, but I doubt whether he and I are of the same mind. Millais is Millais and I am myself; and I wanted to express the aesthetic quality of drowning according to my own convictions. It seemed, however, that it was going to be difficult to find the face I wanted."¹⁶

In Chapter 9 the artist asks O-Nami if the Kagami pond is a good place for painting, to which she replies that it is a good place for dying. And in answer to the artist's "I have no intention of dying yet a while." (a priest) - and that ever since then there has been some-

she says, "I have. Perhaps very soon."

In Chapter 10 O-Nami's words come back to the artist as he is looking at the Kagami pond and he wonders how it would be to paint her.

"Suppose I painted her floating in the water beneath those camellias, with blossom after blossom dropping on her from above. I wanted to create the impression that the camellia blossoms would continue to fall and the woman remain floating throughout all eternity, but I was not sure that this would make a good picture."¹⁷

The threads are drawn together even more by Genbei, whom the artist first met in the tea-house. He comes along as the artist is looking at the camellias. In reply to a question by the artist about the pond, he says:

"I know it's been here for years and years, because this is where the Shioda girl drowned herself."

'Shioda? At the hot spring, you mean?'

'That's right.'

'You say she drowned herself? But she's still alive and well.'

'No, no, no. I'm not talking about the present Mr. Shioda's daughter. This was years ago.'¹⁸

Genbei goes on to tell the artist that an ancestor of O-Nami's had thrown herself into the pond because of an unhappy love affair with a wandering minstrel (a priest) and that ever since then there has been some-

one mad in the Shioda family. This explanation strengthens in the artist's mind the connection between Ophelia, O-Nami and the Maid of Nagara. He now has nearly everything that he needs for his picture: the background (the pond and the camellias) and the model (O-Nami) for the figure floating on the water. However, the one thing lacking is a suitable expression, and for this the artist has to wait until the last scene, when a look of aware (compassion) suffuses O-Nami's face as she catches sight of her ex-husband on the train. And so in the last lines of the book the development of the picture in the artist's mind is neatly rounded off.

Koide is at great pains to show,¹⁹ rightly, that Kusa Makura is a highly structured book. However, having taken this standpoint, he is faced with the problem of explaining Sōseki's remarks about Kusa Makura having no plot and no development of events. This he does, rather weakly, by saying that, although Kusa Makura was conceived as a novel without a plot, it ended up, contrary to the author's intentions, a crafted, structured work, because of Sōseki's natural talent.

It seems rather farfetched to suggest that the cohesion in this novel is a product of the writer's subconscious and that he was not aware of it. Surely the answer is much simpler. The development in Kusa Makura does not constitute a plot nor a development of events, since it is not the kind of development by which a story

is carried forward. It is not, therefore, really tied to the passage of time. Rather it is a development of a picture within the mind of the artist and an evolution of a certain state of mind on his part, coupled with a greater understanding of O-Nami, the object of his study. Seen in this light, there is nothing contradictory in the shape of Kusa Makura and what Sōseki said of this work in 'Yoga Kusa Makura'. Moreover, although such remarks may appear similar to what Sōseki said about Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, it should not be surprising that there is a unity in Kusa Makura which is lacking in this work, since, unlike Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, Kusa Makura was conceived as a whole.

As we have seen, Sōseki said that he wanted to write a haiku-like novel and, in the sense that shaseibun and hininjō are both outgrowths of the haiku, he did. However, it would be equally true to say that Kusa Makura is a kanshi-like novel--more so perhaps in view of its structure. But there is one other connection between Kusa Makura and the haiku, and that is the rather obvious one of the actual haiku which appear in the book. They are important because they form an integral part of the work and are not merely incidental poems. One final point is that Sōseki, in writing Chi ni hatarakeba kado ga tatsu, jō ni sao saseba nagasareru. (Approach everything rationally, and you become harsh. Pole along in the stream of emotions, and you will be swept away by

the current.)²⁰ chose to try to create a haiku-like atmosphere from the very beginning, since these lines are in the seven-five haibun metre.

Sōseki's language in Kusa Makura, as in many of his works, varies greatly. There is the pure poetry of the haiku and kanshi and the semi-poetic haibun. There is ornate description and simple narrative and there is dialogue, including the Tokyo dialect of the barber. Koide has shown in a chart²¹ how the language fluctuates throughout Kusa Makura, and perhaps it would be useful to see this chart in modified form.

CH	LANGUAGE	STRUCTURE OF CONTENTS
1	Highly ornate.	Mostly argument, interspersed with natural description and narrative.
2	Humorous, simple and unconstrained.	Natural description and narrative.
3	Full of fantastic language.	Narrative mixed with argument
4	Simple.	Argument dotted about in narrative.
5	Humorous and unconstrained.	" " " "
6	Voluptuous and fantastic.	First part argument. Second part narrative.
7	A mixture of simple and voluptuous.	Argument dotted about in narrative.
8	Simple.	Mostly narrative. A little argument.
9	Mostly simple dialogue.	Mostly narrative.
10	A mixture of fantastic and plain language.	Narrative. A little argument.
11	Humorous and unconstrained.	" and " are " "
12	Predominantly ornate. Some simple.	First part argument. Second part narrative.
13	Mostly plain.	Argument dotted about in narrative and natural description.

Kusa Makura is often referred to as a 'poetic novel', and so it is. However, it must not be forgotten that much of the work is taken up with passages which are more like short essays than anything else. Indeed, Komiya goes so far as to say, "This may be called an essay-like novel."²² It is true that the argument is about art and beauty and, as Sōseki says in 'Yoga Kusa Makura', the "dirty and the disagreeable" are avoided. Nevertheless it is plain that these passages owe much more to Sōseki the scholar, the writer of Bungaku-ron and Bungaku Hyōron, than to Sōseki the poet. Thus in Kusa Makura we have what may be thought of as the confluence of Sōseki the creative writer, the poet, and Sōseki the literary scholar. This is not to say that the argumentative element and the poetic element are entirely absent from Sōseki's other works, either before or after Kusa Makura, they are not. But nowhere else are they so closely interlocked and used as two complementary halves of a work.

The obvious question that comes to mind is why Kusa Makura should have been written as a mixture of argument and poetry. The following lines make Sōseki's tastes in poetry abundantly clear.

"Western poets in particular take human nature as their corner stone, and so are oblivious to the realm of pure poetry. Consequently, when they reach its borders, they come to a halt, because they are unaware that anything lies beyond. They are content to deal merely in such commodities as sympathy, love, justice and freedom, all of which may be found in that

transient bazaar which we call life. Even the most poetic of them is so busy dashing here and there about his daily business that he can never even find time to forget about the next bill he will have to pay. No wonder Shelley heaved a sigh when he heard the song of the lark.

"Happily Oriental poets have on occasion gained sufficient insight to enter the realm of pure poetry."²³

After quoting a poem by Tao Yuan-Ming and one by Wang Wei, Sōseki continues:

"Within the space of these few short lines, a whole new world has been created. . . . This type of poetry, which is remote from the world and its cares, is as essential as sleep in helping us to stand the pace of twentieth-century life. Unfortunately, however, all the modern poets, and their readers too for that matter, are so enamoured of Western writers that they seem unable to take a boat and drift leisurely to the realm of pure poetry. . . . Suffice it to say that, in my opinion, the inspiration to be gained from their (Wang Wei's and Tao Yuan-Ming's) works is a far more effective antidote to the hustle and bustle of modern living than theatricals and dance parties. Moreover, this type of poetry appears to me to be more palatable than Faust or Hamlet."²⁴

What emerges from the above is that Sōseki was enamoured neither of Western poetry nor of the works of contemporary Japanese poets. He felt it necessary to expound his ideas on hininjō, which represented to him the essence of the Oriental poet's view of life. The essay-like portions are Sōseki's attempt at this exposition, while the beautiful descriptive passages are his attempt at applying the principles he is talking about.

In lesser hands Kusa Makura might have become either a poem with footnotes or a lecture on liter-

ature, illustrated with coloured slides. The fact that it is a well-rounded, cohesive whole is a tribute to his skill.

Chapter 30

The Concepts of hininjō and inhuman in Kusa Makura

The word hininjō was coined by Sōseki when he was writing Kusa Makura to express what, in its inception, seems to have been a literary concept. The first thing to notice is that hininjō is different from inhuman (inhuman behaviour, inhuman), as is shown in the following lines.

"What an inhuman way of falling in love you artists have."

"Not inhuman (inhuman), non-human (inhuman). It is because we read novels and take some non-human, objective approach that we don't care about the plot."¹

The above passage makes it clear that a hininjō approach to literature is an objective one. It is a setting aside of personal (human emotions) when viewing life. This attitude seems to have been noted, from the haiku and from Matsuo Ōta's opinions on that form of writing, in particular.

In the following letter to Morita Sōhei, Sōseki sets out his ideas on the hininjō standpoint and its connection with Kusa Makura very explicitly and in detail.

The Concepts of Hininjō and Aware in Kusa Makura

The word hininjō was coined by Sōseki when he was writing Kusa Makura to express what, in its inception, seems to have been a literary concept. The first thing to notice is that hininjō is different from funinjō (inhuman behaviour, cruelty) as is shown in the following lines.

"What an inhuman way of falling in love you artists have."

'Not inhuman (funinjō), non-human (hininjō). It is because we read novels with this same non-human, objective approach that we don't care about the plot.'¹

The above passage makes it clear that a hininjō approach to literature is an objective one. It is a setting aside of ninjō (human emotions) when viewing life. This attitude comes, as has been noted, from the haiku and from Masaoka Shiki's opinions on that form of writing, in particular.

In the following letter to Morita Sōhei, Sōseki sets out his ideas on the hininjō standpoint and its connection with Kusa Makura very explicitly and in detail.

"You are quite right in your view that the primary emphasis of Kusa Makura is sensuous beauty. Sensuous beauty is something which does not contain human emotions (ninjō) (whether with regard to the watcher or what is being looked at).

1. There is no ninjō in nature. There is no ninjō in the onlooker. Both are hininjō. The viewer just thinks it beautiful. To this there is no objection.

2. If one views people as a part of nature then the same is true.

3. When a person's feelings and emotions are active then that person will exhibit ninjo to a large degree. The viewer will behave in one of three ways.

(a) He will discard ninjō and adopt an attitude the same as when looking at a pine or a plum tree. (This comes to the same thing as 1 and 2.)

(b) He will be unable to discard ninjō completely. He will feel sympathy or he will feel antipathy. However, this is different from when one feels sympathy in the real world. That is to say he will take no account of his own self-interest. (This is the attitude we normally have when looking at a play.)

(c) He will observe the person's activity with the same sympathy or antipathy as occurs in the real world. (This is like, for example, when one gets carried away by a play and jumps up onto the stage and hits an actor. In France a soldier once shot Othello with a gun.)

"As far as the attitude of the artist in Kusa Makura is concerned, the only point about which there is any dissent is No. 3. Therefore, all we have to do is try to decide whether it is (a), (b) or (c). It is not of course (c). The artist tries to view things quite a bit in an (a)-type way. He is the kind of man who, even if he cannot view things purely in an (a)-type way, cannot be content to look at everything in a (b) way. So, even if he falls back a pace and moves away from (a), He does not leap towards (b). He is somewhere in the middle between (a) and (b).

(i) When an expression of compassion (aware) appears on the woman's face, it is not impossible to view it in an (a) kind of way. For example: Does the expression of compassion accord in point of feeling with the subject of the picture? Or, again: Is it of itself an unpleasant or a pleasant expression? In other words, it can be observed simply with regard to whether it is beautiful or not. (If the artist takes this attitude, then his observation will be pure

hininjō, even though compassion is a part of ninjō.)

(ii) The look of compassion, when it appears on the woman's face, is laudable, since it is for her husband. She is a woman with whom one ought greatly to sympathize. She is an admirable person. And so the artist, too, in spite of himself, comes to feel compassion.--This is the same frame of mind as one is usually in when looking at a play. (I do not think that the artist in Kusa Makura went this far in the direction of ninjō.)

(iii) She has shown compassion, which means that she still has a lingering affection for her husband. If she feels affection (for him), by so much is she cool towards the artist, who thinks, 'What a fool I've been! Here I have been thinking up till now that she was in love with me.' This is an attitude taken from the real world. In this case he has been thrown into confusion by self-interest (rigai), his regard for her as a fine woman disappears and she becomes hateful to him. (The artist in Kusa Makura is of course not like this.)

"I do not know what Shakespeare's idea was when he wrote Hamlet, but it certainly was not (i). Nor was it (iii). It was probably (ii). (Which means that his standpoint was identical with that of the audience.)

"Therefore, the attitude of the artist in Kusa Makura and that of Shakespeare are different. One may not be able to make a clear-cut distinction, but the tendencies are different. Shakespeare has a tendency to remain at (ii), while the artist tends to return to (i). If one were to put (i) and (ii) side by side and indicate their directions by means of an arrow, then Shakespeare's attitude would be ↓ and the artist's would be ↑. Both are trying to draw away from each other.

"The artist is hininjōteki (without emotion). Shakespeare is junninjōteki (emotional in a pure way). Moreover, we human beings, who untiringly fight night and day over bread, are zokuninjōteki (emotional in a vulgar way).

Just as the writer has his way of thinking, so, too, the critic has his own views. There is not the least need for you to change what you say because of what I think. I am only giving you my thoughts on the subject.

"The artist believes that the whole mess of vulgar human emotions are mean and lowly--

particularly the vulgar emotions of the twentieth century. More than this, he has even grown to dislike plays which are extremely junninjō and which make these emotions mean. He is quite fed up. That is why he goes on a non-human trip and tries, even for a time, to wander aimlessly. Even if he cannot achieve a completely hininjō attitude, he can attempt to view people with a ninjō which comes as close to hininjō as possible. (Like watching a Nō drama.)"2

It is interesting to note that Sōseki divides ninjō into zokuninjō and junninjō, the former referring to the emotions which one experiences with regard to real life and the latter to the emotions which literature or the theatre can evoke in the reader or the onlooker. While admitting that the artist in Kusa Makura is not able to maintain a completely hininjō attitude, he nevertheless asserts that any ninjō there may be is of the junninjō variety. In parenthesis it is interesting to look at the direction of the arrows which Sōseki drew in his letter when referring to Shakespeare and the artist in Kusa Makura. It is quite clear that he was inflicted with no sense of false modesty.

From the above-quoted letter we can see that the object of the artist's trip is to view human beings with the same attitude as if one were looking at "a pine or a plum tree". The reason why such an attitude is necessary is shown in the following lines from Kusa Makura.

"Even if I cannot be completely objective, then at least my feelings should be no more intense." "I had, for a while, been able to stand aside and view the complexity of human emotions and relationships objectively, and there was no need for me to become involved again, at least for the duration of this trip. In fact it was imper-

ative that I should not become involved, for if that should happen it would mean that all my efforts had been wasted. I had to take human nature, sift out the sand and grit, and then spend my time gazing at the beautiful gold which remained at the bottom of the sieve."³

The point is that it is only by this hininjō approach to human beings that the artist is able to see them as beautiful. When writing of Kusa Makura, people frequently state that the artist enters a poetic realm. This is possibly true in the sense that he is in a romantic setting, in the middle of the mountains in spring. However, it is not true with regard to his contact with other people. As Okazaki Yoshie has pointed out,⁴ the world which the artist is viewing is not strictly speaking an artistic world. It is that world which is "the work of neither god nor devil, but of the ordinary people around us."⁵ It is for this very reason that the artist has to adopt an objective attitude in order that the vulgar, everyday world can be depicted aesthetically as a work of art. Thus it is, as Sōseki said in his letter to Morita Sōhei, that the artist tries to look at people as though they were part of the canvas of nature, or at the very least as though they were part of a Nō drama. Sōseki's reference to Nō is explained by the following lines from Kusa Makura.

"Even if I cannot be completely objective, then at least my feelings should be no more intense than if I were watching a Nō play. At times even the Nō can be sentimental. Can anyone guarantee that he will not be moved to tears by Shichikiochi or Sumidagawa? The Nō, however, is three-tenths real emotion and seven-

tenths technique. Its greatness and charm do not rely on a skilful representation of emotions and human relationships exactly as they actually are, but rather in the fact that it takes plain reality and, clothing it as it were with layer after layer of art, produces a leisurely, almost lethargic pattern of behaviour which is to be found nowhere in real life."6

Nō, then, is as unemotional as it is possible for drama to be. However, even less emotional than the Nō, says Sōseki, is the attitude one has when looking at a picture. The following rather lengthy paragraph from Chapter 1 of Kusa Makura makes it absolutely clear why the protagonist is a painter and not a novelist or a writer of short stories.

"I wonder how it would be if, while I am on this short journey, I were to regard events as if they were part of the action of a Nō play and the people I meet merely as if they were actors. Since this trip is concerned fundamentally with poetry, I should like to take the opportunity of getting near to the Nō atmosphere by curbing my emotions as much as possible, even though I know I cannot disregard them entirely. The 'Southern hills' and the 'bamboo grove',⁷ the skylark and the rape blossoms possess a character all their own, which is vastly different from that of humanity. Nevertheless, I should like to view people from the same standpoint as I view the world of pure poetry. Bashō⁸ found even the sight of a horse urinating near his pillow elegant enough to write a hokku about. I, too, from now on will regard everyone I meet, farmer, tradesman, village clerk, old man and old woman alike, as no more than a component feature of the overall canvas of nature. I know they are different from figures in a painting, since each one, I suppose, will act and behave as he or she sees fit. However, I think it is just plain vulgar the way the average novelist probes the whys and wherefores of his characters' behaviour, tries to see into the working of their minds and pries into their daily troubles. Even if the people move it will not trouble me, for I shall just think of them as moving about in a picture; and figures in a

picture, however much they may move, are confined within two dimensions. If of course you allow yourself to think that they are projected into the third dimension, then complications arise, and once again you will be forced to consider your clash of interests. It is clearly impossible for anyone in such a situation to view things aesthetically. From now on I am going to observe all those I meet objectively. In this way I shall avoid any undue emotional current being generated between us, and so, however animated the other person's actions may be, they will not easily affect me. In short, it will be just like standing in front of a picture, watching painted figures rush about excitedly. Three feet away from the canvas you can look at it calmly. To put it another way, you are not robbed of your faculties by considerations of self-interest, and are therefore able to devote all your energies to observing the movements of the figures from an artistic point of view. This means that you are able to give your undivided attention to judging what is, and what is not, beautiful."⁹

It is considerations of self-interest, then, which constitute the enemy and which prevents one from seeing the beauty in people. This is interesting, not only because it clarifies the hininjō standpoint of the artist in Kusa Makura, but also because it seems to hint at Sōseki's preoccupation with egoism in his novels from Nowaki on. In a sense, hininjō is the forerunner of the later moral concept of sokutenkyoshi, an important point to which it will be necessary to return a little later.

The artist has to view what he sees in terms of pictures and in this way he will be able to reduce the three dimensions of the real world into an actual picture. This is what Sōseki meant when he said, "An artist is a person who lives in the triangle which remains after the angle which we may call common sense has been

removed from this four-cornered world."¹⁰ Here, common sense may be taken as referring to what constitutes one's own best interests. The reason, we are told, that it is necessary to attain this state in which self-interest has been put aside is that by this means one can see the beauty in human beings. Thus we see that hininjō represents a romantic view of literature, since a writer who takes this standpoint, far from trying to portray the ugliness which exists in this world, as a Realist or a Naturalist might try to do, seeks to transcend the everyday world. However, Sōseki defends himself against charges of beautification by saying, "This portrayal of beauty where it is commonly believed that none exists is generally called 'poetic embellishment'. It is nothing of the sort. There is, in fact, no need for embellishment, since in all things there lies beneath the surface an intrinsic beauty which is a reality, and which has always existed in all its brilliance, merely waiting to be discovered."¹¹

The artist in Kusa Makura must select from the world around him what he wishes to portray. In the event, he finds that his picture, when its outline becomes clear to him, is a composite one. It is not surprising that the components which become settled most easily in his mind are the pond and the camellias, since they are both phenomena taken directly from nature. It is when he begins to think concretely of the implications

of using a human subject that he encounters difficulties, because he is now forced to put his theories into practice and paint Ophelia in a hininjō-like way. The problem is twofold. First he cannot decide what emotion to portray on Ophelia's face and secondly O-Nami's expression is unsuitable. This is the artist's dilemma. He realizes that Ophelia must have some expression, and yet, since expressions reflect the emotions, the picture would become full of ninjō. On the other hand, O-Nami's face is not suitable, because in a sense it lacks ninjō.

It is the contemplation of this dilemma and its ultimate solution by the artist's observation of O-Nami which forms the connecting thread of this book. The main character of Kusa Makura is not, then, the artist but O-Nami. She is quite literally the central character, since, it will be remembered, as Sōseki said in 'Yoga Kusa Makura', the artist moves around O-Nami, as it were, observing her, while she remains still. There is no doubt that in his method of describing O-Nami Sōseki is putting into practice ideas about the novel which he expressed in 'Kankaku-ron' ('On Distance'), a section of Bungaku-ron.

"I think that in the average work one has to wait for an introduction from the author as a rule before becoming acquainted with facts and characters in that book. Those referred to as 'he' or 'she' show (a tendency to) keep a set distance from the author. Moreover, since the author and we, the readers, are standing a set distance apart, it is clear that we are twice removed from the characters in the work. . . .

One way to lessen this distance is to hide the shadow of the author, who is acting as an intermediary, and bring the reader and the characters face to face. There are two methods of bringing this about. The first is to draw the reader to the author's side and for them both to take the same standpoint. . . . Or instead of drawing the reader to his side, the author may employ the device of moving himself and blending in with the characters, thus precluding the slightest trace of his own individual existence occasioned by being an intermediary. In this case, the author may become the protagonist or a supporting character. He is one of those who live within the work and breathe its air. . . . I will call those works which employ the first method 'critical works' and those which follow the second method 'sympathetic works'. . . . Critical works are those where the author preserves a set distance between himself and his characters and relates their activities with critical insight. . . . Sympathetic works are those which do not stress the author's own self. Or, even if they do stress his self, they do not do so as a self apart from the characters in the work. In other words, they do not admit of any distance between the two (author and characters), but consolidate them in one place with copious sympathy."¹²

In several of Sōseki's works there is a person who is both one of the characters and an objective observer as well. There are, for instance, the cat in Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, the artist in Kusa Makura, the student in Kokoro, Keitarō in Higan Sugi Made and the younger brother and the friend in Kōjin. These are all examples of Sōseki's attempt to apply the ideas on distance expressed in Bungaku-ron.

Kusa Makura falls into the category which Sōseki labelled as 'sympathetic novels', and so would seem to be the very antithesis of a hininjō work, in which objectivity is of the essence. One would expect such

a work to be of the critical variety, in which "the author preserves a set distance between himself and his characters". However, hininjō is a question of attitude and not of mere distance. It is perfectly possible for the author to put himself into the work, which after all is only a question of narrating the story in the first person, without violating the code of hininjō, providing that the character who represents the author maintains an objective, dispassionate attitude towards the other characters in the novel. Indeed, by this means the writer creates objectivity on two levels. On one level the painter is observing his surroundings as if he were looking at a picture. On another level the painter is a part of the picture which is presented to the reader. Thus, by getting into the picture himself, the author provides the reader with the opportunity of observing him objectively too. In a sense, then, such a method is almost more in keeping with the concept of hininjō than the critical approach since, by becoming one of the characters, the author creates at least the illusion of not viewing things subjectively.

Looked at solely as a literary concept, Sōseki's idea of hininjō is not, perhaps, unique. One is reminded of other concepts, such as Tayama Katai's heimen byōsha and Mori Ōgai's teinen and bōkansha, not to mention Masaoka Shiki's views on the haiku, and the literary standpoint of all the shaseibun writers. There is

evidence, however, that hininjō was not just a literary conceit to Sōseki, but also represented a state of mind in which he could find refuge from the trials and tribulations of everyday life. At the end of the previously quoted letter to Morita Sōhei, for instance, Sōseki points out that the artist in Kusa Makura set out on his trip because he wanted to get away from the vulgarity of the twentieth-century world. Further evidence is to be found in a letter which Sōseki wrote to Takahama Kyoshi on 31st August 1906.

"Sensei, what a shock! Today my third daughter went into the university hospital with what looks like scarlet fever. It is possible that she may be put in isolation. It is much more difficult to bear the sight of my child's illness than to be ill myself. Moreover, the idea that she might die brings me unbearable pain. If the child should die, it is possible that her death might become the material for a novel in two or three years' time, but I would far rather her be healthy than that I should write a masterpiece. The Kusa Makura way is no good at all here."¹³

It is obvious that the "Kusa Makura way" refers to hininjō and that it is not a literary idea but a mental attitude, which he found impossible to adopt in the circumstances.

Ten days later, on 10th September, Sōseki wrote to Kyoshi again: "My daughter is improving daily. I went to see her in hospital, but we have not yet exchanged a word. She is the epitome of hininjō, as you would expect the daughter of the writer of Kusa Makura to be."¹⁴ Here again hininjō has nothing to do with liter-

ature.

Sōseki himself was obviously full of emotion when he went to see his daughter in hospital and seems saddened by her coolness. Komiya says¹⁵ that Sōseki had a yearning for the hininjō world and that, in this sense, Kusa Makura was a kind of Utopia or man-made paradise for him, somewhere where he could get away from the excess of ninjō which plagued him and also from himself for a while. If Komiya means by this that the writing of Kusa Makura was a form of escapism, then one would have to disagree since, as shown in an earlier chapter, this book represents a positive expression of part of Sōseki's opinions on literature. It has also been mentioned already that the world of Kusa Makura is not a Utopian one. If there is a Utopian element it is in the attitude of the observer and not in what is being observed. One must make a distinction here between Sōseki and the artist. It is the artist who is going into the mountains in an attempt to achieve a hininjō attitude. While it is quite possible that Sōseki found it restful to write such a piece as Kusa Makura, it can scarcely be considered as escapism. Even the artist is not really trying to escape. True he has gone into the mountains to get away from the workaday world, and true, as Okazaki says,¹⁶ he is stressing nature and not humanity, to the extent of looking at human beings as a part of nature. However, his object is to find the

true beauty of human beings and not negate human existence. Thus his trip is no more escapism than is a man's going to a Zen temple to seek tranquility so that he can meditate on life.

It is no mere quibble to say that hininjō came to represent to Sōseki not a means of running away from trouble but a means of bearing it. The artist hoped to come to see the beauty in human beings by breaking away from self-interest and reaching a state of fairness and impartiality. In later life Sōseki came to use the word sokutenkyoshi to describe the achievement of this state. However, his comment in the first of the two letters to Kyoshi quoted above that the "Kusa Makura way is no good at all here" indicates that at this time hininjō meant a dispassionate attitude rather than such a moral state to Sōseki.

Sōseki was never very specific when talking of sokutenkyoshi, but it undoubtedly represented to him some form of Buddhist enlightenment, and insofar as hininjō in Kusa Makura has a connotation other than the aesthetic it is a Buddhist one. In Chapter 11 the abbot says to the artist:

"I remember that my predecessor often used to tell me when I was a young priest that a man cannot be said to have completed his education until he can stand at Nihonbashi in the centre of Tokyo and lay bare his soul to the world without embarrassment. You too should

strive towards that end, for if you attained it you wouldn't have to take these trips to find peace of mind.'

"I could reach that state if I became a true artist."¹⁷

Thus we see that for the artist the achievement of a hininjō attitude is not entirely an aesthetic question. It also has philosophical overtones and has in it the seeds of the moral concept of sokutenkyoshi. This development from hininjō to sokutenkyoshi is seen in every major work after Kusa Makura, concerned as they are with examining the problem of self-interest.

The implication that even the aesthetic aspect of hininjō is not without its religious overtones can be seen in the following passage from Kusa Makura.

"The spring breeze, which was passing drowsily through the empty house, came neither to gratify those who welcomed it, nor to spite those who wished to keep it out. It came and went quite naturally: an expression of the impartiality of the universe. I sat with my chin resting on my hands, thinking that if only my heart were as free and open as my room, the breeze would, unbidden, have found its way there too.

"You are conscious of the ground you are standing on, and so fear that it may give way beneath you. You are aware that the heavens are above you, and so you quake with the fear of being struck by lightning. Life is an inescapable rat-race in which you are constantly being spurred on by materialistic values to wrangle and squabble with your neighbour. For us who live in this world with its East and West, and who have to walk the tightrope of advantage and disadvantage, love which is free of self-interest is an enemy. And yet visible wealth is as worthless as dust, and fame which

has been avidly grasped is, it seems to me, like stolen honey which looked sweet while in the making, but in which the cunning bee has left his sting. The so-called pleasures of life derive from material attachments, and thus inevitably contain the seeds of pain. The poet and the artist, however, come to know absolute purity by concerning themselves only with those things which constitute the innermost essence of this world of relativity. They dine on the summer haze and drink the evening dew. They discuss purple and weigh the merits of crimson, and when death comes they have no regrets. For them, pleasure does not lie in being attached to things, but in becoming a part of them by a process of assimilation. And when at last they succeed in this, they find there is no room to spare for their ego. Thus, having risen out of the quagmire of materialism, they are free to devote themselves to the real essentials of life, and thereby obtain boundless satisfaction."18

As a result of his trip, the artist in Kusa Makura becomes aware of just how much viewing the world with a hininjō attitude is conducive to a true recognition of beauty and ugliness. Even when he returns to the world where he suffers, cries and gets excited, the beauty which he has experienced as a result of hininjō will stay with him and colour his life. The point at which he realizes that his life will become more beautiful and noble if he can retain that hininjō attitude which he achieved at Nakoi is the point when the study of life opens out before him.

It is interesting to note that in the second of the two letters to Kyoshi mentioned earlier, Sōseki describes his daughter as having a hininjō attitude and implies that it is because of this that he and she have been unable to communicate with one another. The

same may be said of the artist and O-Nami in Kusa Makura. O-Nami's usual expression is described as being "only a faint mocking smile accompanied by a frown which showed a burning desire to win at all costs."¹⁹ This expression may be taken as exhibiting a kind of hininjō. O-Nami has been divorced from her husband and returned to live with her father. But in spite of this thoroughly unpleasant and upsetting experience, she has come to view life with wry amusement, as her "faint mocking smile" shows. Even the "frown which showed a burning desire to win at all costs" may be seen as evidence of a kind of hininjō attitude, since it shows that she is not wallowing in self-pity and has managed to come to terms with her feelings. This type of hininjō is not of the aesthetic variety. It refers to a state of mind in which one can view oneself and life dispassionately, in the sense that one is able to control one's passions and feelings. Once again it is related to Zen Buddhism, since O-Nami has achieved whatever equanimity she has as a result of the abbot's instruction in Zen. When talking to the artist, the abbot says:

"'Now look at O-Nami Shioda down where you're staying. She had so much weighing on her mind when she came back to her father's place after her divorce that she could not bear it; and because she could not bear it she eventually came to me and asked for religious instruction. Recently she has improved tremendously.

Look at her; she's now a highly rational woman.'"²⁰

Komiya criticizes Sōseki for unnaturalness in creating the character of O-Nami. He says, "Although the whole is beautiful, one cannot deny that it gives one the feeling of being an artificial flower. This is particularly true because of the singular language and behaviour of O-Nami. . . . One might even go as far as to say that there can be few characters as stagy, as unnatural or as patently fabricated as she."²¹

Komiya asserts that Sōseki was aware of this and quotes the following passage from Kusa Makura in support of his assertion.

"O-Nami, I thought, would make a first-class actress. When before the footlights, most actors and actresses have to assume a special manner for the occasion, but O-Nami was different: her home was her stage and her life one continuous performance. . . . Her behaviour was such that, unless regarded as play-acting, it would seem weird and rapidly become intolerable. Set against a background of stock concepts like duty and compassion, and viewed from the standpoint of the average novelist, it appears over-stimulated and thus disagreeable. . . . (it was essential that I regard everything I saw as a picture and all the people I met as though they were merely performers in a Nō drama or characters in a poem.) Seen in the light of this resolution, O-Nami's behaviour and mode of life were more beautiful than those of any woman I had ever met. They were far more beautiful than those of an actress in a play, simply because she herself was not trying to give a beautiful performance."²²

It is difficult to understand why Komiya should feel that this passage shows Sōseki indulging in self-criticism. These are the words of one character in

the novel, the artist, about another character, O-Nami, and do not constitute literary criticism on the part of Sōseki the writer. That is the way O-Nami was. Her behaviour was theatrical, and while it may be considered unnatural for a person to behave in a theatrical way, some people do. And if they do, a faithful portrayal of such unnatural behaviour can hardly be considered a weakness in a writer.

The artist states that O-Nami is not trying consciously to give a beautiful performance. This is ~~undoubtedly~~ true in the sense that she is not consciously putting on airs. She does, however, contrive to stage certain set pieces for the artist, such as appearing nude in the bathhouse and walking up and down the verandah in her wedding kimono. Apart from these 'dramatic' scenes, however, it is quite possible that her forthright language and, to the artist, rather eccentric behaviour may have appeared unnatural and removed from everyday life. It is certainly no surprise that a Japanese man, especially one of the period in question, should find such behaviour on the part of the daughter of his host unusual, to say the least.

This theatricality and forthrightness are both products of O-Nami's hininjō. Her forthrightness goes with her "faint mocking smile" and is an expression of her dispassionate attitude. The scenes which she stages are also a result of her slightly mocking atti-

tude towards the artist, a man--an attitude which she has only been able to attain towards men as a result of the abbot's help in controlling her emotions.

It is as though she, from her own hininjō standpoint, were watching the artist watching her, and adopting several poses, as if to say, "How about this?" and then laughing at his consternation.

When the artist succeeds in looking at O-Nami's behaviour objectively, that is to say when he is able to overcome his consternation, then her actions appear beautiful to him. However he is set on painting a picture of Ophelia floating on the water and realizes that O-Nami's expression, even though she is a beautiful woman, is not suitable. The reason for this is that all of O-Nami's expressions, whether a smile or a frown, stem from a real or assumed lack of emotion and, while it is necessary for the observer to be objective, if the other party is objective as well, there is no communication, as in the case of Sōseki and his daughter.

The artist realizes that he needs to see emotion on O-Nami's face before he can use it as a model for the dying Ophelia's and that this must be a natural emotion and not one presented for his approval by the objective O-Nami. And so the impasse is caused, because the attitude of both the artist and his subject are hininjō, the former in a mainly artistic and the latter in a psychological sense. The artist comes to see that,

when painting people, there must be ninjō on the part of the subject, even though the painter may regard that subject dispassionately, as though he were looking at a "pine or a plum tree".

Here, then, is the artist's dilemma: a hininjō model is no good, and yet he considers ninjō to be vulgar. As he himself says:

"I knew, however, that it was going to be no easy task to express so non-human a concept as eternity while using a human subject. . . . Thinking that perhaps I ought to use someone else's face, I ran through all the women I knew, counting them off on my fingers, but none of them was satisfactory. O-Nami was the most suitable after all, yet there was something lacking. That much I realized but, since I could not put my finger on the deficiency, it was impossible to make the appropriate alteration to her expression as I pictured it in my mind. If I added jealousy, the feeling of uneasiness would be too strong. What about hatred? No, that was too violent. Anger? No, that would completely shatter the harmony. I dismissed bitterness because, with the exception of the poetic bitterness of love, I consider it too vulgar. Having thought over various other possibilities, the answer suddenly dawned on me. I had forgotten that there exists among the many emotions one called compassion (aware). It is unknown to the gods, and yet it is the very emotion that can elevate man to near-deity. There was not a trace of compassion in O-Nami's expression; that was what was missing. The instant I saw a flicker of this emotion pass across her features, roused by some momentary impulse, I would be able to complete my picture; but when or even if that time would come I had no way of knowing."²³

A hint of this aware is given when the artist observes O-Nami talking to her ex-husband and giving him some money in Chapter 12, but it is not until right at the end of the book that it flowers fully. The very

last scene of Kusa Makura is at the station, where Kyūichi is being seen off as he leaves to go to the war. O-Nami's ex-husband also happens to be on the train. The book ends with the following lines:

"There was the shaggy beard and well-worn brown Homburg of the 'soldier of fortune' (O-Nami's ex-husband) who, filled with the sadness of parting, was taking one last look out the window. Just then, he and O-Nami happened to catch sight of each other, but the engine continued to chug on, and very soon his face disappeared from view.

"O-Nami gazed after the train abstractedly, but strangely enough the look of abstraction was suffused with that 'compassion' (aware) which had hitherto been lacking.

"That's it! That's it! Now that you can express that feeling, you are worth painting,' I whispered, patting her on the shoulder. It was at that very moment that the picture in my mind received its final touch."²⁴

This look of aware on O-Nami's face is not just a convenient device of Sōseki's to bring the book to an end. O-Nami's hininjō is of a psychological kind. It is in part an equanimity derived from the abbot's spiritual guidance and in part an ability to put aside, or at least to hide, her feelings. As O-Nami watches her ex-husband's face receding into the distance she feels a genuine sympathy and perhaps even love for him, which causes her face to be suffused by a sad and tender expression. She has at last become able to put aside her ego and her selfishness and to identify emotionally with her husband, so taking another step in the direction of spiritual enlightenment. Thus Sōseki is admitting that, in the sense which he used the word with regard to O-Nami, the sense which later led him

on to the concept of sokutenkyoshi, hininjō in its pure form is not desirable. It must be leavened by aware which, however near to the gods it may elevate human beings, still belongs to the realm of ninjō. trad-

At the end of a long discussion as to whether the artist feels aware when he sees this expression on O-Nami's face, Okazaki concludes²⁵ that what he in fact feels is okashi. He points out that okashi has been contrasted with aware since Heian times and that, although nowadays it tends to mean only 'humour', it used to be used to describe the feeling which one has when appraising something objectively. He further says that this okashi fits the painter, because it is a contemplative attitude more in keeping with the plastic and graphic arts than with poetry or music. Moreover, one might add that it is entirely consistent with Sōseki's ideas on shaseibun, whose objectivity he described in his essay of that name as containing "an underlying smile".

This leads us to an interesting conclusion. Although it is not possible to say that the hininjō attitude of the artist is a purely aesthetic one, since his attainment of this state is a help in appreciating the true beauty of humanity, it is clear that in speaking of hininjō in Kusa Makura, Sōseki is talking of two different, though closely related, things. On the one hand there is the hininjō tempered by aware which has a psychological and even a moral connotation, and there

is that hininjō which is an aesthetic and artistic standpoint and which may be expressed by the word okashi. Thus the development of hininjō throughout the book ends with the juxtaposition of those two traditionally contrasted concepts, okashi and aware.

It is interesting to note that, even in this most hininjō of works, Sōseki is forced to admit, by recognizing the necessity of aware, that if one is going to take human beings as one's subject then ninjō, in some shape, manner or form, is inevitable. In this way he signals that in future works he will be altering his course somewhat.

As Sōseki wrote in *Shinshū no Hōkoku* (An Account of the New World), "My ideas were very different when I started writing. The social consciousness which appears toward the end of *Uranai no Koto De Aru*, and the satirical tone of *Shinshū no Hōkoku* intellectuals in particular, is completely new. The fact that a similar preoccupation with contemporary society can also be seen in *Shinshū no Hōkoku* and written after *Shin Makura*, shows that there are two parallel lines within Sōseki's work and that Romanticism did not give way chronologically to Realism or vice versa.

In a sense, *Koto no Hōkoku* and *Shinshū no Hōkoku* are these lines to some extent. The former is a simple everyday story with overtones of the social

Chapter 11

The Position of Kusa Makura

in the Works of Natsume Sōseki

When looking at Sōseki's early works as a whole, one is first conscious of the fact that Wagahai wa Neko De Aru and Botchan are different from the other pieces. Although Wagahai wa Neko De Aru started out as a piece of shaseibun, it finished as a critique of contemporary society. As Sōseki wrote in 'Shojosaku no Tsuikai-dan' ('An Account in Retrospect of My Maiden Work'), "My ideas were very different when I finished from when I started writing."¹ The social consciousness which appears towards the end of Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, and the satirical look at 'westernized' intellectuals in particular, is carried on in Botchan. The fact that a similar preoccupation with contemporary society can also be seen in Nihyakutōka, which was written after Kusa Makura, shows that there are two parallel lines within Sōseki's early works and that Romanticism did not give way chronologically to Realism or vice versa.

In a sense, Koto no Sorane and Shumi no Iden straddle these lines to some extent, since the first is a simple everyday story with overtones of the super-

natural, while the latter is a curious mixture of the mysterious and the commonplace. However, they lean towards a realistic view of life in the sense that Koto no Sorane dismisses the idea of a mystic sympathy between spirits and Shumi no Iden is an account of a 'scientific' approach to explaining the attraction between lovers.

This leaves of the early works Rondon-tō, Kārairu Hakubutsukan, Gen'ei no Tate, Ichiya, Kairo-kō and Kusa Makura. The first two of these works differ from the others in that they are more by way of being essays than stories. However, they share with the other works, the former in particular, a certain air of fantasy, a poetic quality, perhaps. Again, there is a poetic quality about Gen'ei no Tate, Ichiya and Kairo-kō, dealing as they do with fated and mysterious love. One major difference between these works is that Ichiya takes for its inspiration an Oriental sense of beauty, whereas the others stem, directly or indirectly, from English literature.

at this time
It is clear, however, that Sōseki was consciously writing poetical works. In a letter to Kawamoto Binryō², dated 2nd March 1906 (a date about four months after the publication of Kairo-kō and about six months before the publication of Kusa Makura) Sōseki says, "In the first place, people often say that what I write is difficult to understand. Since, when I write

fiction, I think as I do when composing haiku, I think, 'This much will be understood.' But there are very few people who are prepared to read a novel as they would read a haiku, and I think that it is for this reason that there are many who feel that it is difficult and who do not understand."³

Sōseki probably had Ichiya particularly in mind when he wrote this, since, more than any other of his early works, it seems to have been greeted by general incomprehension.

Of these poetical works Komiya says:

"If, as in the West, a form of poetry had been perfected in Japan into which Sōseki could have poured his feelings, there is no doubt that he would have chosen one of these forms and expressed this 'poetry' as poetry. However, in Japan, at least as far as Sōseki was concerned, there was no suitable form of poetry at the time. Of course one cannot doubt but that Japanese poetry was in a flourishing state even then. However, the Myōjō school of poetry, to take one example, was distasteful to Sōseki both in form and, more especially, in content. Sōseki had to attempt something new: the vigorous expression of 'poetry' in prose. The result was Rondon-tō, Gen'ei no Tate, Ichiya and Kairo-kō."⁴

Kārairu Hakubutsukan is not included in this list, but a little earlier in the same article Komiya says that, although very different in style, it and Rondon-tō both possess a dream-like quality. More important is the omission of Kusa Makura. However, Komiya goes on to say that, although after Kairo-kō Sōseki stopped writing poetry, Kusa Makura and Gubijinsō are poetic, but in a different way.

At first sight, it would seem that Komiya is lumping Kusa Makura and Gubijinsō together and contrasting them with the other poetic works. It is more likely, however, that he means that each, in its own way, is different from what went before. Even so, it is difficult to accept this statement as it stands. While Komiya's appellation of poetry in prose is a very apt one, his formation of categories seems rather arbitrary, considering the fact that both Ichiya and Kusa Makura have their roots in Oriental literature, whereas the other works mentioned by him are connected in some way with English literature. Indeed, Gen'ei no Tate and Kairo-kō are virtually mediaeval Romances written in Japanese, as was stated in an earlier chapter.

However, Komiya's basic point is a valid one, but one which needs careful consideration in the light of Sōseki's statement that when he wrote prose he thought as he did when writing haiku. Komiya seems to be saying that Sōseki was writing Western poetry, while Sōseki seems to be saying that he was writing haiku. The two statements, however, are not contradictory, for what Komiya is talking about is form, whereas what Sōseki is talking about is content and a writer's attitude to his subject. Moreover, Komiya is not saying that Sōseki is writing Western poetry, at all. His point is that Sōseki was forced to write his poetry in prose, because there was nothing in Japanese like the long

narrative forms which exist in English poetry. One might say that Sōseki's poetic ideas demanded that he be allowed to spread himself more than a writer of the concise, traditional forms of poetry is allowed to do. This would explain why he wrote comparatively few haiku and kanshi during the years 1903 to 1906.

It has been noted in earlier chapters that Sōseki disliked English literature, despite the fact that he wrote English poetry while in England and praised individual Western writers on various occasions. Sōseki inevitably viewed English literature with the eyes of a Japanese poet and therefore objected to the fact that Western poets took "human nature as their cornerstone", as he said in Kusa Makura. Some things, such as Meredith's novels, some works by Stevenson and the novel, Aylwin, he read with pleasure. Moreover, he seems to have appreciated, as do many Japanese, the poetry of the English Romantics, particularly Shelley. The romantic air of the Arthurian legends also appealed to him, hence his writing of Gen'ei no Tate and Kairo-kō. But the fact remains that he became convinced that Oriental concepts of poetry and art were superior to those in the West. This view was strengthened by his association with the shaseibun school of writers. Thus, on the one hand he continued to write haiku and kanshi, while on the other he began to branch out into prose which reflected this opinion, partly because shaseibun was

a prose form and partly because there was no suitable poetic form in Japan which would give him the scope he needed to express his ideas.

Sōseki's first attempt at writing prose which embodied a purely Oriental view of literature was Ichiya. In this piece, not only is the standpoint of the writer an objective one and the mood dream-like and poetic, but the subject matter, too, is purely Japanese. The language, moreover, owes much to kanbun.

Ichiya, like Kusa Makura, depicts a hininjō world, and the talk of viewing things as pictures is common to both. Furthermore, the dialogue does not follow any logical progression, but jumps from point to point. This is very much like the conversations between the artist and O-Nami, but is even more pronounced, probably one of the reasons why people said that they could not understand it when it was first published.

Morita Sōhei suggests⁵ that Sōseki may have written Kusa Makura as a means of getting people to understand what they had said they could not understand about Ichiya. However, whether this is true or not, says Morita, it is certainly easier to understand Ichiya if one has read Kusa Makura first.

Ichiya has no point, if point means plot or didactic significance. It is a picture in words and, as such, is mainly an attempt at creating an atmosphere by means of objective description.

of To charges of being incomprehensible, Sōseki replied that Ichiya was meant to be felt, not understood. His aims in writing Ichiya are perhaps best explained by his remarks about Kusa Makura in 'Yoga Kusa Makura', where he says, "However, if literature is a part of man's expression of beauty, then the novel, which is a part of literature, should convey a feeling of beauty. . . . I will be content if a feeling of beauty remains with the reader. Thus, if Kusa Makura conveys no feeling of beauty at all it is a complete failure, and if it conveys it in some part it is a partial success."

On the last page of Ichiya the word ichi (one) occurs time and time again. In this last part of the story Sōseki is emphasizing the superiority of quality over quantity and stating that every microcosm is a reflection of the macrocosm. Sōseki was very fond of pointing some moral or making some philosophical statement at the end of his works, as witness Gubijinsō, where the point of the book is summarized in the last six pages or so. In Ichiya the point Sōseki is making is a literary one: namely that it is not necessary for a story to have a beginning, a middle and an end; nor need one describe the whole of a person's life in order to grasp the nature of that life. A description of one night is enough. This is a point which may seem trite now, but one which Sōseki, as a member of the shaseibun movement, felt it necessary to make at the time, in view

of the writing of the Naturalists. *that, although*

Although there is no absolute proof that Morita's suggestion that Sōseki wrote Kusa Makura as a means of explaining Ichiya is true, it seems wholly reasonable to assume that this was in fact the case. In Ichiya we have the aesthetic aspect of hininjō in action. That is to say, Sōseki has adopted a purely objective attitude in describing people and has tried to evoke a certain atmosphere without going into their characters. This is done without any explanation, for the point made at the end has very little to do with hininjō. No wonder that his readers were perplexed and that he should have felt the need to explain himself. Thus, whereas Ichiya is a purely hininjō-like descriptive piece, Kusa Makura is a succession of such passages interspersed with explanatory sections. *at carrying*

However *true* Morita's contention *may be*, *it is* it is not the whole truth. It certainly explains why there are explanatory passages in the book, but it does not explain why there are so many of them. If Sōseki had merely wanted to explain his ideas he could simply have written an essay entitled Hininjō, but this he did not do, preferring instead to expound on the subject within the framework of fiction. It makes more sense to regard Kusa Makura not only as an explanation of Ichiya but also as an extension and an amplification of that work. *appeared, with some modifications, as*

It is an extension in the sense that, although admittedly rather short for a novel, it is a full-length work and not just a vignette as Ichiya is. In this sense Kusa Makura differs from all of Sōseki's other poetic works, which would have to be classified as either short stories or essays. One may agree with Komiya that Sōseki's early poetic works are really poems in prose, but in spite of the fact that they were in a shaseibun vein and shaseibun stems from haiku, one feels that, to a large extent, they all have their roots in a foreign soil, with the exception of Ichiya and Kusa Makura. Kusa Makura is not just a haiku-like novel or a kanshi-like novel. In point of tone and attitude it is a haiku and in structure it is a kanshi. It is also a novel. This represents a step forward from Ichiya, in that it shows an attempt at marrying Oriental poetry with that child of Western literature, the novel, as opposed to merely trying to produce a piece of prose with an Orientally poetic flavour, as is the case with Ichiya.

In Ichiya we are given a glimpse of a woman. She is beautiful, forthright in what she says when talking to men and somewhat enigmatic. In Kusa Makura Sōseki took this woman and turned her into a full-blown character--O-Nami. This beautiful, mysterious woman was to become a permanent member of Sōseki's cast of characters and appeared, with some modifications, as Fujio

in Gubijinsō and Mineko in Sanshirō, for example.

Another phenomenon which was first used in Ichiya and developed more fully in Kusa Makura was what might be termed the use of theatrical props. In Ichiya there are, for instance, the woman's fan, the man's fan, the ash-pot and the Sentoku incense burner, while in Kusa Makura there are such things as O-Nami's wedding kimono, the ink-stone and the celadon cake bowl. Sōseki used the description of such objects to give, almost literally, colour to a scene, since in both these works his object was to create a series of pictures. However, what were merely subjects for graphic description in Ichiya have, on occasion, a more sophisticated role in Kusa Makura. The kimono, for example, appears again and again and thus becomes a motif which runs throughout the work. This was a device which Sōseki continued to use as a means of carrying on and developing the plot in works after Kusa Makura, too. There is, for instance, the gold watch in Gubijinsō, which is used to show the fluctuations in the relationship between Fujio, Munchika and Ono. In Sanshirō there is the thirty yen which Sanshirō borrows from Mineko, which serves somehow to establish a bond between them. In Higan Sugi Made there is the almost symbolic walking stick, with a snake swallowing an egg carved on the knob. It will be seen, then, that Kusa Makura, although the last of Sōseki's poems in prose, was by no means a dead-end,

since devices and techniques which he developed in this work were further expanded and used in subsequent works.

As Sōseki said, Kusa Makura only represented one aspect of his views on literature, and indeed Wagahai wa Neko De Aru and Botchan are different from the poetic works of his early period. However, they are not so far removed as they might seem to be at first sight. They are not, of course, part of the hininjō world, but they are nearer to the poetic works than they are to Naturalism and Realism, since they both stand out as being patently products of the imagination. There is no pretence at their being reality. Moreover, what all of Sōseki's works have in common is yoyū, that characteristic of shaseibun writing.

Nihyakutōka, which was Sōseki's next work after Kusa Makura, can also be said to fall into the same category. It is in the same vein as Wagahai wa Neko De Aru and Botchan in the sense that it is concerned with social criticism, but it, too, has yoyū. Takahama Kyoshi did not like Nihyakutōka and Sōseki wrote a letter to him in its defence.⁶ He defended the fact that Kei falls asleep in the inn without telling Roku anything of his life, although he had promised to do so, on the grounds of yoyū. He also said that what Kyoshi regarded as an excess of humour was also necessary to give an air of yoyū.

With Nowaki, Sōseki entered a new phase. He moved out of the hininjō realm into the world of ninjō. Moreover, he moved away from general social satire and from its humorous presentation as seen in Wagahai wa Neko De Aru, Botchan and Nihyakutōka and began to deal with real-life characters in specific, real-life situations. Why he should have moved away from this yoyū standpoint is an interesting question, and one that was touched on earlier.

In his preface to Kyoshi's Keitō, it will be remembered, Sōseki wrote that there are really only two kinds of novels: those which have yoyū and those which do not. He says, "The world is a large place. There are various modes of living in this wide world. The enjoyment of various modes of living by adapting to changing circumstances is yoyū. Observing things is yoyū. Savouring things is yoyū."⁷

He goes on to say that novels containing yoyū may be thought to be shallow. He then says, "I agree that this is so. But it is a mistake to take 'shallow' as meaning 'worthless'. In this case, 'deep' and 'shallow' are the equivalent of colours being dark (thick) and light (thin), and they are in no way a yardstick to measure a work's standing, any more than one would judge that (a painting) is of a high tone because the colours are rich, or of a low tone because they are pale."⁸

He continues by giving examples of yoyū. "Making

jokes is yoyū. Passing one's free time in painting and sculpting is yoyū. Fishing, singing, watching plays, going to summer resorts, going to hot springs for treatment, these are all yoyū." ⁹At the end of the article, when talking of works which do not have yoyū, Sōseki says that they generally deal with matters of life and death and "reproduce the poignant climaxes of fate." He says that readers give this as a reason for admiring this kind of novel. He goes on: "In this point, I, too, respect this kind of novel."

In a letter to Suzuki Miekichi, dated 26th October 1906, Sōseki indicates his position on literature at the time. He mentions that when he was a boy he thought that when he grew up he would be married to a loving wife, wear beautiful clothes, eat good food and lead "a poetic existence". Reality was, however, very different and he found that a writer could not ignore this reality which is the world at large and just live in his own microcosm, writing of things which he considers to be beautiful. He says in the letter:

"I do not know how much of the point of life is in living beautifully, that is to say in leading a poetic life, but I think it is only a very small amount. One should not be like the protagonist in Kusa Makura. That is all right, too, but in order to exist in the modern world and give free rein to one's good points, it is necessary to become Ibsenesque. In this respect, the haiku set, like Kyōshi and Shihōda, are living in a different world. It would be most uninteresting if all writers were like them. But your usual novelist is like that. I want, on the one hand, to go in and out of haiku-like liter-

ature which has the live-or-die, give-and-take-life type of ardour which the men of high purpose at the time of the (Meiji) Restoration had."10

In both his preface to Keitō and his letter to Suzuki, Sōseki expresses his admiration for literature with a life and death type of importance. It is clear, then, that Sōseki wished to deal with things of great moment. His remark about "men of high purpose at the time of the Restoration" is especially revealing, for it reminds one that the reason he took up the study of English literature was that he felt that, by so doing, he would be able to help his country. As was pointed out in Chapter 4, Sōseki had always been acutely conscious of the public function of literature. Thus it was not any distaste for poetry and the poetic which caused him to move into the realm of ninjō, but a heightened desire to take part in public life by stressing the public rather than the private function of literature, this time in the writing and not in the study of it. As far as Sōseki's tastes in literature are concerned, there are ample grounds for thinking that until the end of his life he preferred what, in the language of science, one might term 'pure' as opposed to 'applied' literature.

In a letter to Kyoshi, dated 11th November 1906, not the one from which passages have been quoted in previous chapters, Sōseki says, "I wish I could be satisfied with writing about fine autumn weather and autumn

clouds.¹¹ How happy I should be personally if I could.
... From now on, my tendency will be towards what
Shihōda-sensei terms as degenerate. . . . I did not
choose to write degenerate literature; the world forces
me to degeneracy."¹²

Sōseki did not give up writing poetry, but his writing tended to become polarized, with haiku and kanshi forming the private aspect of his literature, while his novels fulfilled the public function. This is not to say, however, that there is nothing poetic in his novels from Nowaki on. Some descriptive passages in Gubijinsō, for instance, are very similar in quality to his prose writing during his early period. But the fact is that, from Nowaki on, Sōseki may be seen as Sōseki the poet on the one hand and as Sōseki the professional writer of prose on the other. One remembers that, when writing Meian, his final work, he wrote the novel in the morning and composed kanshi in the afternoon. Indeed, Morita Sōhei states¹³ that Sōseki in his later years said that when he was writing novels he felt as though he had fallen into a vulgar world and that he wrote one or two poems afterwards to wash away the dirt.

One may say that after Kusa Makura poetry was poetry and prose was prose, for Sōseki was never to write anything like it again. The only later prose work that is even vaguely similar in tone to his early works is Yume Jūya, but this is more like a collection of short

stories loosely strung together than a novel. Moreover, when compared with Sōseki's early pieces it can be seen to be a regression, although an enjoyable one, in that it neither moves farther along the road of Occidental romanticism as seen in Kairo-kō, nor significantly develops the Oriental romanticism of Ichiya and Kusa Makura.

In later life Sōseki came to dislike Kusa Makura. In reply to a letter from Yamada Kōsaburō, announcing that he was translating Kusa Makura into German, Sōseki said, "I no longer have the courage to read four or five pages at a stretch."¹⁴ Also, in a letter to Koike Kenji, in which he mentions that Yamada is in the process of translating Kusa Makura into German, Sōseki refers to it as "an extremely weak work".¹⁵

Okazaki suggests¹⁶ that Sōseki's disaffection with Kusa Makura stems from the fact that it deals with beauty and art, whereas Sōseki turned more to logic and religion in later life. The answer is probably not as simple as that, since, although he may be said to have turned more to logic in his prose writing, this in no way meant a rejection of the aesthetic. It just meant that, as has been shown, it was confined to his poetry. It is probable that Sōseki came to regard Kusa Makura as unnatural, in that it was a hybrid born of a marriage between Oriental poetry and Western prose. Like many hybrids, while a thing of beauty itself, Kusa Makura was

not able to reproduce. That is to say that Sōseki saw the impossibility of producing a whole line of such works. This must have been a great disappointment to him since, as he said in 'Yoga Kusa Makura', he hoped to create a new genre of novel which would spread from Japan to the West.

In spite of what its author may have thought in later years, Kusa Makura has continued to occupy a very important place in Japanese literature and to receive critical acclaim right until the present day. On this subject Yoshida Seiichi says, "Viewed from the Japanese standpoint, the essential contrast and harmony between the Oriental--that is to say the traditional--and the Western--that is to say the foreign-- . . . in the past, at present and in the future, was, is and always will be of great significance."¹⁷

It is interesting to note that Yoshida goes on to say that it was considerations different from those which pertain today which caused the book to sell out immediately when it was first published in Shin-shōsetsu. In those days, he says, they were probably charmed by Sōseki's manipulation of beautiful language, by his great erudition--which spanned both Chinese literature and the West--and by the conversations which took place between the beautiful O-Nami and the artist and between the Tokyo barber and the young priest, for example.

If Yoshida is saying that in modern times people

are more conscious of the work as a yardstick for measuring the differences between the Orient and the West (with the former coming out on top), whereas at the time the book was written people were more conscious of style, knowledge and the effective use of dialogue, then one is tempted to say that Sōseki's contemporaries had a greater appreciation of literature than do their modern counterparts.

To return to the main point, however. It will be seen that, in the sense that it was the last thing of its kind that Sōseki wrote, Kusa Makura may be said to be the end of a certain line. However, as stated before, it is not a dead-end, because of its connection with later works in the areas of technique and characterization. In this sense, and in the sense that Sōseki continued to write about the 'poetic', albeit in poetry, Kusa Makura is just one link in the natural development of Sōseki as a writer.

Kusa Makura was the work in which Sōseki introduced the concept of hininjō, a concept which was to develop into the central core of his philosophy and become sokutenkyoshi. In this sense Kusa Makura may be seen as a beginning: a premonition of works ⁱⁿ which *there is a growing preoccupation with moral issues*, as opposed to the works before Kusa Makura, which were, in the main, either purely descriptive or vehicles for rather vague, unfocused social criticism.

There is another sense in which Kusa Makura may be regarded as a beginning, and that is in that it introduces the idea of meian (light and darkness) when talking about the real world. Although the hininjō realm is not one of meian, the artist has come from and will return to such a world. In Chapter 1 of Kusa Makura we have, "After twenty years of life I realized that this is a world worth living in. At twenty-five I saw that, just as light and darkness (meian) are but opposite sides of the same thing, so wherever the sunlight falls it must of necessity cast a shadow."¹⁸

Although this image of meian cannot be said to occupy a very important place in Kusa Makura, it is one which was developed in subsequent works. As Jay Rubin says when writing of Sanshirō:

"Sanshirō finds in black the comforting shades of old Japan. But light and shadow are interdependent . . . and into the comforting dark places, light always finds its way. This light that pierces the shadow is dangerous. It brings with it the threat of modern society and of woman, who inhabits the real world. Modern woman is aggressive and has forced men to play the passive role. . . . Sōseki's imagery is a reversal of the traditional scheme. It is the women who are bright (mei) and their light penetrates into the darkness (an) of the men--darkness that traditionally was female. The modern age has turned everything upside-down. There are no more shining Prince Genjis."¹⁹

The above passage, besides calling to mind the characters of the woman in Ichiya and of O-Nami, makes the point that, even when writing Sanshirō, Sōseki was still continuing to develop the image of light and darkness.

Indeed, the image became so important to Sōseki that he used the term Meian as the title of a novel, fittingly perhaps, his last.

Kusa Makura occupies a unique place in Sōseki's prose works, marking as it does the transition from hininjō, in the aesthetic and artistic sense, to ninjō. It was an inspired experiment: an experiment which in the opinion of its author in later years failed. This is an opinion, however, to which its continuing popularity gives the lie. It may be read at one level as a poem and at another as a dissertation on poetry and art. To some it may represent the end of one stage in a writer's development, to others a beginning but, beginning or end, it is an outstanding piece of literature.

"Try as you may, you cannot portray it. Try as you may, you cannot portray it," reiterated the person sitting informally cross-legged at the edge of the verandah. His wiry hair was cropped to within half an inch of his head. Perhaps because he thought that he could get away with a Zen saying that he had learned beforehand, he inclined his round, beardless face and nodded lowly once more. "Try as you may, try as you may, a dream it is that, try as you may, you cannot portray."

He then roared with laughter and looked over his

Appendix 1

One Night

"The many beautiful dreams of the many beautiful people..." The man with the beard sang this softly two or three times and then appeared lost in thought. He had been sitting upright with his back against the pillar of the tokonoma, which was picked out by the lamplight. But now he bent forward slightly, forming a steep mountain by hugging his knees with his arms. From under the gentle curve of black brows restless eyes flashed with what might have been resentment at not being able to continue after having come up with such a fine turn of phrase.

"Try as you may, you cannot portray it. Try as you may, you cannot portray it," reiterated the person sitting informally cross-legged at the edge of the verandah. His wiry hair was cropped to within half an inch of his head. Perhaps because he thought that he could get away with a Zen saying that he had learned beforehand, he inclined his round, beardless face and recited loudly once more, "Try as you may, try as you may, a dream it is that, try as you may, you cannot portray."

He then roared with laughter and looked over his

shoulder at a woman who was sitting further back in the room.

The woman was facing the deep green of the garden. To her right, beyond a dimly burning lamp, its hot rays deflected by a woven bamboo shade, were the offset shelves next to the tokonoma.

"Let the artist paint it. Let the woman stretch silk on a frame and embroider it," she said. She was wearing a yukata with a white ground and she allowed one leg to slip sideways inside the robe. The white in-step of her foot slid down onto the russet chamois cushion and the resulting pose was utterly captivating.

The man who was hugging his knees began to chant once again, "The many beautiful dreams of the many beautiful people..." As he finished, the woman continued, "I'm not going to embroider it. And even if I did, I wouldn't give it to anyone. No, not to anyone."

She smiled a little artificially and then, using the vermilion lacquered handle of a round fan, she impatiently brushed away the black strands of hair which had begun to draggle down her cheek. At this, the purple tassel at the end of the handle described an arc and danced into the perfumed blackness of her oiled hair.

"Give it to me," at once interposed the man without a beard and burst out laughing again.

The ghost of a smile eddied to the surface of the woman's cheeks from the milky depths and her eyelids

were suddenly suffused by a faint crimson flush.

"If you did embroider it, what colours would you choose?" the man with the beard asked seriously.

"When I bought silk, it would be white. When I bought thread, there would be silver thread, gold thread, thread the colour of the impermanent rainbow, thread of twilight (that borderland between night and day), and there would, of course, be thread the colour of love and the colour of hate," said the woman, raising her eyes and looking towards the tokonoma pillar. The coolness of her eyes called to mind a jewel which had been melted, then tempered, but which could not withstand a fierce flame. The colour of grief has ever been black.

The four or five cypress trees planted as a border along the alley leading next door had summoned up a cloud. The summer rain had stopped earlier, but now began again. The round-faced man had discarded his cushion and now had both legs hanging over the edge of the verandah.

"It doesn't look as if those trees have ever been cut back. The rainy season just keeps on and on, too. I don't know how it can keep on raining like this," he said, half to himself. And then as if something had just occurred to him, he began to pummel his knees with the edge of his open hand. "I wonder if it's beriberi. I wonder if it's beriberi," he said.

The other two were pulling, as it were, at the end

of a thread which was somewhat difficult to unravel, a dream-like poem, perhaps, or a poem-like dream. slanted down "Women have more beautiful dreams than men, don't they?" said the man. toward "If you can't go somewhere beautiful in dreams, where can you?" the woman answered. Her expression implied that this was a sordid world.

"Has the world grown old and sordid?" he asked. The man "It has," she said, fanning her beautiful skin with the white silk fan. asked. Then the woman said I thought

now "But there must be old wine in old jars.¹ Enjoy it."

The man, too, began fanning his knees. The fan was made of overlapping goose feathers and had a red sandalwood handle. wonder?" asked the woman. She showed no parti-

cular "It would be nice if I could get drunk on this old world," said the woman, determined to go on being peevish. become lighthearted. "I will try to fall in love your

heard At this point, the man who had been incessantly fussing with his legs and wondering whether he had beriberi raised the hand with which he had been hitting his knees and checked his two companions reprovingly.

As all three stopped talking, a bird inserted a sharp "Cuckoo!" into the ensuing lull and, skimming over the tops of the cypress trees, flew off towards the Zen temple behind. It's better not to meet some-

one "Cuckoo!" all in love with, said the heard solemnly.

The "That was a cuckoo calling, wasn't it?" The man

with the feather fan put it aside and moved on hands and knees out onto the verandah. The black rain slanted down under the eaves into his upturned face. The man worried about beriberi raised a finger and pointed towards the southwest. "Over there," he said. From somewhere above the main hall of Tetsugyūji came, "Cuckoo! Cuckoo!"

Leaning back against the tokonoma pillar again, the man with the beard said happily, "I knew it was a cuckoo the first time it called. Then the second time I thought how nice it sounded." It seemed as though this was the first time in his life that he had ever heard a cuckoo.

"Is that what falling in love at first sight is like, I wonder?" asked the woman. She showed no particular sign of embarrassment.

Crew-cut rounded on her. "When you hear that call you become lighthearted, but when you fall in love your heart becomes choked up. Right? Don't fall in love. Don't fall in love... You know, I really think it is beriberi."

With this he made a dent in his shin with his thumb.

"You add on that last little bit. But you don't know whether it's the ha'porth of tar without which the ship will be spoiled, or the last straw that will break the camel's back. It's better not to meet someone you'll fall in love with," said the Beard solemnly. The feather fan began to move again.

"But what happens when a piece of iron meets a magnet?"

"Even so, there's no awareness the first time," said Crew-cut as he tried to knead out the dent which he had made with his thumb.

"But it's strange how you can feel 'This is the one' about someone you've never seen or heard before," said the other, twisting his beard importantly.

"I can appreciate the beautiful women that Utamaro paints. Isn't there some way of bringing pictures to life?" Crew-cut turned to the woman again.

"I... Only a person who has appreciated them..." she said, twining the tassel around a slender finger.

"They come to life soon enough in dreams," replied the Beard easily.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, in mine--" He was about to embark on his story when the mosquito smudge went out and a mosquito which had been hiding in the darkness suddenly came out and bit him on the back of the neck.

"Perhaps the ash is damp," said the woman. She pulled the tube towards her and removed the lid. The bundle of incense had been tied together with a red silk thread and the ashen remains smouldered as they swung erratically from side to side.

From the house immediately to the east a koto and a shakuhachi could be heard playing together. The sound

seemed to spill from a hydrangea bush and could be heard distinctly. Through the bush it was possible to glimpse patches of light in the room, which had been left open to the night.

"What do you think of them?" asked one of the men.

"Nothing special," replied the other.

Only the woman said nothing.

"In mine--" said the Beard, returning to his story.

The fumigator had been relighted and three separate streams of smoke escaped from the holes in the tube.

"Now it's alight," said the woman.

No sooner had the three streams of smoke come together above the lid to form a brown ball than a gust of rain-washed wind blew in and scattered it. Sometimes the wind would catch the smoke before it had had time to settle into a cloud and the three streams would form three rings, moving around the black-lacquered tube powdered with gold and silver. Some rings would revolve slowly, while others moved more quickly. Sometimes the smoke was dispersed even before it had had time to form into rings.

"They burn! They burn!"² said the round-faced man, suddenly recalling the scene at a crematorium.

"Life isn't easy for a mosquito, either," said the woman, putting people and mosquitoes on the same plane.

The conversation had been moving back towards the point from which it had started, but it was now dispersed

along with the smoke from the fumigator. The man who had begun to speak showed no sign of continuing. He had long since learned that this was the way of the world.

At length the woman asked, "What about the story of your dreams?"

The man picked up from beside him a collection of poems bound in sheepskin with the title written in cinnabar. He layed the book on his knee. A thin ivory paper-knife marked his place and protruded far out of the book. It was finely beaded with moisture, and he traced the tip of one finger over it, producing a weird character.

"This dampness is unbearable," he said, frowning.

"It certainly is damp," agreed the woman and gathered up the end of a sleeve in one hand. "I think I'll burn some incense," she said and stood up. Once again the story of the dreams was deferred.

A sandalwood lid rested on the Sentoku³ incense burner. In the middle was a sapphire knob carved in the shape of a monkey. "Oh!" cried the woman as her hand touched the lid.

"A spider!" Her long sleeve swung sideways.

Both men looked towards the tokonoma, where they could see a white earthenware jar, glazed with feldspar, next to the incense burner. The vase contained a lotus bud and two furled leaves, a testimony to the human

kindness of the person who had put on a straw cape
and gone out to cut them in yesterday's rain. world
of About four or five inches above the leaves hung
a spider. It was suspended from the ceiling by a long
silver thread and looked the very picture of elegance.

of these spaces. "Onto a lotus leaf
the hundred and Descends a spider,
vades the galle And I burn incense,"⁴

chanted the woman. She then picked up a handful of
incense sticks and threw them into the back of the
censer.

Then the bearded man recited:

Just then "A spider hangs
a gate. The spider And swings nor left nor right;
shifted their Smoke swirls
of anyone could And writes on bamboo beams."⁵

He looked at the spider, but made no attempt to
sweep it away. Save for a slight wavering each time
a puff of wind caught it, the spider, too, remained still.

"It looks as though the spider has come to hear
about your dreams, too," said the round-faced man, laugh-
ing.

"That's right. I was going to talk about bringing
pictures to life in dreams, wasn't I? Let the spider
listen as well if it likes," said the Beard.

He opened the book of poetry on his lap, but showed
no sign of wanting to read it. Although his eyes were

on the words, it was impossible to tell whether what he saw in his head was a world of poetry or a world of dreams. "See..." said the beard uncertainly, facing the "There is a long pillared gallery. The pillars are spaced six feet apart and there are a hundred and twenty of these spaces. A hundred and twenty lanterns hang in the hundred and twenty spaces, and the spring tide invades the gallery. The hundred and twenty lanterns flicker in the spring breeze. Through the gloom an enormous torii can be seen standing in the sea like a giant spectre, a restless spirit unable to quit this world..."

Just then a bell sounded shrilly and someone opened a gate. The speaker broke off abruptly. The other two shifted their positions slightly, but there was no sign of anyone coming in.

"Next door," said the man without a beard.

After a while there came the sound of an umbrella being opened and a young woman's voice said, "See you again tomorrow night, then." And what sounded like a man's voice answered, "Yes, tomorrow night."

The three smiled faintly and looked at each other in silence.

"That was no picture. They were alive." "But it would make a picture if you could reduce it to two dimensions."

"But what about the voices?"

"The woman's is dark lilac." direction of an Old
"And the man's?" they parted company, one going
left "Let me see..." said the Beard uncertainly, facing
the woman. pairs of eyes happened to come to rest on
the "Scarlet," said the woman scornfully. said, "There
is a "There are two hundred and thirty-five framed
pictures hanging in the long gallery. In the two hun-
dred and thirty-second picture there is a beautiful
woman and her..."

"Voice. Is it yellow or brown?" asked the woman.

"It isn't so monotonous as all that. It's a voice
you couldn't express in terms of colour. But if I had
to describe it, I would say that it was, well, something
like your voice, perhaps."

"Thank you," said the woman, her eyes filled with
the light of an uneasy laughter. At that moment two
ants crawled onto the scene from somewhere or other.
One climbed up onto the woman's lap. It was probably
bewildered. It had reached as far as it could go and
not only had it failed to find any prize but it had
also lost its way down. Unperturbed, the woman lightly
brushed off the black crawly thing with her white
fingers. As it fell to the ground it chanced to meet
the other ant on the border of a tatami mat. The bor-
der was of white twill with a black pattern. For a
moment the ants stood head to head as if murmuring to
each other, and then they moved off together, this time

not towards the woman but in the direction of an Old Imari cake-dish. Here they parted company, one going left and the other right.

Three pairs of eyes happened to come to rest on the ants. At last the man without a beard said, "There is an eight-mat room. There are three guests sitting there. One of them is a woman. An ant crawls up onto her knee. The hand of the beautiful woman onto whom the ant has crawled..."

"Is white. The ant is black," supplied the Beard.

All three laughed together. One ant had reached the pinnacle of a bamboo ash-pot and was thinking. The other had had the good fortune to chance upon an arrow-root starch cake in a bowl and was now wandering about in a confused way, dazed perhaps by excessive happiness.

"What about the beautiful woman in the picture?" asked the woman, getting back to the point.

"It is a hazy moonlight night and not even the sound of the waves is to be heard. Suddenly what had seemed to be a shadow has begun to move. It moves down the great length of the gallery, neither flying nor walking, but simply as a shadow moves."

"What about the face?" asked the beardless man. But just at that moment the concert started up again next door. One piece finished quickly and what appeared to be a new piece began. It was not very good.

"They keep the honey in their mouths and spit out

the stings." commented one. "They would make you eat fossilized beefsteak," said another.

"If you are going to use artificial flowers, you should also burn Raja incense, with its perfume of orchids and musk." This from the woman.

Thus each of the three commented on the performance in his or her own way, but their remarks were extremely difficult to understand.

"There are coral branches on the sea bed. But these people are like ungrateful children who, in spite of the medicine they swallow, can only spit out poison." Having said this, the Beard came out of his reverie and continued, "That's it, of course. The continuation of the dream's the thing, not the concert." But then he could only mumble, "The face of the woman who comes out of the picture..."

"Try as you may, you cannot portray it. Try as you may, you cannot portray it," said the round-faced man and, picking up the rhythm, he began to tap lightly on a silver bowl. The ant which had acquired a cake was disconcerted by these vibrations and began to rush about left and right inside the cake bowl.

"That's the end of the ant's dreams," said the woman to the man who had been talking of dreams.

"Do ants dream of arrow-root starch cakes?" he asked, laughing softly.

The round-faced man continued to tap the bowl assiduously, repeating, "Will you get out! Will you get out!" from the lamp with the woven-bamboo shade. There

"Surely it would be easier for you to become a picture than for the woman to get out of one," said the woman, once more addressing the Beard.

"I hadn't thought of that. In future I'll become a picture," said the man nonchalantly.

"If this ant had been able to become a cake, there wouldn't have been any need for it to be thrown into such confusion," said the round-faced man and stopped tapping the bowl. At some point he had lighted a cigar and was now puffing it pompously.

The medake bamboo rose to a height of four feet in the early summer rain and formed a screen about a stone hand-basin. One or two taller stems reached almost to the eaves. Each time they were courted by the wind they scraped against the shutter casing and scattered a flurry of droplets from the green bamboo onto the verandah.

"There's a picture over there." He indicated the direction with a jet of cigar smoke.

Smoke from the still burning incense sticks penetrated the hairs of a monk's whisk hanging from the tokonoma pillar. The scroll in the alcove seemed to be Wild Geese in the Reeds by Jakuchū⁶. There were seventy-three geese in the picture, but of course there

were too many reeds to count. The alcove was three feet in depth and the picture only faintly caught the light from the lamp with the woven-bamboo shade. There was something less than honest in the way that this made it difficult to distinguish the picture from a genuine old master.

"This would make a picture, too," said the man leaning against the pillar, looking around.

The woman's freshly washed black hair cascaded to her shoulders. As she moved the round silk fan to and fro, shadowy clouds of hair were wafted into disarray at the sides of her head. But when they settled back into position, her thin eyebrows were revealed in more than usual glory. Her cheeks looked as though they had been rubbed with crushed cherry blossoms, and she gazed out coolly from eyes in which lodged the stars of a spring night.

"Would I make a picture, too?" she asked.

She firmly adjusted the neckband of her yukata; the pattern of the robe was not very clear, but it seemed to be a dense covering of arrowroot leaves on a white ground. As she did so, the sinews at the back of her neck stood out in bold relief as if carved from warm marble, winning the hearts of the men.

"Don't move! Don't move! You're a masterpiece just as you are," said one of them.

"If you move, you'll destroy the picture," warned

the other.

"It's hard work being a picture," said the woman. Not caring apparently whether or not she seemed pleasing to the men's eyes, she lifted her right hand from her lap and flung it out behind her, letting her body keel over at an angle. Her long black hair gleamed in the light and could be heard brushing against the new straw matting.

"God! A thing of joy lasts but a moment," said the man with the beard, tapping himself lightly on the knee.

"In life you must be prepared to lose a fortune at a stroke," said the man without a beard, tossing the butt of his cigar out into the garden. The concert next door had come to an end and the only sound was the plashing of raindrops running in the gutter. The mosquito smudge had gone out.

"It's getting late."

"The cuckoo isn't calling any more."

"Shall we go to bed?"

The talk of dreams had ended in midstream. The three made their separate ways to bed.

Thirty minutes later they had forgotten the phrase, "The many beautiful dreams of..." They had forgotten the cuckoo's call. They had forgotten the players next door who kept the honey in their mouths and spat out the stings. They had forgotten the ant which climbed the ash-pot and the spider which descended onto a

lotus leaf. At last all was tranquility.

The woman who had forgotten everything forgot that she was the owner of beautiful eyes and beautiful hair. One of the men forgot that he had a beard. The other forgot that he did not. Everything was now even more tranquil.

Once long ago Asura the Titan fought against the god Sakro Devānām and lost. Taking all of the eighty-four-thousand members of his family with him, he hid in a hole no bigger than that made when a single fibre of lotus root is pulled from the ground?

I forget whether it was one thousand or ten thousand people who came to hear the word from Yuima⁸ in the abbot's quarters of the temple.

If I remember correctly, it is Hamlet who says in one of his speeches, "O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space."⁹

Heaven and earth are contained in a grain of millet or a poppy seed. A man once asked his teacher whether an atom could be picked up with chopsticks. Not only can you pick up the whole world with your chopsticks, but once you have succeeded in doing so it should remain in your stomach.

Moreover, I believe that you should consider a hundred years as one year, one year as a single moment, and if you know one moment, then you truly know life. The sun rises in the east and sets without fail in the

west; the moon waxes and wanes. The man who attains hoar-headed status having done no more than tick off the passing years on his fingers is the very person who vainly bears a grudge against the vast reaches of time for placing limits on his body and soul.

The days and months may deceive us, but the astute man does not dupe himself. Adding one moment to one moment only produces two moments. Even the ten beautiful types of brocade which Mencius made in Shu are not perfect and may be improved to some extent by the addition of one flower. the latter says he is twenty-

In an eight-mat room a man with a beard, a man without a beard, and a woman with a cool gaze met and passed one night as I have described. To have described one night in their lives is to have described those lives themselves.

How did they come to meet? I don't know. What were their social status, backgrounds and personalities? I don't know that, either. No connecting thread developed from their words and actions, did you say? That can't be helped, because what I have been describing is real life, not fiction. Why did all three of them go to bed at the same time? Because they all felt tired at the same time.¹⁰

(26th July 1905)

her room and that he has come to teach her English.
A typical Sōseki scene builds between the man and the
woman, only to be

Appendix 2 Fujio's mother comes home.

One wants to leave, but Fujio stops him. She goes out
of the room Gubijinsō (The Red Poppy) finds a gold
watch under her cushion. Fujio comes back with her

Chapter 1 she can see how spoiled Fujio is by the way her

not This tells how two young men are climbing Mt. Hiei
in the Kansai region. Munechika is a squarely built
individual, while Kōno is tall and thin. The former says
he is twenty-eight and the latter says he is twenty-
seven. Munechika wants to reach the top of the moun-
tain as soon as possible, but Kōno is in no hurry at
all, preferring to take a rest. Much of the chapter is
taken up with humorous banter and argument between the
two.

Chapter 2 and Munechika are in a room on the first floor

of The chapter opens with a description of a beautiful
young girl who is reading Shakespeare's Anthony and
Cleopatra. There is a young man with her. His name is
Ono and he is a poet. The girl teases him and we are
told that there is a possibility in the way they talk
to each other that they might fall in love. The girl
is Kōno's younger sister, Fujio. She is twenty-four.
Ono is the same age as her brother. He is a dreamer
and seems to think of her as Cleopatra. She flirts
with him and he is gauche. We learn that they are in

her room and that he has come to teach her English. A typical Sōseki scene builds between the man and the woman, only to be defused as Fujio's mother comes home. Ono wants to leave, but Fujio stops him. She goes out of the room and, while she is gone, Ono finds a gold watch under her cushion. Fujio comes back with her mother. We can see how spoiled Fujio is by the way her mother talks. One thing we learn is that Fujio threw her brother's book out into the garden. The mother says that Fujio and her brother are both children. The conversation turns to Kōno and Munechika. The mother says, "Speaking of Munechika, where is the watch?" Fujio shows her, then puts it on Ono's waistcoat. She says, "Shall I give it to you?" When he does not answer, she says, "Perhaps not." and takes it back.

Chapter 3 Munechika, but says nothing. Later comes.

Kōno and Munechika are in a room on the first floor of an inn. It is pouring with rain. Their wet clothes are drying. They talk about the story of the Gordian knot. Kōno starts to write kanshi in his diary, but crosses them out. Munechika is on the verandah, listening to a girl play the koto next door. He says that he has seen her and that she is more beautiful than Fujio. He takes down his waistcoat from where it is hanging and the talk turns to his younger sister, Itoko, who faced it for him. Kōno remarks that she is much more practical than Fujio.

We then learn that Kōno's father, who was abroad, has died, and that his mother wants him to take over the role of head of the family, something which he is unwilling to do. They then wonder whether Kōno's father's effects have arrived. Kōno says that a man called Saeki from the legation is supposed to bring them. They talk, in particular, of Kōno's father's watch, which Fujio loved when she was a little girl. Munechika says that Kōno's father had promised him the watch as a graduation present when he came home this time. Kōno says that he remembers. He then says that Fujio may have already received the watch and be playing with it again. To this, Munechika says rather archly, "You mean that Fujio and the watch can't be separated? Ha, ha, ha. That doesn't matter. I'll still take it. Kōno looks at Munechika, but says nothing. Lunch comes.

Chapter 4

This chapter is mainly about Ono. Sōseki says that he is a creature of the world of the senses. His childhood was very bleak. Some say, even, that he was illegitimate. His father died when he was young and he went into an orphanage run by a man called Inoue-sensei. His early life in Kyoto is described as having been like a weed on the bottom of a pond. However, in the course of time things have got better, especially after he came to Tokyo. It is as though he has risen to the surface. Sōseki says that his life has bloomed,

but that he has no roots. He is thinking of taking a doctorate and it is clear that he is attracted to Fujio. He fantasizes about his future, including about asking Fujio to marry him. But he is not confident about his future and feels that she would refuse him. Sometimes he even fears that he will not get his doctorate, either.

While he is thinking, a letter arrives. It is from Inoue, saying that he and his daughter are coming to Tokyo. Ono becomes flustered, feeling that the past he is trying to escape from is catching up with him.

The maid comes in to say that a friend from his Kyoto days, Asai, has come to see him. Asai has also had a letter from Inoue. From the tone of the conversation between Asai and Ono, we gather that Asai expects Ono to marry Inoue's daughter. Ono says that he is grateful to Inoue, but that he cannot marry his daughter. Asai is surprised and says he thought that everything had been arranged. Ono says that Inoue had decided unilaterally.

Ono and Asai leave the house together, but separate at the gate.

Chapter 5

The chapter starts with Munechika and Kōno in a temple. They then walk through the town and catch a train to Kameoka, where they board a boat which shoots the rapids back down to Kyoto. Most of the chapter is

again taken up with their banter. *caught up with him.*
Fujio Once, as they are examining a teacup in a shop, on
Munechika sees the girl who played the koto next door,
but by the time he tells Kōno, she is too far away to
see. At the end of the chapter they see the girl again
as they alight from the boat. Munechika says that the
maid told him that the girl was from Tokyo. *incurring*

Chapter 6

This chapter begins with a description of Itoko,
Munechika's sister. Munechika's first name is, apparently,
Hajime. Itoko is in a six-mat room at Fujio's house.
Both of the girls are sewing. As they sew, they engage
in a verbal sparring match. Each suggests in a round-
about way that the other should marry her brother. It
seems clear that Itoko at least is keen on Fujio's *stalks*
brother (whose first name is Kingo). As the girls are
talking, Ono arrives. Itoko (who, we are told, is a domes-
ticated girl) says that he does not look well. He says
that he has not slept for the past two or three nights.
Fujio suggests that it is because he is writing his *girl*
thesis. He agrees, although this is not true. *himself,*

Itoko says that she has had a letter from her
brother in which he mentions the girl who plays the
koto, saying that she is more beautiful than Itoko but
not as beautiful as Fujio. Itoko asks Ono if he has
heard of an inn called the Tsutaya. Ono is hauled back
from dreams of the future, brought on by looking at *yoko's*

Fujio, and feels that his past has caught up with him. Fujio embarks on an imaginary and poetic description of that part of Kyoto, eventually ending up with a description of the garden and the house next door, where the girl is playing the koto. Ono would like to change the subject, but he sees how cross Fujio is when Itoko breaks her train of thought, and is afraid of incurring her displeasure.

At last it begins to rain and Itoko says that she must be off. She goes, leaving Ono and Fujio together.

Chapter 7

It is night time in Kyoto. It has finally stopped raining. Munechika and Kōno take the eight-o'clock train for Tokyo. Inoue and Sayoko, his daughter, are on the train, too. Neither couple meets the other. Sōseki talks about fate and the various microcosms in which people live.

On the train, Munechika says to Kōno that the maid told him that the family next door to the Tsutaya Inn were moving to Tokyo. Kōno muses that one day the girl will get married, at which Munechika laughs to himself.

The scene moves to the carriage where Inoue and his daughter are. Sayoko, we are told, has a dream for the future. She and her father talk. He asks how long it is since she came to Kyoto. Five years, she says. She came when she was sixteen, directly after leaving school. The talk turns to Ono, and we learn what Sayoko's

dream is. Everyone sleeps.

Morning. Munechika and Kōno can see Mt. Fuji. Inoue and Sayoko buy a box lunch at a station to eat on the train. Munechika and Kōno go to the dining car. On the way, they pass through the carriage where the Inoues are and see them. We learn for the first time that Sayoko is indeed the girl next door to the inn. The four microcosms have come together for a time.

Back in their own carriage, Munechika and Kōno talk of Sayoko. Kōno wonders whether she is going to get married. He then asks if Itoko wants to get married. Munechika offers to have Itoko make him an elbow-rest (cushion).

At last they reach Shinbashi station. On the platform, Munechika thinks that he sees Ono. All four microcosms part company.

Chapter 8

The scene is Fujio's house. Spring is coming to an end. Fujio's mother is sitting in a room. Fujio comes in. They lament the fact that Kōno will not take over the running of the family. The mother is angry. She says that Kōno has been telling everybody that he is going to hand all the property over to Fujio and just let her keep him. She says that they cannot get Fujio married off until he makes a decision. Fujio says that Itoko would like to marry her brother. Fujio's mother asks her whether she would like to marry Mune-

chika. Fujio says no and adds that she does not find him attractive. Fujio's mother agrees. She goes on to say that he would not be a good catch, because he failed the entrance examinations for the diplomatic corps the previous year. He talks big, she says, but he has no prospects. She adds, however, that Fujio's father had promised the watch to Munechika and had made allusions to how much Fujio thought of it and how they were inseparable. She thinks, she says, that Munechika's father may have taken this as meaning that Fujio's father wanted Fujio to marry Munechika. Fujio calls this ridiculous and asks to be allowed to keep the watch. She then leaves the room. On the other side of the shōji she asks if she can give the watch to Ono, but she does not hear her mother's reply.

The scene shifts to Munechika's house, where he, his father, his sister and Kōno are talking about the trip to Kyoto in high good humour. The father in particular, is forever laughing. He teases the boys because all they have done is climb the mountain and come down again and have not learned anything about its history. The boys jokingly say that they will go and live in the mountains for twelve years, but this prompts the remark that if they did they would not be able to get married. Thus the conversation turns to marriage. Munechika says that he cannot get married yet, because he failed the exams last year. Moreover,

he thinks that he has failed them this year, too. Munechika's father tells Kōno that he must get married for Fujio's sake, thus showing that he is on Fujio and her mother's side. Kōno privately thinks that he would rather live up in the mountains for twelve years than get married.

Chapter 9

Sayoko is in the house which Ono has found for her and her father. She is still trying to get the place straight. Ono arrives. Sayoko's father is out. The two find it rather difficult to get close to each other. Ono is constantly trying to get away from his past life, of which Sayoko is a part, and as he looks at her he compares her unfavourably with Fujio. Sōseki says that Sayoko had cherished a dream of Ono for five years, but that, when she reached Shinbashi station, a crack had appeared in her life as the dream approached reality. Her life was to fall apart later, but the initial crack appeared then. Sōseki says that a crack appeared in Ono's life at this point, too.

Sayoko feels uncomfortable with Ono at first, because he is so different from her dream. He has become a gentleman. He wears gold-rimmed glasses, he has a gold watch and he has grown a moustache. She thinks back to how kind he was at the station when he came to meet them and how he took them to an inn. He was still the same kind person, but she found it difficult to get

close to him. Then he asked her about Kyoto, stepping back as it were into the past, and everything gelled. He became the same as the dream. He, however, felt oppressed, so he left. Sayoko felt that she would have done better to stay in Kyoto. Thus we see that their worlds are incompatible.

Fujio's father comes home from shopping. He has bought some cushions. Fujio tells him that Ono has been. She tells him that Ono has changed and she laments the fact that he thinks she has not. She seems rather upset, so her father tries to cheer her up by saying that Ono is not himself, because he is busy with his studies. A little earlier, the father had been complaining about Tokyo and he and Sayoko have a half-humorous discussion as to whether they should both go back to Kyoto. Half in jest, her father says that the reason he is prepared to put up with the dust of Tokyo is so that Ono and she can be together.

Sayoko's father asks her if she invited Ono to go to the great exhibition with her. When she says no, he seems rather exasperated, which makes her eyes fill with tears. Again he comforts her and says that he will invite Ono by letter. Sayoko goes off to the kitchen to get the evening meal.

Chapter 10

Fujio's mother is talking to Munechika's father in the latter's house. Fujio's mother is referred to

as nazo no onna (a woman with a riddle to solve). She tells Munechika's father about Kōno not getting married and attributes this to his nervous illness. In the course of the conversation we learn that she is not his real mother. Munechika's father asks if he should approach Kōno on the subject of marriage, but the mother says she is afraid of what Kōno would do if he found out that she had instigated the conversation. Munechika's father then asks if Fujio would like to marry Munechika. Fujio's mother says that, as things stand at the moment, Fujio cannot marry, in case it becomes necessary for her to take a muko¹ in the event of Kōno not changing. Munechika's father, who is referred to as 'the Abbot', says that if Fujio were to marry, Kōno would automatically come to his senses.

At this point, the scene changes to a room upstairs, where Munechika and his sister are talking. Itoko is sewing. The general tone of the conversation suggests that the brother and sister are very close. Munechika says that he will take his sister either cherry-blossom viewing or to the exhibition, whichever she prefers. Itoko chooses the exhibition. Itoko tells Munechika that she does not think that Fujio will have her, because she likes studious people like Ono, and Munechika failed the examination. Munechika then tells her about having seen Sayoko so many times in Kyoto and again on the train. He tells her how Kōno had wondered whether

Sayoko was going to get married. When Itoko says that she does not want to hear any more, he says that he made the whole thing up. She calls him a tease, but laughs happily.

Chapter 11

The chapter opens with a typical Sōseki diatribe against modern civilization. In particular, he describes how people flock to "illuminations" like moths around a lamp. He obviously has the exhibition in mind.

Munehika, Kōno, Itoko and Fujio are at the exhibition, enjoying themselves, but Munehika does not make much headway with Fujio, who thinks his descriptions vulgar.

Inoue and Sayoko, accompanied by Ono, are also at the exhibition. Ono is very happy in one sense, since, being a modern person, he feels at home in these surroundings. However, at the same time he feels irked at having to drag around two people of the past. Sayoko does not feel well, because of the great crush of people, but Ono presses on, saying that there are a lot of tea-houses where they can rest further ahead.

Munehika, Kōno, Itoko and Fujio go into the same teahouse for tea and cakes, and see the others. Itoko, as usual, seems oblivious to the implications of the situation. Of all of them it is Fujio who is the most affected. All the way home, and after she has gone to bed, two things which her brother said earlier keep

ringing in her ears: "Things can only be enjoyed while there is surprise." and "Women are lucky." Fujio's Chapter 12

The chapter begins with a dissertation on poets (of whom Ono is one) and money. Ono needs money--Fujio's money--in order to help Inoue, he convinces himself. He thus succeeds in rationalizing the situation as follows: it is not to get rid of Sayoko that he wants to marry Fujio, but to help Inoue. Having come to this conclusion, he decides that he has not a moment to lose in going to see Fujio, since the more he sees her the quicker will things be brought to a conclusion. (Because of helping Inoue and Sayoko, he has not had an opportunity of seeing Fujio for four or five days.) He rushes to get ready, but just as he is about to go out, the maid announces a visitor. It is Sayoko. She seems rather shy and subdued, but eventually manages to tell Ono that her father wants some shopping done and has suggested that she should go shopping with Ono if he is free. Ono refuses, pleading a pressing appointment, but says that he will buy the things himself on the way home and drop them off at her house that evening. Thus, says Sōseki, her father's kindness in trying to bring them together comes to nothing for the second time.

The scene shifts to Fujio's house. Fujio is sitting at a table. Sōseki describes her beauty. He says that

her beautiful hair is like a spider's web ready to ensnare men. He says that Ono is in danger. Fujio's love is for her own sake and not for anyone else's. It is a love which proceeds from her ego². It is poetic but immoral. "The object of love is a toy. It is a sacred toy. Usually a toy is something which is only played with. But I take it to be a principle that the toys of love play with each other. Fujio would play with men. She would never allow a man to play with her at all. Fujio was a queen of love." Fujio's ideal love, says Sōseki, could best be illustrated by thinking of her lover as a dog. She called, the dog barked. She called, the dog barked again. Later, the dog barked even when she did not call, and she ignored it. Fujio's love stemmed from her ego (pride), thus she had to have someone who himself had no pride as the object of this love. Ono was the person who filled the bill. Munechika would never have done, because he would not have been able to bend his will to hers.

While Fujio is wondering why Ono has not been to see her lately and trying to convince herself that he is bound to come, her brother, looking rather scruffy, comes in. The tone of their conversation suggests that there is some antipathy between them. When Kōno asks Fujio whether she has seen Ono lately, she jumps up, eyes flashing. Kōno leaves to go for a stroll.

At this moment Ono is on his way to see Fujio. He

meets Kōno at the gate. In a rather inconsequential conversation, it is established that both Ono and Kōno were at the exhibition the previous evening and that Fujio was with Kōno. That they saw Ono and Sayoko is never said.

Fujio's mother's room. The mother is thinking how unsuitable Kōno is as an heir. She feels that Fujio, however, is strong and that she can rely on her. The thing is, then, to find a suitable muko for Fujio. Ono is suitable in every way, except for the fact that he has no money. Not that this is a bad thing in itself, because it would make him more dependent on Fujio. The problem is how to get Kōno's money. And this, we learn, is the riddle that Fujio's mother is trying to solve. For, although Kōno says that he will give everything to Fujio, they cannot just accept it, for fear of what people might say. The nazo (riddle) is how to appear not to want the money, but to accept it anyway.

Fujio's mother goes along to her daughter's room. She finds Fujio where we left her, leaning against a pillar, thinking. She broaches the subject of Ono, but Fujio does not tell her mother about having seen Ono on the previous evening with Sayoko, because her ego (pride) will not let her.

The mother then brings up the subject of Kōno, whom she apparently regards as the bane of her life. She asks Fujio if he has been to see her and what he talked

about. She also suggests that he has been acting strangely lately. At this point the maid comes in and announces Ono. The mother goes back to her own room.

Fujio seems bent on doing what she said earlier in the chapter, namely to give the wayward marionette a hard time and then make him dance to her tune again, since most of her anger seems to stem from a pride which is hurt because Ono has had the audacity to show some independent behaviour. Ono, for his part, does not know whether she is angry because he has neglected her for four or five days or because she saw him with Sayoko the previous night. He does not want to bring the subject up himself if she did not see him, hence his dilemma. The two spar verbally. Ono finally says that the reason he has been so busy is that a former teacher of his has come from Kyoto. Fujio, naturally, is not mollified. She asks him whether he knows the Kameya (presumably the teahouse she saw him in) and sarcastically remarks that he ought to take his teacher there. She, she says, intends to get Munechika to take her there again.

The chapter ends with a clock striking. Then, says Sōseki, thirty minutes later, Ono was out in the street. When Fujio went to bed that night she did not hear echoing in her ears her brother's words about women being lucky.

Chapter 13

Kōno calls at Munechika's house, only to find that

the only people at home are Itoko and the student priest who lives in. Itoko invites him in for a cup of tea, and a short conversation ensues. Kōno remarks that he feels sorry for the girl they saw the previous evening (Sayoko). He says that Itoko is lucky, because of her settled position. Itoko says that she would like to change and be like Fujio. Kōno says that there are too many women like Fujio in the world. He says that for every one Fujio that appears five like Sayoko are killed. He goes on to say that Itoko will change when she falls in love. Itoko bites back an impulse to tell him that she loves him and, instead, merely says that she will probably change when she gets married.

Chapter 14

Munechika catches up with Ono in the street. The latter is carrying a wastepaper basket and a lamp base. Munechika asks where he is going. Ono says that he has been asked to buy these things and that he is on his way to deliver them. Ono then asks Munechika where he is going. Munechika says that he can go anywhere. He walks with Ono, carrying the wastepaper basket. The tone of their conversation is a bantering one by and large, but several things emerge from it. Munechika learns of Ono's relationship with Sayoko. Ono learns for certain that he and Sayoko were seen at the exhibition. Munechika says that they looked like

a married couple. On the way they stop to look in a bookshop. In the course of conversation, Munechika says that he has read somewhere in Western literature that literati toy with women. As they continue their walk, he goes on to tell Ono all the occasions on which he has seen Sayoko. He also says that he has heard (from the maid at the hotel) that she is originally from Tokyo.

Munechika says that he is sure Sayoko must be a good koto player, because her playing made him sleepy. He says that you can say the same about people, that is to say there is generally something good about people who make you sleepy. To which Ono says, "There's something old-world about them which is precious." Munechika replies, "One of the new breed like you would never get sleepy."

"You mean there's nothing precious about me?"

"Not only that, you'd probably like to denounce these precious people as anachronisms."

Thus the difference between Ono and Sayoko is underlined by an outsider.

At a certain point Munechika hands back the waste-paper basket and goes his own way. Ono continues walking, deep in thought. He does not admire Munechika, but he envies him his light-hearted disposition. Ono himself feels very dispirited, because he has lied to Fujio about his relationship with Sayoko, making it

seem of much less consequence than it really is. He also feels sure that he is going to be forced into telling lies when he gets to the Inoues'. It seems to him that things are moving at a great rate and that what he must do is to marry Fujio soon, since he feels that things will sort themselves out when this is a fait accompli.

At last he arrives at the house, which is dark and gloomy, to find that Sayoko and the old servant woman are out, having gone to the bathhouse. Inoue is at home. He does not look well. He is coughing and has been in bed. Ono talks with him. Inoue, after complaining about Tokyo, which he says has changed out of all recognition in the twenty years that he has been away, tells Ono that Asai is coming back soon. He then goes on to press Ono for an answer with regard to his intentions towards Sayoko. He urges him to get married straight away and not wait until he has finished writing his doctoral dissertation. Ono tries to evade the issue, but the old man presses him. At last Ono asks for two or three days' grace to think about it. He is, of course, trying to buy time so that he can find a way of getting out of the situation. There is no doubt, however, that the old man is left with the impression that Ono is going to marry Sayoko, and that it is just a question of timing.

Ono leaves, although Inoue urges him to stay until

Sayoko returns. Just after Ono has left the house, Sayoko and the maid pass by on the other side of the road. Sayoko is wondering whether he will be at the house. They do not see him in the darkness and he does not of course address them.

Ono wonders why he is not more determined. He feels sure that Munechika, Asai or even Kōno, could get out of the situation very easily with their various characters. He himself is too much swayed by ninjō and is not steadfast of purpose. He resolves to try to find an answer in the next few days and, if he cannot, to ask Asai to go to Inoue and explain to him why he (Ono) cannot marry Sayoko. Indeed, we learn that the reason he asked for two or three days' grace is that he had heard that Asai was coming back to Tokyo.

Chapter 15

The chapter opens with a description of Kōno's very modern study, furnished in the Western style by his father with things which he had had sent home from abroad. We are told that Ono feels envious whenever he comes into this room. He feels that he is a better scholar than Kōno and that it is unfair that he should not have such a room in which to study. He regards putting his talents to good use as a vocation and feels that not having a room like this in which to study is a bar to his fulfilling this vocation.

Kōno is in the room, reading and making notes in

his diary. His eye is suddenly caught by a portrait of his father which hangs on the wall. The eyes are alive. Whenever he thinks of his father he feels sorry for him. He stares at the portrait and, as he does so, it seems to move. He has had several strange turns like this lately, but he puts it down to his physical debility.

The scene shifts to Fujio's room. Her mother is with her. They discuss the problems of Fujio taking a muko. They decide that the only way to get Kōno to make a settlement on Fujio (or to make over the entire estate to her, as he frequently says he is going to do) and at the same time avoid public opprobrium is to tell him that Fujio wants to take Ono as a muko and hope that this will spur him to action. Fujio then worries as to whether her mother has told the Munechika family that she will not marry Hajime. Her mother says that she has. Fujio asks whether the father accepted this refusal. The mother answers rather vaguely that he should have, but that in any case there is no need to worry on that score. Fujio then worries that her brother might marry. Her mother says that this is unlikely, but that there is no need to worry even if he does. The main thing is to conclude a marriage between Fujio and Ono as quickly as possible. We now have a situation in which both Fujio and her mother on the one hand and Ono on the other are anxious to push

forward the marriage for their own ends. The mother agrees to talk to Kōno. She goes to his room.

Fujio's mother asks Kōno to take care of Fujio. Kōno says that there is nothing he would like better, but that there is nothing he can do for her, because she despises him. The mother denies this hotly. She then asks whether Kōno does not intend to take a wife, saying that his not marrying worries her and is unfair to Fujio, too, since the situation is unsettled. Kōno says that he cannot marry at the moment, because of his health, but that Fujio should go ahead with her own plans first. He then asks whether Fujio is absolutely against marrying Munechika. Fujio's mother says that she is and, in reply to his next question, says that Fujio was never explicitly promised to Munechika. Kōno says that he thinks Munechika would take better care of Fujio's mother than Ono would. Throughout this conversation Kōno is calm and serious. He reiterates his intention of giving the house and estate to Fujio. The mother successfully engineers a situation in which she accepts the money and estate for Fujio because Kōno will not marry. Thus the riddle is solved. Kōno says that he wants to speak to Fujio. She is called.

Kōno begins by saying that he will give her the house and the estate. She calmly thanks him and asks when. "As of today," he replies. However, he says that he is only thinking of her when he says that she would

be better off marrying Munechika than Ono. Fujio asks him if he thinks he knows Ono's character. He replies that he does. Fujio then says that it is impossible for him, a mere philosopher, to understand the soul of a poet, and that anybody who thinks that Munechika is good could not possibly understand Ono. With this, she flounces out of the room. In this chapter one is left with a sense of Kōno's seriousness and of his genuine concern for his sister and mother.

Chapter 16

The time is exactly the same as the last chapter. The scene is Munechika's father's room. Munechika comes in. At first they talk of general things, such as the tabakobon³ the father has bought and flowers. Then Hajime tells his father that he has passed the examination for the foreign service. His father says that he ought to get married before he goes abroad. Hajime says that he has thought of asking Fujio to marry him. The father tells him of Fujio's mother's visit. He is not clear whether what she said constituted a refusal, or whether she just meant that she could not let Hajime marry Fujio until he had passed the examination. However, one thing is clear: if Kōno does not marry, Fujio will have to take a muko.

Hajime says that he will go and speak to Kōno about Fujio, but that first he will ask Itoko whether she is willing to marry Kōno. He goes to Itoko's room.

Once again the tone of the conversation suggests how close the brother and sister are. Hajime tells Itoko his news and explains the situation to her. She says that he should not marry Fujio. He replies that he has no intention of forcing himself on her if she does not want him. He then asks her if she is willing to marry Kōno. She says that he must not mention the subject to Kōno. Hajime then asks if it is all right to accept if Kōno proposes. She says that he will never propose, to which Hajime says that he will make sure that he does. Again he asks her if this is all right and, when she does not answer, he takes her silence for consent and leaves.

Chapter 17

Ono and Asai are out for a walk on the outskirts of the city. Asai asks Ono to lend him some money until the end of the month. Ono agrees to lend him ten yen, but asks in return that Asai go to Inoue and explain why he (Ono) cannot marry Sayoko. Asai readily agrees and says that he will go either that evening or the following morning. Ono also asks him to say that this has nothing to do with his willingness to look after Inoue. Ono secretly looks down on Asai, because he feels that his ability to undertake such an assignment stems from a character which is coarser than his own. Asai announces that he is going to see Munechika to try to borrow some money from him, where-

upon Ono tells him to say nothing about him and Sayoko. Although he professes to be concerned for Sayoko and her father, the fact that he can send someone whom he considers to be insensitive to talk to them gives the lie to his words. The two walk into the city, where they part. Ono goes directly to Fujio's house.

Shortly after Ono arrives to see Fujio, Munechika calls on Kōno. Munechika tells Kōno that he has passed the examination. He then suggests that he should tell Fujio's mother. Kōno replies that, rather than tell her, he should announce it to the picture of his late father, since this is more real than the mother.

Munechika finds the study oppressive and takes Kōno out into the garden. Across the pond, in the other wing of the house, are Fujio and Ono. The four come face to face. As Munechika and Kōno head towards them, Fujio suddenly takes her father's watch out of her sash and holds it against Ono. Munechika goes to move forward, but Kōno pulls him back to the study. There he locks all the doors and the French windows. He tells Munechika that he cannot have Fujio or the watch. Munechika accepts this calmly. Kōno announces that he has given Fujio the whole estate, including the house, and that he is going to leave home. He then attacks his mother's character, saying that when she says that she does not want him to give Fujio the money and the house, she means that she does; when she says that she wants him

to look after her, she means the opposite; and when she says that she wants him to stay at home, she really wants him to leave. Munechika asks why Kōno does not stay and hang on to the money to spite her. It is then that Kōno comes out with an almost saintly reply. He agrees with Munechika's accusation that he is crazy and then says that the reason he cannot stay is that it would be bad for his and his mother's character (soul). To force her to leave would also be bad for her soul, he says. As for the money, he has no need of it. Munechika accepts this, and the chapter ends with an impassioned plea on his part that, whatever Kōno does, he marry Itoko and take her with him, since she understands him better than anybody and it would kill her to lose him. Kōno does not reply.

Chapter 18

The scene is Inoue's house. Asai has come to convey Ono's message. He does so without any tact whatever. The result is that, when he goes, he leaves Inoue, who has a bad cough, in a rage and Sayoko in tears. Inoue tells Asai to tell Ono to come and refuse for himself. The scene shifts to Ono's room. Ono is not looking forward to going to Ōmori with Fujio that afternoon. Indeed, he seems to have got cold feet at the last minute and to be having second thoughts about marrying Fujio. In this chapter he shows himself to be a weak

and vacillating individual. As he is sitting lost in thought, the maid shows Munechika in. Ono is startled and at first fears that Munechika has come out of ill will. However, Munechika quickly puts his mind at rest and says that he has come to help him. In this scene Munechika shows a strength of character which Sōseki has slowly, throughout the book, led one to suspect that he had. To use his own word, Munechika says that he became majime (serious) yesterday. He says that Itoko and Kōno became serious, too. He says that Asai is not fit to be considered as a human being and that he has heard everything from him. He goes on to say that it is time for Ono to become serious, too, if he wants to salvage anything of his life and not become like a mere doll. Ono humbly agrees. Munechika asks Ono what he thinks the serious thing to do in this situation would be. Ono replies that it would be to marry Sayoko. Munechika now explains that he has sent his father to Inoue's house to look after the father and daughter. He says that he has left it that, if his discussion with Ono goes well, he will send a rickshaw to fetch Sayoko. When she comes, Ono is to propose to her. Then the three of them will go to Fujio's house and explain the situation. After much prompting, Ono agrees.

Ono then tells Munechika of his date with Fujio at three o'clock. It is now two. But since Ono is sure

that she is not the kind of person to wait more than one minute, they decide not to inform her that he will not turn up. It is now raining very heavily. They decide to send a letter by rickshaw, telling Sayoko to come.

The scene shifts to Inoue's house. Inoue is in bed with a fever. Munechika's father is with him, trying to persuade him to let Sayoko go to Ono if a message comes. Inoue refuses. The sound of a rickshaw pulling up is heard from outside.

The scene is now Kōno's study. Kōno is sorting out papers. Some he puts in a pile, and these, together with his diary, he throws into the grate and sets light to. At this point Fujio's mother comes in. He tells her that he is leaving and takes down the picture of his father, saying that he wants to take it with him. The mother tries to stop him going, but only because such a sudden departure would reflect badly on her. Here, Itoko, who has come to see Kōno, arrives. She tells Kōno that she has come to take him with her. The mother remonstrates, and an argument ensues between her and Itoko. The mother stresses 'face' and their public image all the time, while Itoko takes the position that it is pointless to try to keep someone against his will. In the midst of this argument Munechika arrives with Ono and Sayoko in tow. As they are all talking together, we are told that Fujio, with "the ire of Cleo-

patra", is on her way home in a rickshaw from Shinbashi station. She eventually arrives and bursts into the study. Munechika explains the situation concerning Ono and Sayoko to her. She is livid and demands that Ono speak for himself. This he does. At this, Fujio becomes hysterical and, laughing, takes the watch out from her sash and says, "Well, you won't need this then, will you?" She puts the watch into Munechika's hand. He throws the watch away and it smashes when it hits the marble fireplace. He then tries to explain that he has engineered this situation for the sake of the people concerned and not because he wanted a watch or a woman. Fujio goes rigid and falls to the floor. *ence.*

Chapter 19 *ly flourishes here."*

Fujio is dead. She is laid out in her room. She is surrounded by beautiful things and she looks beautiful in death. (The detailed descriptions in the early passages of this chapter remind one of Ichiya and Kusa Makura.) One of the objects in the room is a silver screen on which there is a delicate red poppy. Kōno, Munechika and Sayoko are in the house. Fujio's mother at last seems to realize that she has caused her daughter's death. Munechika suggests that Kōno should remain at home and says that he will talk to Itoko about this. Kōno says that, providing his mother changes her scheming ways, there is no reason for him to leave. His mother promises to change.

Two days later, on the evening of the funeral, Kōno writes in his diary. What he writes forms the final pages of this book. He writes how great Tragedy is compared with Comedy. He says that everything in life is Comedy. Only death is Tragedy. Thus, while people are busy going about the Comedy of their daily lives, they forget the possibility of death and lose their sense of morality. It is only when death touches them that they are forced to review their own position. Therefore it is Tragedy which teaches true morality.

Two months later Kōno copies down this passage from his diary and puts it in a letter to Munechika, who is in London. In Munechika's reply is the sentence, "Only Comedy flourishes here."⁴

But always loses his nerve at the last minute. Finally, the young man, who is nineteen years old, leaves home, seeking, we are told, solitude and darkness. He heads in the general direction of the Kagon Falls, possibly with the idea of committing suicide there.

On the outskirts of Natsubara, where the story actually opens, the young man falls in with a thoroughly unscrupulous character named Chōzō, whose job it is to press young men into working in the mines. The young man does not know why, but he allows himself to be persuaded by Chōzō and, after a train ride, they set off on foot across country for the mines, picking up two more young men on the way. The mines seem to represent

to the young man the darkness and solitude which he is seeking. After a hard, hungry journey and one night's stay in a shed, Kōfu (The Miner) reach the mines.

The young man is introduced to Hara Konakichi, a

This is supposed to be a true story, based on an account given to Sōseki in 1906 by a young man who went to see him in the office of the Asahi Newspaper. It tells how a young man who comes from a good family runs away from home. His parents want him to marry Tsuyako, but he himself is desperately in love with another girl, Sumie. He feels sorry for Tsuyako, but cannot bring himself to love her and, unable to find any suitable solution to the situation, he contemplates suicide on several occasions, but always loses his nerve at the last minute. Finally, the young man, who is nineteen years old, leaves home, seeking, we are told, solitude and darkness. He heads in the general direction of the Kegon Falls, possibly with the idea of committing suicide there.

On the outskirts of Matsubara, where the story actually opens, the young man falls in with a thoroughly unsavoury character named Chōzō, whose job it is to press young men into working in the mines. The young man does not know why, but he allows himself to be persuaded by Chōzō and, after a train ride, they set off on foot across country for the mines, picking up two more young men on the way. The mines seem to represent

to the young man the darkness and solitude which he is seeking. After a cold, hungry journey and one night's stay in a shack, they eventually reach the mines.

The young man is introduced to Hara Komakichi, a kind man who is in charge of the mess hall and who tries to persuade him to give up his idea of being a miner and go home. The following day he is taken on a tour of the mine, and there in the darkness he realizes just what a dreadful place he has come to. The only thing which prevents him from letting go of one of the rope ladders as he is climbing is the fact that he cannot bring himself to die in such a place.

In the darkness the young man gets separated from his guide. But after wandering around inside the mine for a while, he comes across a miner, Yasu, who turns out to be an educated man of good family. Yasu, we are told, has committed some unspecified crime against society and cannot face the idea of leaving the haven which the darkness of the mine represents, even though in a short time he will no longer be liable to arrest. Yasu tries to persuade the young man to go back to his family, but with no success. The young man will not leave his new-found friend, in whom he recognizes a kindred spirit. And, even when he is found medically unfit for work in the mines, he gets a job in the mess hall so that he can be near him. Five months later, however, he decides to go back to Tokyo, probably as a result of Yasu's continual urging.

side. In order to achieve enlightenment, he concentrates on attaining a state of nothingness, but in spite of the Yume Jūya (Ten Nights of Dreams) sits in meditation and in spite of his determination, he is not

This is, in fact, not a novel at all, but a collection of ten stories. However, the fact that each of the stories is a dream gives a certain cohesion to the whole.

The First Night

This tells how the speaker is sitting by the bedside of a dying woman, who asks him to bury her when she dies. He is to dig her grave with a shell of mother-of-pearl and mark it with a piece of a fallen star. She promises that she will come to him again if he waits for her for a hundred years. When she dies, he takes her down into the garden and does as she has told him. He then sits by the grave, watching each day's sunrise and set. Just when he begins to think that she will not come to him, a white lily grows from the grave. He kisses it, realizing that a hundred years have passed.

The Second Night

A samurai is at a temple and is trying to achieve enlightenment by means of meditation. A priest has told him that his inability to achieve enlightenment means that he is worthless, and he has sworn that he will achieve enlightenment by the time the clock strikes the hour and will then cut off the priest's head for his insults. If he fails to do so he will commit sui-

cide. In order to achieve enlightenment, he concentrates on attaining a state of nothingness, but in spite of the cramp that racks his body as he sits in meditation and in spite of his determination, he is not successful. However, at the end we are told that the chiming of the clock brings him to himself and he reaches for his short sword with the object of committing suicide, not realizing that, if the clock brought him to himself, he must have attained the state he was seeking. ss, since there is neither a boat nor a bridge.

The Third Night

The speaker dreams that he is walking along with his six-year-old child on his back. The child is blind, but keeps directing his steps. The man's one thought is to put the child down, but he keeps going. Eventually he enters a forest. The path is dark and it is raining. When they come to the foot of a cedar, the child says that it was here that his father killed him a hundred years ago. At this, the father remembers that he killed a blind man at the foot of this tree a hundred years ago. With this realization, the child suddenly becomes as heavy as a stone image of the patron saint of children. s.

The Fourth Night

An old man with a long white beard is sitting drinking sake and eating. After a while, he gets up and goes out into the street. A boy, the narrator, who has been

watching him, follows. The old man lays a cloth on the ground and tells a group of children playing there that it will turn into a snake. He then takes out a flute and begins to play. The children all watch. After a time, the old man stops playing, picks up the cloth and puts it into a box. Saying that the cloth will soon turn into a snake, he walks off. The boy, who has been watching all along, follows. They eventually come to a river and the boy wonders how the old man will get across, since there is neither a boat nor a bridge. The old man walks straight into the water and disappears under the surface. The boy stands and waits for the old man to appear again, but he never does.

The Fifth Night

This time the narrator dreams that he is a warrior in a very ancient age who is on the losing side in a battle. He is brought before the general of the victorious army, who asks him whether he wishes to live or die. Since to ask to live entails unconditional surrender, the man chooses to die, but asks that he be allowed to see the woman he loves first. The general agrees and says that he will wait until the first cock crows.

The woman mounts a white horse and rushes to see the man before he dies. As she is riding along she hears a cock crow and drags on the horse's reins. Both she and the horse plunge into a chasm. The cock crows

again. We are told at the end that it was not a cock that crowed, but a woman imitating one. As he is sitting

The Sixth Night

The narrator imagines that Unkei, the great sculptor, is alive at the present day and is carving a statue of a Niō, a guardian god, out of wood. The narrator is among a crowd of onlookers. He enters into a discussion of Unkei's skill with the man standing next to him, who says that Unkei is not carving a god, but liberating the god which already exists in the wood. The narrator, very impressed with this remark, goes home and tries to carve a god himself. However, although he goes through a whole pile of logs, he says that he is unable to find a god in any of them. His conclusion is that gods do not live in present-day logs and that is why Unkei is still alive.

The Seventh Night

The narrator is on a ship. The ship is noisy and belching smoke. It seems to have no definite destination, but just to be following the sun. Now and again the narrator talks to members of the crew and to one or two passengers, most of whom seem to be foreigners. He is, however, very bored and sad and decides to jump over the side and end everything. But when he does at last jump into the sea he realizes, belatedly, that he would have been better off on board, even though the ship was not heading for anywhere in particular.

The Eighth Night

The narrator goes into a barber's. As he is sitting in the chair he sees a succession of people pass by in the mirror. The first is someone called Shōtarō, who is wearing a panama hat and is accompanied by a woman. After him come such people as a man selling bean curd and a geisha. Suddenly he sees in the mirror the reflection of a woman who is counting money in the shop. However, when he gets up to go, she is no longer there. He goes outside and sees a goldfish seller. He looks at the goldfish, but none of them move.

The Ninth Night

A mother and her baby remain at home, while her husband, a samurai, has gone off to the war. The mother often goes to the Hachiman Shrine, carrying the baby on her back, to pray for her husband's safe return. When she has said the necessary prayers, she takes the baby from her back, walks up the steps to the shrine proper and ties the baby to the hand-rail. She then goes back down the steps and begins the ritual of walking backwards and forwards one hundred times between the foot of the steps and the torii arch at the entrance, as a further means of petitioning for her husband's safe return. Sometimes the child is quiet, but sometimes it cries and the mother has to go and comfort it. On these occasions she begins her pacing from the very beginning. What she does not know is

that her husband has long since been killed.

The narrator says that his mother told him this story in his dream.

The Tenth Night

The narrator says that somebody called Ken has told him that Shōtarō (who made a brief appearance in the dream of the eighth night) has come home after being abducted by a woman for a week. It seems that Shōtarō, who is very good-looking, was in the habit of sitting in front of a fruit shop in the evenings and, in his panama hat, admiring the women. One evening, when a woman came and bought a basket of fruit, Shōtarō offered to carry it for her. On his return, he said that he had been on a train to the mountains. When they got off, the woman had taken him across a moor and shown him a steep precipice. She said that if he did not jump over the precipice he would be licked by a pig. Shōtarō refused, and immediately a pig came at him. He hit it on the snout, but another came. As fast as Shōtarō hit a pig and threw it over the precipice, another came and took its place. At last Shōtarō grew too weak to hit the pigs and was licked. He immediately fell over the precipice himself.

The narrator then says that Ken says that he would like Shōtarō's hat and that this story shows that too much looking at women is not a good thing. The narrator agrees and says that Shōtarō will probably come to a bad end and Ken will get his panama hat.

Sanshirō

Sanshirō is the story of a young man by that name who, having graduated from college in his native Kyushu, goes up to Tokyo in order to attend the university. He is twenty-three years old. He has the feeling that in Tokyo he will be entering the 'real world' and that, up till now, his life has been little more than a dream. From the very outset things conspire to show him how unsophisticated he is. On the train to Nagoya he meets a woman who asks him if he will help her find a room for the night. He agrees, and they end up, he is not quite sure how, in the same room. Sanshirō feels himself to be very much a country bumpkin because of his inability to take advantage of the woman's implied offer. Again, on the train from Nagoya to Tokyo, he falls into conversation with a man whose sophistication and erudition once more leave him feeling awe-struck.

In Tokyo Sanshirō first goes to visit Nonomiya, whose name he has been given by his mother. Nonomiya is a research fellow in the faculty of science. When classes start Sanshirō also becomes friends with a fellow student, Yojirō, an impetuous young man who is responsible for a great deal of the humour in the book. These are his first two friends in Tokyo. Yojirō tells

Sanshirō that he lives as a student-houseboy with a Professor Hirota, who turns out to be, with a typical Sōseki lack of respect for probability, the man he had met on the train. ~~Even though Mineko may marry~~

Nonomiya asks Sanshirō to deliver a parcel to his sister, Yoshiko, who is in hospital. Sanshirō agrees and, while there, he sees a girl, Mineko, who is also visiting Yoshiko. Sanshirō remembers that he has seen Mineko once before, when she was standing near the pond at the university. Mineko is very beautiful and self-assured. She is in complete contrast to Miwata O-Mitsu, the 'girl back home' that his mother wants him to marry. Several times in the book he evinces an unwillingness to marry O-Mitsu, because she is symbolic to him of the old life.

The main cast of characters is now more or less complete. There is no real development of plot in Sanshirō, unless it be the growing awareness by Sanshirō of his love for Mineko, and the growing affection with which she seems to regard him. The book is really a succession of scenes, many of them humorous, involving some or all of this group of friends. The centre of the group is really Professor Hirota, who plays the role of the worldly-wise man who has no illusions about life. He is the centre of this little group, both by reason of age and because he acts as a link between all the other characters, since he knows them all.

There may be no plot to Sanshirō, but there is

certainly a theme and this is that the optimism of youth is doomed to disappear one day, even though the young person concerned is not aware of it at the time.

For a time it looks as though Mineko may marry Nonomiya, but at last she marries someone else, a man, to whom we are scarcely introduced. At the end of the book, however, Sanshirō still has not lost his innocence with regard to life, although one or two things, attitudes of Hirota's, for example, give him pause.

There is a great deal of humour in the book, a humour which comes from the exuberance of youth, but it is beautifully tempered with pathos. This pathos stems in part from the relationship between Sanshirō and Mineko, a relationship which Mineko sums up by referring to them both as "lost sheep". For the most part, however, the pathos lies in the fact that Sōseki implies that the optimistic and innocent Sanshirō is in for a rude awakening at some time in the future.

For Hiraoka and Mineko as first, but then she lost a baby and he was forced to resign from his bank. Daisuke sets about finding somewhere for the couple to live in Tokyo and also approaches his elder brother, Seigo, with regard to securing a loan and a job for Hiraoka.

Seigo refuses, but Usako, Daisuke's sister-in-law, agrees to provide some of the money he has requested. In the midst of this, Daisuke is once again urged by his father to get married. To date, Daisuke has refused

every girl his father has chosen for him and, this time, too, his attitude promises to be no different. It is clear that Sore Kara (And Then) far from dead and that it prevents him from taking the idea of marrying any Nagai Daisuke, the central character of this novel, is an intellectual who is able to live a comfortable life and pursue his dilettante studies because of the allowance which his father makes him. He considers himself to be very much the child of the 'modern Japan' and his views on life are in sharp contrast to those of his father, who was a samurai at the time of the Meiji Restoration and who is a traditionalist.

Hiraoka, a friend of Daisuke's, comes back to Tokyo from Kyoto, where he has been working in a bank. Hiraoka is married to Michiyo, a girl that Daisuke also loved but whom he surrendered to his friend, a situation the reverse of that which we find in Mon (The Gate) and Kokoro (The Heart of Things). Things had gone well for Hiraoka and Michiyo at first, but then she lost a baby and he was forced to resign from his bank. Daisuke sets about finding somewhere for the couple to live in Tokyo and also approaches his elder brother, Seigo, with regard to securing a loan and a job for Hiraoka.

Seigo refuses, but Umeko, Daisuke's sister-in-law, agrees to provide some of the money he has requested. In the midst of this, Daisuke is once again urged by his father to get married. To date, Daisuke has refused

every girl his father has chosen for him and, this time, too, his attitude promises to be no different. It is clear that his love for Michiyo is far from dead and that it prevents him from taking the idea of marrying anyone else seriously.

and Michiyo, we learn, has heart trouble and is by no means healthy. However, her husband does not appear to take care of her very well. Indeed, in this and in the fact that he does not seem to be particularly grateful for anything which is done for him, he is a different person from the Hiraoka whom Daisuke used to know.

Once again Daisuke eventually decides to refuse the girl his father has found for him and to take Michiyo from Hiraoka instead. Hiraoka agrees to give Michiyo up, but only on condition that Daisuke does not visit her while she is ill. Daisuke is sure that Michiyo is dying and cannot refrain from visiting the house to see how she is. He finds, however, that the house is empty.

A few days later Daisuke's brother, Seigo, visits him. He says that he has had a letter from Hiraoka telling him that Daisuke tried to take Michiyo from him. When Daisuke admits that this is true, Seigo says that he is disinherited and that he must provide for himself from now on.

The story ends with Daisuke, who is physically rather delicate and of a nervous disposition, leaving his house to look for a job.

The story is set in Tokyo (where Sōsuke was born) six years after the elopement. What little money Sōsuke received Mon (The Gate) is almost gone, and he and O-Yone are living in a rented house. Their fi-

The central characters in this novel are Sōsuke and his wife, O-Yone. They are a devoted married couple, although they are childless and are forced to live in comparative poverty. O-Yone had once been the common-law wife of Yasui, a friend of Sōsuke's. At this time Sōsuke was a rather well-off student at Kyoto University. He and O-Yone fell in love and decided to marry. The two did, in fact, run away to Hiroshima and get married. Since he did not graduate, however, Sōsuke has only been able to find a very minor position in the local civil service.

The knowledge that they have betrayed Yasui casts a shadow over the marriage and the two retreat into a shell. Although they are emotionally self-sufficient, the fact that they are cut off from the rest of society seems to have a depressing effect on their lives. Things would probably have been better had they been able to have children, but three pregnancies have ended either in miscarriage or stillbirth. O-Yone has been told by a fortune teller that this is because of what she and her husband did in the past, and she seems to believe this. The situation of Sōsuke and O-Yone reminds one of that of Sensei and his wife in Kokoro.

The story is set in Tokyo (where Sōsuke was born) six years after the elopement. What little money Sōsuke received from his parents is almost gone, and he and O-Yone are living in a rented house. Their financial plight is further complicated when Sōsuke has to provide a university education for his younger brother, Koroku. Up till now Koroku has had his education paid for by an uncle, but the uncle has now died and his widow says that she is unable to pay for Koroku to go to university. Sōsuke does not have the money for this purpose, either, but decides to have his brother come and live with him until things look brighter. O-Yone is unhappy with this arrangement, since the brother's presence is a constant reminder that it is through her that Sōsuke could not finish university and that now Koroku will not be able to complete his education, either. As the situation becomes more depressing, Sōsuke gradually takes to drink.

One morning Sōsuke finds a lacquered box which had been dropped by a thief who broke into his landlord's house on the previous evening. Sōsuke goes to return the box and finds that, in contrast to his own situation, his landlord is the centre of a happy family and is surrounded by many fine possessions. In the course of conversation, the landlord says that his brother has come back from Mongolia and is coming to see him. He invites Sōsuke to join them and mentions

that his brother is going to bring a friend called Yasui with him. This is, of course, a shock for Sōsuke and, instead of going to the landlord's house, he gets drunk.

Not everything, however, is black for Sōsuke and O-Yone, since their landlord offers to send Koroku to university, provided that he will work for him as a houseboy. In an effort to set his life straight, Sōsuke decides that what he needs is religion. He decides to practise Zen meditation at a temple and, indeed, puts his intention into practice. He finds, however, that spiritually he obtains nothing from the experience. Nevertheless, at the end of the book, things are going better for Sōsuke and his wife, what with his brother's education having been provided for and he himself getting a rise at work.

The book ends, however, on a pessimistic note. Although Yasui goes back to Mongolia without learning the whereabouts of Sōsuke and O-Yone, Sōsuke is sure that he will be faced with the worry of meeting Yasui many times in the future, and to O-Yone's optimistic remark that spring is finally here he replies, "But it will soon be winter again."

This section gets its title from the fact that

Higan Sugi Made (By Just After the Spring Equinox)

due to put in an appearance at a certain tram stop.

This is not so much a novel as a series of short stories linked together by the presence of the central character, Tagawa Keitarō. The work is divided into six sections, the first of which is entitled:

After the Bath

The events of this section have very little to do with anything that comes after. Its function seems to be to introduce Keitarō to the reader and to describe what kind of person he is. We are told that he regards himself as no more than a keen observer of human nature, but that in reality he has the soul of a detective.

Keitarō has graduated from the university, but is unable to find a job. He is living in lodgings and delights in hearing the various stories told him by his fellow-lodger, Morimoto. Morimoto has done just about everything, and Keitarō shows an insatiable curiosity in listening to him. One day Morimoto disappears, leaving six months' rent unpaid, and eventually writes to Keitarō from Manchuria. This disappearance is, of course, calculated to arouse Keitarō's curiosity. Morimoto has left Keitarō a few things, including a walking stick with a knob shaped like a snake swallowing an egg. Keitarō does not, strangely enough, find suspicious. The

Tram Stop that is a great practical joker and

This section gets its title from the fact that Keitarō is given the job of shadowing a man who is due to put in an appearance at a certain tram stop. Keitarō has been to see a former classmate, Sunaga, who has neither the desire nor the need to look for a job, since he is able to live comfortably on the money which his father left him. Sunaga offers to introduce Keitarō to his uncle, who is a businessman. In the course of conversation, Sunaga elicits from Keitarō the information that what he would really like to be is a detective.

After two unsuccessful attempts at meeting Sunaga's uncle, a man named Taguchi, he finally manages to see him and is given the rather strange job described above. Keitarō carries out his mission and sees the man meet a woman. He follows them into a restaurant, but is unable to overhear much of what they are saying. After they leave the restaurant, he tries to follow the man, but without success.

The Report

Keitarō goes to see Taguchi to make his report. He suggests that next time, instead of following the subject, he should confront him directly. By this means he hopes to get more information. Taguchi agrees to give Keitarō an introduction to the man, an action which Keitarō does not, strangely enough, find suspicious. The

fact is that Taguchi is a great practical joker and he has been having a joke at Keitarō's expense, playing on the latter's predilection for prying.

Keitarō goes to see the man, but is told that he cannot see him, because it is raining. Keitarō goes back the next day and is admitted. In answer to Keitarō's questions, the man explains that he is Matsumoto Tsunezō, Taguchi's brother-in-law and that the girl he had been with in the restaurant was none other than Chiyoko, Taguchi's daughter. There was, then, nothing suspicious in their meeting at all.

Taguchi gives Keitarō a job as a sort of personal assistant, a position which enables him to become better acquainted with Chiyoko, Sunaga and Matsumoto.

A Rainy Day

In this section Chiyoko explains Matsumoto's strange behaviour in refusing to see Keitarō because it was raining. It appears that Matsumoto's youngest daughter had died one rainy night, the year before. Since then Matsumoto has absolutely refused to see visitors on rainy days.

Sunaga's Story

Here Sunaga tells Keitarō that he and his cousin, Chiyoko, had been childhood playmates, but that he had gradually grown away from her as he grew up. However, one day his mother had told him that she wanted him to marry Chiyoko who, she says, was promised to him at

birth. Sunaga says that he was unwilling to marry Chiyoko and went to see her father to ask him to find someone else for her.

When he was at university, however, he had gone to see the Taguchis at their holiday home in Kamakura. He was surprised to find that there was a man friend, Takagi, with Chiyoko. He became so insanely jealous that he even toyed with the idea of smashing Takagi's skull in. When he asked Chiyoko later about her relationship with Takagi, she had become very angry that he should expect her to love him and be loyal to him without any commitment on his part.

Matsumoto's Story

In this section Keitarō learns how Sunaga's mother had gone to see Matsumoto to ask him to reason with her son about marrying his cousin. Sunaga, who has just graduated, is very suspicious as to why everyone should keep on about his marrying Chiyoko. At last Matsumoto tells Sunaga that, although the late Mr. Sunaga was indeed his father, Mrs. Sunaga was not his true mother. His real mother had been one of the family maids. However, Mrs. Sunaga had brought him up as her own child and now wanted him to marry Chiyoko as a means of cementing his relationship with the family.

The Conclusion

In this section we learn that Keitarō is no more than an onlooker: all his knowledge and pleasures are vicarious and do not help him chart a course in life.

a good wife. However, she never once actually says that she loves her husband. As they are talking, a stern Kōjin (The Wanderer), Incorporating Jinrō (Evil Passions)

Wakanoura until the following morning. They take a room

in a The wanderer mentioned in the title is Ichirō, a brilliant scholar who is driven to near-madness by a great sense of loneliness. He and his wife, Nao, have one child, but are unable to communicate with each other. Each appears to the other as cold and unresponsive.

Although it is Ichirō's perception of the world which lies at the root of his mental problems, it is the inability (or unwillingness, as it seems to him) of his wife to provide solace which is the factor that contributes most to his overwhelming loneliness. they

all The story is narrated by Jirō, Ichirō's younger brother. One day, when Ichirō, Jirō, Nao and Ichirō's with parents are at Wakanoura, a seaside resort, Ichirō takes his younger brother aside and says that he suspects Nao of being unfaithful to him. It is not that he suspects her of actually having done anything wrong, but he is sure that she is secretly in love with Jirō. He asks his brother to make advances to Nao and report her reaction to him. Jirō refuses, but agrees, by way of compromise, to take Nao on a trip to Wakayama and see if he can find out how she feels about her husband. rite

down While talking to Jirō in Wakayama, Nao breaks down and cries and says that she has done her best to be

a good wife. However, she never once actually says that she loves her husband. As they are talking, a storm comes up, making it impossible for them to return to Wakanoura until the following morning. They take a room in an inn. Although neither makes any approach to the other, one is not quite certain what reception Jirō would have got if he had tried to make love to his sister-in-law. Jirō sits up smoking all night and when he returns to Wakayama with Nao on the following day he reports to his brother that he has absolutely no grounds for doubting his wife. He says, however, that he cannot tell him about the trip in detail until they get back to Tokyo.

The whole family moves back to Tokyo, where they all live in the same house. As time goes by, the tension mounts and eventually the brothers have a quarrel, with Ichirō accusing Jirō of insincerity. Jirō decides that his presence in the house is not in the best interests of his brother's mental health and he moves out.

Jirō avoids the house, but is eventually sent for by the family, who are worried by the ever-increasing strangeness of Ichirō's behaviour. It appears that recently he has been forcing Nao to help him with experiments in telepathy. Jirō asks a colleague of Ichirō's if he will take his brother on a trip and write down his impressions of his behaviour. The colleague agrees, and the last chapters are taken up by his

letter to Jirō. He tells Jirō that his brother is in a deep sleep at the moment, after a very tiring ten days. One is tempted to think that all will be well for Ichirō after this rest. However, it is clear that this is no more than a brief respite, since he sees death, religion or madness as the only alternatives open to him. And since we are told that he has rejected both religion and suicide, all that is left to him is to continue his wanderings as he slowly goes insane.

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The book opens with the boy going to Koyama's one summer to bathe. Here he happens to see a rather aloof-looking man on the beach, whose air of mystery he finds attractive. After a couple of days he manages to strike up a conversation with the man, and eventually they become friends. The boy often visits Sensai's house, where he meets Sensai's beautiful wife. The couple seem devoted to each other and the wife, a very placid woman, seems quite content. Sensai, however, is a very lonely figure.

As their relationship develops, the boy begins to become more attached to Sensai than to his own father, a country gentleman. The boy cannot help comparing his simple father unfavourably with the sophisticated and, apparently, worldly-wise, Sensai. When it eventually comes time for the boy to go home during the summer vacation, he is unwilling to leave his friend. However,

he feels that he must go in view of the fact that his father is seriously ill with a chronic kidney ailment. The boy Kokoro (The Heart of Things) untried, not knowing that he is destined never to see Sensei again.

This book is divided into three sections, each being told in the first person. The two main characters are an unnamed student and an older man who is referred to simply by the title, Sensei. The first two parts of the book are narrated by the student and the third part takes the form of a letter from Sensei to him. The book opens with the boy going to Kamakura one summer to bathe. Here he happens to see a rather aloof-looking man on the beach, whose air of mystery he finds attractive. After a couple of days he manages to strike up a conversation with the man, and eventually they become friends. The boy often visits Sensei's house, that where he meets Sensei's beautiful wife. The couple seem devoted to each other and the wife, a very placid woman, seems quite content. Sensei, however, is a very lonely figure. letter constitutes the third section of the

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he feels that he must go in view of the fact that his father is seriously ill with a chronic kidney ailment. The boy leaves for his home in the country, not knowing that he is destined never to see Sensei again.

The second section of the book is devoted to the boy's stay at his home and concentrates mainly on building up a picture of the sick father and showing in what light he appears to his son. While the boy is at home, a bulky letter arrives for him from Sensei. At the time, his father is in a coma and not expected to live long, and so the boy does not have time to read the letter. However, he opens it and one sentence catches his eye. The sentence says that by the time the boy receives the letter Sensei will be dead. Realizing that Sensei intends to commit suicide, the boy decides to rush back to try to see him. In spite of the fact that his father is dying and that if he leaves now he will certainly never see him alive again, the boy catches a train back to Tokyo. On the train he reads the letter.

The letter constitutes the third section of the book. In it Sensei tries to explain to the boy the reason for his suicide. He says that his father had died when he was young and left him quite a lot of money, but that an uncle who had become his guardian had swindled him out of a lot of it. This had embittered him and made him distrustful of others. He had taken what was left of his money and moved to Tokyo. Here

he had taken lodgings in the house of a widow with a beautiful daughter. He had fallen in love with the daughter. At about this time a very close friend, referred to only as K, had been having trouble at home and had no means of supporting himself, so Sensei had invited him to live in his lodgings. K was a very ascetic person, but he, too, had fallen in love with the young woman. Sensei had become extremely jealous and, having ridiculed K, had gone to the girl's mother and asked to be allowed to marry her daughter. The mother had agreed. Two days after this K had committed suicide. Although K had not blamed Sensei in any way, Sensei himself was acutely conscious of his own guilt, of which the presence of his wife was a constant reminder. He has decided at last, he says, to take his own life. other or to find any rapport, in spite of the fact that they love each other. Sôseki had the extraordinary ability of standing back and viewing himself from a distance. Thus it is that the blame for this situation is not laid solely at Kenzô's wife's door, but is equally apportioned.

It is the reappearance of Kenzô's ex-stepfather and his increasing demands for money, again an occurrence taken from real life, that provides the story line of this novel. The old man is eventually bought off with a fairly substantial amount of money--money which Kenzô and his wife can ill afford--and promises not

to bother Kenzō again. At the end of the novel Kenzō's wife expresses her pleasure at the fact that everything is now Michikusa (Grass by the Wayside) that hardly anything is left that is reminiscent of Sōsuke's

This is the only completely autobiographical novel that Sōseki wrote. It is a fictionalized account of the years immediately following his return from England. Kenzō, the central character, is Sōseki himself.

Kenzō's childhood is Sōseki's childhood, a time of great unhappiness. In this novel Sōseki expresses his bitterness at the way he was treated as a child, being pushed from pillar to post and handed from one to the other like so much baggage. Perhaps the main point of the book, however, is to describe and analyze the inability of Kenzō and his wife to communicate with each other or to find any rapport, in spite of the fact that they love each other. Sōseki had the extraordinary ability of standing back and viewing himself from a distance. Thus it is that the blame for this situation is not laid solely at Kenzō's wife's door, but is equally apportioned.

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to bother Kenzō again. At the end of the novel Kenzō's wife expresses her pleasure at the fact that everything is now settled. However, Kenzō's statement that hardly anything is ever settled is reminiscent of Sōsuke's words at the end of Mon. The figures of this novel are a husband and wife. Tada Yoshio and his wife, O-Nobu, have only been married for six months and outwardly appear to be a devoted couple, and yet there is also a certain disaffection between them. On O-Nobu's side it seems to stem from the disappointment that she feels at the fact that her husband is not quite the man she thought he was, not being too proud, for example, to accept money from his father to supplement the rather meagre salary which he receives from the company where he works. Yoshio's discontentment is easy to understand, since he has, we learn, only married O-Nobu, after being jilted by Kiyoko, a girl with whom he was in love.

Yoshio is due to have a second operation for haemorrhoids and, to make matters worse, his father has not sent any money this month, because he is angry with his son for not having paid back a previous loan. However, the operation is a success and his financial situation gets back on a more even keel, thanks to some money from his sister and some more which O-Nobu receives from an uncle.

The president of Yoshio's company is a Mr. Yoshikawa, whose wife it was that arranged the marriage be-

tween Yoshio and O-Nobu. Mrs. Yoshikawa was also the person who had introduced Yoshio and Kiyoko to each other. Although Meian (Light and Shade) of this latter fact, she feels somewhat uneasy in Mrs. Yoshikawa's presence,

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tween Yoshio and O-Nobu. Mrs. Yoshikawa was also the person who had introduced Yoshio and Kiyoko to each other. Although O-Nobu is not aware of this latter fact, she feels somewhat uneasy in Mrs. Yoshikawa's presence, because of a special relationship which seems to exist between her and her (O-Nobu's) husband.

O-Nobu's uneasiness with regard to her husband is further increased when an acquaintance of Yoshio's calls at the house while he is out and, in the course of conversation, suggests that Yoshio is keeping from her love affairs which he had before they were married. O-Nobu eventually goes to talk to Yoshio's sister, O-Hide, to see if she can find out the truth of the situation from her, but O-Hide refuses to say anything.

Mrs. Yoshikawa tells Yoshio that Kiyoko, now Mrs. Seki, is at a certain hot-spring resort, convalescing after a miscarriage. She suggests that he go and see Kiyoko one last time. She seems to think that the reason that O-Nobu and Yoshio are always so indulgent to each other is that this is the only way they can avoid a confrontation: that, in Yoshio's case, his actions stem from the fact that he has not yet got over Kiyoko. One suspects that Mrs. Yoshikawa may be attempting to manipulate Yoshio and Kiyoko again, a practice at which she has shown herself to be adept in the past.

Yoshio goes to the resort, not fully decided whether actually to meet Kiyoko or not. However, he bumps into

her by chance and she runs away in confusion. The next morning he puts a visiting card in with a basket of fruit which he has brought as a present from Mrs. Yoshikawa and has the maid take it to Kiyoko. Kiyoko agrees to see him and he goes to her room. The novel, unfinished, ends with the following lines:

"Tsuda finally stood up. He intended to say, 'Mrs. Seki,' but by a slip of the tongue, what he actually called her was 'Yoshiko'.

'How long will you be here?'

'I have absolutely no fixed plans at all. If a telegram came from home I'd have to go back today.'

Tsuda was surprised.

'Do you think one will come?'

'I have no idea,' said Kiyoko with a smile.

Tsuda went back to his room alone, trying to fathom the meaning of that smile."

Footnotes

Chapter 1

1. All Japanese names are given in the Japanese order of surname followed by given name.
2. Kusa Makura literally means The Grass Pillow, but was translated into English by the present writer under the title of The Three-Cornered World.
3. kyōka, senryū: Humorous poetry, the former in tanka form: i.e. five lines of 5, 7, 5, 7 and 7 syllables respectively.
4. Bakin: Takizawa Bakin (1761-1848). Perhaps the greatest writer of fiction of his day.
5. gesaku 戯作 : saku 作 means 'a work', and the character ge 戯 basically means 'humorous' or 'frivolous'. It sometimes has the added connotation of 'flirtation' or 'dalliance'.
6. W.G. Aston, A History of Japanese Literature, (1899; rpt. Tokyo: Tuttle, 1972), p. 378.
7. The character 江戸 can also be read as Yanagisawa. This is the name of the place in Tokyo from which, in the Edo Period, boats left for the
- 7a The way in which new literary fashions emerged with periodic regularity during the Meiji Period makes it possible to consider the prose of the period in terms of decades rather than on a year to year basis.

Footnotes

Chapter 1

1. All Japanese names are given in the Japanese order of surname followed by given name.
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6. W.G. Aston, A History of Japanese Literature, (1899; rpt. Tokyo: Tuttle, 1972), p. 378.
7. The characters ryūkyō 柳橋 can also be read as Yanagibashi. This is the name of the place in Tokyo from which, in the Edo Period, boats left for the Yoshiwara--the red-light district. By association the word comes to refer to the demi-monde.
8. ninjō: This literally means 'human emotions', but is

14. often used more specifically to mean 'love', either of the agape or eros type. and to literature, but
9. setai: This is a word which occurs very frequently with reference to the literature of the Edo Period. It is variously translated as 'the prevailing conditions of society' and 'the way of the world'.
10. This is a reference to the expression kanzenchōaku, literally 'encourage good, punish evil'.
11. Kochō is the name of the female protagonist of the story.
12. These are normally termed pivot words, since they contain two connotations and thus help the sentence to 'swing' from one meaning to another. As an illustration in English, one can do no better than to quote the example which Aston contrived. "The sun went down, and the welcome, the thrice-wished for, the best beloved ^{night} knight sought a well-earned ^{dawn} repose. On the morrow he rose from his couch donned his armour and sallied forth in quest of fresh adventuresome as was his bold spirit, his courage was now to be put to a testy old ^{fool} full of meat as an egg-shaped domes, slender minarets, . . ."
1. Aston, A History of Japanese Literature, p. 363.
13. Saikaku: Ihara Saikaku (1642-93). Poet, dramatist and writer of popular fiction, which last form of writing he rescued from the state of neglect into which it had fallen since the Heian Period (800-1186).

14. teinen: Ōgai said of teinen: "This is not a feeling which I have only with regard to literature, but to all aspects of life." Resignation no Setsu of (Views on Resignation), Mori Ōgai Zenshū (The, but Collected Works of Mori Ōgai) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1971), VII, 99. (Although Ōgai translated the word teinen as 'resignation', it may shed some light on his idea if one realizes that the word may also be rendered as 'propriety'.)
15. Die Geschichte eines Genies by Ossip Schubin (1854-1934), whose real name was Aloisia Kirschner.
16. A translation of Improvisatoren (1835).
17. sō: 想.
18. uchū no seishin.
19. naibu seimei.
20. Teriha Kyōgen was a popular form of dramatic entertainment during the late Edo and early Meiji Periods and formed the basis of the novel.
21. Not to be confused with the work of the same name by Yamada Bimyō.

Chapter 2

1. The name of a shop.
2. Two words are used to translate 'Realism' into Japanese: shajitsushugi and genjitsushugi. The former is a question of description and implies no philosophy. Thus even someone like Ozaki Kōyō

- can be said to be a realistic writer in this sense. Genjitsushugi, however, is nearer to what is meant by Realism in the West and refers to that mode of writing which not only avoids beautification, but
8. (certainly at the turn of the century) concentrates on the darker aspects of life in its attempt to show an unromanticized reality. It is, therefore, closely related to Naturalism. Having said this, however, it should be noted that Japanese critics do not always distinguish between the two, seeming to use them interchangeably at times.
 3. haiku: A short Japanese poem of three lines. The lines have 5, 7 and 5 syllables respectively.
 4. In terms of the Meiji Period, this was an incomplete decade, since the Taishō Period began in 1912.
 5. Waseda Bungaku, No. 65 (April 1911), p. 108.
 6. Ernest de Selincourt, ed., The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, 2nd ed. II (1940-9; Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1952), 431-2.
 7. In Hyaku Monogatari (One Hundred Tales) in Chūōkōron (1st Oct. 1911) Ōgai speaks of his own attitude as an onlooker (bōkansha) as follows: "I am an onlooker by nature. From the time I played with other children until now when, as an adult, I go to various social functions with people high and low, from first to last I have never thrown myself into things and enjoyed myself wholeheartedly, no matter how

much fun people were having. Although I am at present on that stage upon which Life's stormy scenes are played, I have never played a role worthy of the name myself." Mori Ōgai Zenshū, II, 170.

8. In the word asobi, which literally means 'play', there is the concept of having something left over after facing the rigours of life, which is sometimes expressed by the word yoyū. This latter is in contrast to Naturalism, where there is no yoyū at all. However, in asobi there is perhaps also the loneliness which comes from lack of involvement, which makes it somewhat akin to Ōgai's idea of bōkansha.
9. waka: This literally means 'Japanese poetry' and is, strictly speaking, a general term for all types of traditional poetry written in Japanese. In practice, however, it is usually synonymous with tanka, on which see Ch. 1, Note 3.
10. The word yama is used here to mean 'climax' and reflects Shiki's view that every work should have a climax.
11. Kokoro no Hana, 5, No. 11 (Nov. 1902), front supp. p. 2.
12. shōsetsu: Depending on the length, either a short story or a novel.
13. 'Shōsoku' ('News'), Hototogisu, 8, No. 13 (Sept. 1905), p. 65.
14. The word botchan is untranslatable, because of the many nuances it contains. It is basically a form

of polite address used to the sons, generally while they are children, of well-to-do families. It is akin to the rather archaic phrase 'the young master'. Yet, being a diminutive, it carries a nuance not contained in the English. On occasion, the word may also imply that the person referred to is, because of his background, rather spoiled and self-willed. The main reason that Sōseki dubbed the protagonist of this novel Botchan, however, is that he was trying to convey the deep feeling of affection which the old servant, Kiyō, had for him.

15. Waseda Bungaku, No. 14 (Feb. 1907), pp. 1-2.

Chapter 3

1. Kusunoki Masashige was a famous warlord who was killed in battle in 1336.
2. Nanakusa-shū 「七草集」: shū 集 means 'collection'. Nanakusa 七草 is used to refer to seven traditional plants of spring and autumn. In this case it is a fanciful title, each of the seven sections being given the name of a flower.
3. Bokusetsu-roku 「木屑録」: roku 録 means 'account' or 'record'. Bokusetsu 木屑 is part of a longer phrase, chikutō bokusetsu 竹頭木屑, literally, 'the tops of bamboos and sawdust (or 'wood shavings')'. This phrase is used to refer to something useless. Here Sōseki is obviously being modest.
4. Ōtsuka was the first professor of aesthetics at

5. Tokyo Imperial University.
5. This is not, strictly speaking, a novel, being, rather, a collection of stories, each related in the first person. Each story is, however, a dream, and the fact that there is a continuity of atmosphere throughout the stories makes it easy to regard them as one book.
6. Sanshirō is the name of the protagonist.
7. This title has nothing to do with the contents of the book. It merely refers to the time by which Sōseki promised to complete the manuscript.
8. He was forced to stop writing this work due to ill health.
9. This was written as a continuation of Kōjin.
10. Meian was unfinished at the time of Sōseki's death.

Chapter 4.

1. 'Natsume Sōseki, A Japanese Meiji Intellectual', The American Scholar, 36, No. 4 (Autumn 1965), 606-7.
2. Professor of English at Tokyo Imperial University when Sōseki was a student.
3. Introduction to Bungaku-ron (1907), Sōseki Zenshū (The Collected Works of Natsume Sōseki) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966), IX, 9-10. (Sōseki Zenshū is hereafter cited as SZ.)
4. SZ, XII, 528-649. (These poems are published with Shiki's notes and alterations, since they were shown to him for critical appraisal.)

5. As pointed out by Yoshida Rokurō in Sakka Izen no Sōseki (Sōseki Before he Became a Writer) (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō,1966),p. 165.
6. Letter to Masaoka Shiki (23rd April 1897),SZ,XIV, 100.
7. 'Guken Sūsoku' ('Several Dos and Don'ts in My Humble Opinion'),Hokei-kai (Preservation of Benevolence Group) Magazine (Matsuyama Middle School, 25th Nov. 1895),SZ,XII,259-64.
8. 'Fugen no Gen' literally means 'Wordless Words', but is an old Chinese phrase used to suggest words with implicit meaning.

9. SZ,XII,227-8.

10. SZ,XI,442.

Chapter 5

1. SZ,IX,8.
2. SZ,XI,442.
3. SZ,XIII,62-4.
4. SZ,XIV,188.
5. Shojosaku Tsuikai-dan (My Maiden Work in Retrospect),Bunshō Sekai (World of Writing) (Sept. 1908), SZ,XVI,606.
6. SZ,XIV,184.
7. SZ,XI,442-5.
8. SZ,XIV,196.
9. Introduction to Bungaku-ron,SZ,IX,11.
10. SZ,XII,369-74.

11. SZ,II,387.
12. Japanese National Commission for UNESCO,ed., 'Natsume Sōseki, His Personality and Works' in Essays on Natsume Sōseki's Works (Tokyo: Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, 1970), p. 14.
13. A term of respect meaning literally 'Teacher' or 'Master'.
14. SZ,IV,822-3.
15. The elder brother in Kōjin.
16. SZ,V,725.
17. SZ,IX,11.
18. SZ,IX,27-8.
19. SZ,IX,12.
20. SZ,IX,49.
21. jiko hon'i is a term which Sōseki used to suggest the idea of taking oneself as a yardstick. It implies individuality and a confidence in oneself. It is closely connected with what he wrote in 'Watakushi no Kojinshugi', which was dealt with earlier in this chapter.

Chapter 6

1. Letter to his father-in-law (15th March 1902), SZ, XIV, 201.
2. Letter to, among others, Kanō Kōkichi (9th Feb. 1901), SZ, XIV, 169.
3. Letter to Fujishiro Teisuke (19th June 1901), SZ, XIV, 184.

4. Letter to Terada Torahiko (12th Sept. 1901), SZ, XIV, 188. (In this letter the characters for Torahiko are given as 寅日子, instead of the more usual 寅彦.)
5. Introduction to Bungaku-ron, SZ, IX, 13-4.
6. Letter to Suga Torao (14th June 1903), SZ, XIV, 223.
7. Letter to Hosogai Katsuitsu (6th March 1903), SZ, XIV, 214. (The reading of Hosogai's given name 勝逸, is not clear, but is probably Katsuitsu.)
8. Letter to Suga Torao (21st May 1903), SZ, XIV, 221.
9. Letter to Suga Torao (14th June 1903), SZ, XIV, 223.
10. *ibid.*
11. Letter to Suga Torao (3rd July 1903), SZ, XIV, 227.
12. shintaiishi: Literally 'new-form poetry'. This is a term used to distinguish freer modern poetry from the traditional forms like tanka and haiku.
13. Both translated from Macpherson's 'Ossianic' poems.
14. Some reference works (e.g. Etō Jun, Natsume Sōseki [Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1965], p. 473 and Natsume Soseki-shū [Natsume Sōseki Collection] in the series Nihon Gendai Bungaku Zenshū [Anthology of Modern Japanese Literature] [Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1961], pp. 489-502) mention a work called Seiro no Uta (The Subjugation of Russia) as having been published with Jūgun-kō in the May 1904 issue of Teikoku Bungaku. However, neither a search of that magazine nor of Sōseki's collected works reveals any work of that

- name. Neither is it the theme name in that issue of Teikoku Bungaku, since none of the other works are on that theme.
- It seems likely that the term Seiro no Uta may have been used at some time to describe Jūgun-kō and that someone inadvertently put square brackets around it, under the impression that it was the title of a separate poem, and that later editors have continued to list it in this way.
15. Sakka Izen no Sōseki, pp. 235-46.
16. SZ, I, 53, l. 10. in SZ.
17. Named after Takayama Chogyū (1871-1902). SZ, XIV.
18. Translated into English under the title of Puss in Boots. to Morita Sōhei (under the nickname of Haku-)
19. Also translatable as Puss in Boots.
20. This work was actually written under Tieck's pseudonym of Peter Leberecht. 'n' or 'empty' respectively.
21. 'Wagahai wa Neko De Aru' in Essays on Natsume Sōseki's Works, UNESCO, p. 23. es included in the
22. SZ, XII, 191.
23. SZ, XI, 527. Sumo Sōseki, p. 473.

Chapter 7

1. A comic short story involving two or more characters, all played by the same raconteur, and generally ending with a humorous play on words.
2. SZ, II, 122. 3, No. 10 (July 1900), supp. p. 29.
3. A reference to one of the entrances of the Hongō

campus of Tokyo Imperial University. (Tokyo: Kaizōsha,

4. Letter to Nakagawa Yoshitarō (15th July 1905), SZ, XIV, 307.
5. Letter to Takahama Kyoshi (addressed to him in his real name of Kiyoshi 清) (17th Sept. 1905), SZ, XIV, 322.
6. Letter to Suzuki Miekichi (9th November 1905), SZ, XIV, 336.
7. SZ, II, 208.
8. SZ, II, 224.
9. All as printed in SZ.
10. Letter to Takahama Kyoshi (7th Oct. 1906), SZ, XIV, 464.
11. Letter to Morita Sōhei (under the nickname of Haku-yō 白楊) (6th Nov. 1906), SZ, XIV, 497.
12. Yōkyo-shū 漾虚集: The characters, yō 漾 and kyo 虚, mean 'drifting' and 'vain' or 'empty' respectively. The title is meant to convey a sense of modesty about the worth of the pieces included in the collection.
13. Eto Jun, Natsume Sōseki, p. 473.
14. SZ, IX, 16.

Chapter 8

1. SZ, XVI, 495.
2. SZ, XII, 10.
3. Hototogisu, 3, No. 10 (July 1900), supp. p. 29.
4. Letter to Sōseki (6th Nov. 1901), Shiki Zenshū

- (Collected Works of Masaoka Shiki) (Tokyo:Kaizōsha, 1930),XVI,463.
5. SZ,I,175.
 6. Terada Torahiko Zenshū (Collected Works of Terada Torahiko) (Tokyo:Iwanami Shoten,1935),XI,235.
 7. Sōseki used the word shōsetsu,which in this context is not strictly speaking a novel,the word shōsetsu in Japanese covering more ground than the word 'novel' in English. Perhaps the word 'fiction' comes closest to defining it.
 8. Letter to Noma Masatsuna (30th April 1905),SZ,XIV, 296-7.
 9. Letter to Takahama Kyoshi (24th Nov. 1905),SZ,XIV, 339.
 10. 'Menkaibi':An article in Kokumin Shinbun (People's Newspaper) (25th Nov. 1906),p. 5,col. 4.
 11. Letter to Nomura Denshi (27th June 1905),SZ,XIV, 303-4.
 12. SZ,XVI,506.
 13. Tanpyō Narabi ni Zakkan (Short Pieces of Criticism Together With Random Thoughts),SZ,XVI,131.
 14. SZ,XI,21-9.
 15. For 'cruel' Sōseki uses funinjō.
 16. yutori is similar in meaning to yoyū. See Ch. 2, Note 8.
 17. 'Haiku to Shaseibun' ('Haiku and Shaseibun'), part of 'Haikai Hitokuchibanashi' ('A Word about

28. Haiku'), Kokumin Shinbun (24-8th Oct. 1906), XIV,
Kyoshi Zenshū (The Collected Works of Takahama
 29. Kyoshi) (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1974-5), XII, 172.
 (For 'dispassionate' Kyoshi uses hinetsujōteki.)
18. hijō may be variously translated as 'emergency',
 'unforeseen contingency', 'the out of the ordinary'.
19. fururu: This literally means 'to touch'. Used
 31. adjectivally, it referred in Sōseki's day to works
 32. which 'touched' the heart of things. That is to
 33. say novels which dealt in depth with the problems
 34. of human life. It seems to have been used by
 Sōseki to refer to Naturalist works. There may
 also be the idea that such works are frenetic or
 35. frenzied, in that the plot is in a hurry to get
 somewhere, since the word fureta also has the mean-
 ing of 'touched' in the sense of 'not right in the
 36. head'. 510-16.
20. furenu is the negative of fururu.
21. furenai is an alternative form of furenu.
22. SZ, XI, 551.
23. All underlined English words in this quotation
 are taken direct from the original.
24. Danpen (Fragment), SZ, XIII, 302-3.
25. Tanpyō Narabi ni Zakkan, SZ, XVI, 132.
26. 'Bunshō Hitokuchibanashi' ('A Word about Writing'),
 47. Hototogisu, 10, No. 2 (Nov. 1906), SZ, XVI, 339.
27. Letter to Kyoshi (1st April 1906), SZ, XIV, 387.

28. Letter to Nomura Denshi (2nd April 1905), SZ, XIV, 291.
29. Postcard to Nomura Denshi (15th Nov. 1905), SZ, XIV, 339.
30. The words 'courtesan' and 'gloom' are a reference to the timbre of Meiji novels which dealt with the demi-monde.
31. Letter to Kyoshi (11th Nov. 1906), SZ, XIV, 503.
32. Letter to Morita Sōhei (21st Oct. 1906), SZ, XIV, 478.
33. A variant of saboten.
34. In a letter to Kyoshi (17th Oct. 1906), SZ, XIV, 474, Sōseki referred to Morita's writing as Roshiyashugi ('Russianism').
35. Sōseki refers to Kyoshi's praise of this passage in a letter to Torahiko (2nd Sept. 1906), SZ, XIV, 446.
36. SZ, II, 510-16.
37. Letter to Kyoshi (9th Nov. 1906), SZ, XIV, 499.
38. A reference to Kei in Nihyakutōka, whose father is a bean curd maker.
39. For 'I' Sōseki used the word atai, signifying that a country bumpkin (a girl) is speaking.
40. Shaseihaiku Oyobi Shaseibun no Kenkyū (A Study of Shasei Haiku and Shaseibun) (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1974), p. 417.
41. Letter to Kyoshi (11th Nov. 1906), SZ, XIV, 502.

Chapter 9

1. SZ,XVI,543-5.
2. SZ,II,458-9.
3. Yoshida Seiichi,Natsume Sōseki (Tokyo:Yūseidō,
1970),p. 344.
4. SZ,II,387.
5. Letter to Kuroyanagi Kaishū (7th Aug. 1906),SZ,II,
433.
6. Yoshida Seiichi,Natsume Sōseki,loc. cit.
7. Morita Sōhei,Zoku Natsume Sōseki (Natsume Sōseki,
Continued) (Tokyo:Kōchōshorin,1943),p. 211.
8. ibid. loc. cit.
9. Tanpenshōsetsu-shū Kaisetsu,SZ,II,864.
10. ibid. loc. cit.
11. In 'Kusa Makura no Zōkeisei' ('The Structural Qual-
ity of Kusa Makura') in Nihon Bungaku Ronkō (Dis-
sertations on Japanese Literature),ed. Yoshida
Ryōhei-sensei Koki Kinen Ronbun-shū Kankō-kai (The
Committee for the Publication of a Collection of
Essays in Commemoration of Professor Yoshida Ryō-
hei's 70th Birthday) (Tokyo:Rōfūsha,1970).
12. ibid. p. 343.
13. This is variously referred to as taigūhō,tsuiku,
taihō,gūku and haiku.
14. SZ,II,406.
15. ibid. p. 413.
16. ibid. p. 466.
17. ibid. p. 500.

18. ibid. p. 503.
19. Koide, op. cit. p. 99.
20. SZ, II, 384.
21. Koide, op. cit. 347.
22. In an essay appended to an edition of Sōseki's
Kusa Makura (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1950), p. 155.
23. SZ, II, 393.
24. ibid. pp. 393-4.

Chapter 10 pp. 500-1.

1. SZ, II, 488.
2. Letter to Morita Sōhei (30th Sept. 1906), SZ, XIV,
 457-9.
3. SZ, II, 526.
4. Sōseki to Sokutenkyoshi (Sōseki and Sokutenkyoshi)
 (Tokyo: Hōbunkan, 1968), p. 100.
5. SZ, II, 387.
6. ibid. p. 395. Natsume Sōseki (Tokyo: Kōchōshorin,
7. A reference to poems by Tao Yuan-ming (Tō En-Mei)
 and Wang Wei (Ō Ii) quoted earlier in Kusa Makura.
8. Matsuo Bashō (1644-94). Famous writer of hokku
 (haiku) poems.
9. SZ, II, 395-6.
10. ibid. p. 416.
11. ibid. loc. cit. pieces written by Shihōda and pub-
12. SZ, IX, 385-6. Autobiography in Nov. 1906: Aki Nidai, Sono
13. SZ, XIV, 442. Sono Ni: Aki no Hori (Two Pieces on
14. ibid. p. 450. Pine Autumn Weather: No. 2: Cloudy
Autumn Weather).

15. SZ,II,870. Takahama Kyoshi (11th Nov. 1906),SZ.
16. Okazaki,op. cit. p. 99.
17. SZ,II,518-9.
18. SZ,II,453-4.
19. ibid. p. 501.
20. ibid. p. 519.
21. ibid. p. 867.
22. ibid. pp. 523-4.
23. ibid. pp. 500-1.
24. ibid. p. 547.
25. Okazaki,op. cit. p. 107.

Chapter 11

1. SZ,XVI,606.
2. At the time,Kawamoto's name was Yokomae.
3. SZ,XIV,383.
4. SZ,II,850.
5. Morita Sōhei,Natsume Sōseki (Tokyo:Kōchōshorin, 1942),pp. 262-3.
6. Letter to Kyoshi (7th Oct. 1906),SZ,XIV,464-5.
7. SZ,XI,551.
8. ibid. pp. 552-3.
9. ibid. loc. cit.
10. SZ,XIV,492.
11. A reference to pieces written by Shihōda and published in Hototogisu in Nov. 1906:Aki Nidai,Sono Ichi: Akibare,Sono Ni: Akigumori (Two Pieces on Autumn,No. 1:Fine Autumn Weather;No. 2:Cloudy Autumn Weather).

12. Letter to Takahama Kyoshi (11th Nov. 1906), SZ, XIV, 502. Sai Sect), a Buddhist work of the T'ang
13. 'Natsume Sōseki Kenkyū' ('A Study of Natsume Sōseki'), in Nihon Bungaku Kōza (13) Meiji Jidai Ge (Lectures on Japanese Literature (13), Meiji Period, Part 2) (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1935), p. 405.
14. Letter to Yamada Kōsaburō (9th Aug. 1916), SZ, XV, 570. ling essay in the Autumn 1978 issue of
15. Letter to Koike Kenji (24th Sept. 1916), *ibid.* p. 590. Appendix 2
16. Okazaki, Sōseki to Sokutenkyoshi, p. 119. a wife's
17. Yoshida Seiichi, Natsume Sōseki, p. 346.
18. SZ, II, 388. ter used is 2X, read ga, which Sōseki
19. Jay Rubin, 'Sanshirō and Sōseki: A Critical Essay', Sanshirō (English trans.) (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1977), p. 219.

Appendix 1 ork has been treated at length because, at

1. Apparently an allusion to Matthew 9, 17. of Sōseki's
2. Dabi: This comes from the Sanskrit term jhāpita, that, referring to cremation. not been either translated
3. An incense burner made in the Sentoku (Hsúan tē) Era (1426-35) of the Ming Period.
4. A haiku verse in the Japanese text.
5. A kanshi from a collection written by Sōseki in March 1898.
6. Jakuchū (1716-1800): An artist of the Kanō school who specialized in painting animals and plants.

7. A legend recorded in the Rinzai-roku (Record of the Rinzai Sect), a Buddhist work of the T'ang Period (618-907).
8. Yuima: A legendary figure said to have lived in India at the same time as Gautama.
9. Hamlet 2,2.
10. SZ, II, 127-37. (This translation will appear with a covering essay in the Autumn 1978 issue of Monumenta Nipponica.)

Appendix 2

1. muko: A man adopted at marriage into his wife's family.
2. The character used is 我, read ga, which Sōseki later translates as 'pride'.
3. tabakobon: A tray upon which are set the various requirements for smoking.
4. This work has been treated at length because, at the time of writing, it is the only one of Sōseki's major works written after he joined the Asahi that, so far as is known, has not been either translated into English or at least had something written about it in English.

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NATSUME
SOSEKI

THE
THREE-
CORNERED
WORLD

A
NOVEL
TRANSLATED
FROM
THE
JAPANESE

NATSUME
THE THREE-CORNERED

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Natsume Soseki is regarded in Japan as the greatest novelist produced by the Meiji era — a time when the Japanese began to combine Western culture with their own oriental traditions.

In **The Three-Cornered World**, an artist wanders off into the mountains to meditate, but when he decides to stay at an almost deserted hotel, he is soon drawn towards the hostess, O-Nami. She is strange, almost mad, and rumour has it that she deserted her husband and fell in love with a priest. The artist becomes haunted by the mystery and sense of tragedy which surrounds her. She reminds him of Millais's portrait of Ophelia drowning and he wants to paint her. Yet there is always some quality lacking in her expression, and he is unable to complete his picture, until, finally, he solves the enigma of her life.

Soseki examines each event or scene scrupulously and with a slight satirical twist; and his imagery is so sharp that each small situation falls into a perfectly balanced picture within itself.

Translated with an introduction by Alan Turney.

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THE THREE-CORNERED WORLD

TRANSLATED BY ALAN TURNER

First Book - London

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THE THREE CORNERED WORLD

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Natsume Sōseki

THE THREE-CORNERED WORLD

TRANSLATED BY ALAN TURNEY

Peter Owen · London

TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE
Kusa Makura

UNESCO COLLECTION OF REPRESENTATIVE WORKS
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"An artist is a person who lives in the triangle which remains after the angle which we may call common sense has been removed from this four-cornered world."

SŌSEKI

INTRODUCTION

I

Natsume Kinnosuke, better known by his pen-name of Sōseki, was born in Tokyo in 1867, one year before the Meiji Restoration which marked the beginning of the influx of Western thought and literature into Japan. The early part of his education was concerned largely with the Chinese classics. This set him apart from many of the other writers of the period who went to mission schools, and thus came under a strong Western influence.

In 1884 he went to the Yoshimon College intending to become an architect. Later, however, he changed his mind and entered the department of literature of Tokyo Imperial University from which he graduated in 1892. While at university, he formed a close friendship with Masaoka Shiki who was the greatest name in the revival of Haiku (Hokku) poetry at that period. This friendship undoubtedly exercised a profound influence on his writing, for although he is principally famous as a novelist, the Haiku with which he often intersperses his prose are a mark of the essentially Japanese quality of his work, and are of great literary merit. After finishing a post-graduate course in 1895, Sōseki became a middle school teacher, and then went on to teach at high school.

In 1896 he was married, and four years later was sent to London by the Japanese Ministry of Education to study English literature. The experience he gained here, added to

his knowledge of the Chinese classics, gave him a breadth of background unique among his contemporaries. Moreover, it enabled him to form a balanced view of the comparative merits of Western and Oriental literature, and saved him from the blind hero-worship of all things foreign that was detrimental to the work of many Japanese writers of the time.

After three years in England, Sōseki returned to Japan and was appointed lecturer in English literature in Tokyo Imperial University. It was about this time that his *London Letters*, published in a magazine edited by Masaoka, first began to attract attention. As yet, however, he had received no real acclaim as a writer. In 1905 he published his first novel *Wagahai wa Neko de aru* (*I am a Cat*), and immediately rose to fame. During the next ten years, there followed a whole stream of works both long and short, including *Botchan*, *Kusa Makura* and *Kokoro* (*The Heart of Things*). With the publication of each new work, his position as the foremost literary figure in Japan became more and more firmly established. Like Tennyson during the Victorian era in England, he became the acknowledged voice of the age. Although unlike Tennyson, who was in essential agreement with his fellow Victorians, Sōseki more often than not indulged in ruthless criticism of his contemporary society. It is, therefore, all the more remarkable that he became so popular in his own lifetime, considering that his was the role of critic, and not of one who sang the praises of the newly emerging 'modern' (meaning Westernised) age. The probable reason for his popularity was that it was realised that his criticisms were constructive, and based upon a patriotic desire not to see Japan sacrifice her great and long tradition in favour of the indiscriminate adoption of Western culture.

Soon after Sōseki wrote *I am a Cat*, he resigned from the

university for financial reasons, and took a job as literary editor of the Asahi newspaper. In 1910 he contracted ulceration of the stomach, and it was this that caused his premature death at the age of 49 in 1916.

II

With the coming of the Meiji era, a large amount of Western literature found its way into Japan. Not only were many works translated, but many authors adopted Western brands of philosophy, and in general followed the European concepts of literature. The schools of the novel which existed in Europe began to appear in Japan too.

Sōseki saw the dangers of such undiscerning copying, and realised that no worthwhile works would be produced as long as Japanese writers merely tried to repeat formulae that were entirely alien to them. He himself succeeded in creating a happy blend between the new imported ideas and the traditions of Japanese literature. Thus he, more than any other writer, provides a bridge between Japanese classical and present-day literature. It has been said that Sōseki was anti-Western, but I think it is truer to say that he was pro-Japanese in an age when it was fashionable to revere everything foreign. It is the very Japanese quality of his work that has made him a lasting favourite among his fellow countrymen.

Sōseki's achievement in becoming and remaining the greatest figure in modern Japanese literature appears all the more impressive when one realises that only one other author, Mori Ogai, took an independant stand, and that every other major writer belonged to some school or another. Some say that Sōseki created his own school, but while undoubtedly he eventually gained a large following

in the literary world, the whole of his writing was aimed at destroying schools and advocating a greater freedom of approach.

III

Kusa Makura literally means *The Grass Pillow*, and is the standard phrase used in Japanese poetry to signify a journey. Since a literal translation of this title would give none of the connotations of the original to English readers, I thought it better to take a phrase from the body of the text which I believe expresses the point of the book.

In this, more than in any of his other more conventional novels, Sōseki shows his opposition to the Realist, Naturalist and Romantic schools that were flourishing around him. Sōseki has been accused of taking a God-like view of humanity because he considers himself superior to his fellow men. This, however, is not so. There is, of course, a great deal in the world to which he does consider himself superior. This is what he terms the vulgar or common world, and which he believes is unworthy of his attention as an artist. He feels that it is the artist's job to portray beauty, and that he must transcend the vulgar in order to do so. When, however, he refers to rising above human relationships and emotions, it is not that he despises them, but that he feels he must stand back and view them objectively in order to see them in their proper perspective.

Sōseki's apparent desire to get away from the world and immerse himself in Nature may at first sight seem Wordsworthian. There is, however, a vast difference between Wordsworth's and Sōseki's view of Nature. To Wordsworth, Nature was a reflection of God the creator. To Sōseki, it was not the reflection of anything, but was one facet of essential beauty.

Sōseki's method of describing both Nature and his other physical surroundings is that of the painter. Every scene he presents is in perfect proportion, as though he were reproducing it on canvas. He also makes detailed allusion to colours, shapes and textures. Indeed, so graphic is his description, that a certain Japanese artist, having read *Kusa Makura*, actually painted the scenes which appear in it. One's first impression of *Kusa Makura* is that it is a series of essays illustrated by the author with verbal sketches. This, however, is a superficial view, for in fact just the opposite is true. It is the illustrations that come first, and the so-called essay passages which follow from them. When Heinrich Heine wrote his *Harze Reise*, he was merely using his journey as a vehicle for conveying his ideas on life. With Sōseki, however, what he sees about him is of primary importance, and it is some object in his surroundings which provides the stimulus for one of his philosophical flights.

From *Kusa Makura* we are able to get a clearer insight into the mind of the author than from any of his other novels. There is no need to wonder whether such-and-such a character is meant to represent Sōseki or not, for here we have his thoughts and opinions set out plainly for all to see. If it is true that one can come to know a people through its literature, then I believe that *Kusa Makura* tells us more about the Japanese than any other book written since the beginning of the Meiji era.

Alan Turney
Tokyo, August 1964

◆ 1 ◆

Going up a mountain track, I fell to thinking.

Approach everything rationally, and you become harsh. Pole along in the stream of emotions, and you will be swept away by the current. Give free rein to your desires, and you become uncomfortably confined. It is not a very agreeable place to live, this world of ours.

When the unpleasantness increases, you want to draw yourself up to some place where life is easier. It is just at the point when you first realise that life will be no more agreeable no matter what heights you may attain, that a poem may be given birth, or a picture created.

The creation of this world is the work of neither god nor devil, but of the ordinary people around us; those who live opposite, and those next door, drifting here and there about their daily business. You may think this world created by ordinary people a horrible place in which to live, but where else is there? Even if there is somewhere else to go, it can only be a 'non-human' realm, and who knows but that such a world may not be even more hateful than this?

There is no escape from this world. If, therefore, you find life hard, there is nothing to be done but settle yourself as comfortably as you can during the unpleasant times, although you may only succeed in this for short periods, and thus make life's brief span bearable. It is here that the vocation of the artist comes into being, and here that the

painter receives his divine commission. Thank heaven for all those who in devious ways by their art, bring tranquillity to the world, and enrich men's hearts.

Strip off from the world all those cares and worries which make it an unpleasant place in which to live, and picture before you instead a world of graciousness. You now have music, a painting, or poetry, or sculpture. I would go farther, and say that it is not even necessary to make this vision a reality. Merely conjure up the image before your eyes, and poetry will burst into life and songs pour forth. Before even committing your thoughts to paper, you will feel the crystal tinkling, as of a tiny bell, well up within you; and the whole range of colours will of their own accord, and in all their brilliance, imprint themselves on your mind's eye, though your canvas stands on its easel, as yet untouched by the brush. It is enough that you are able to take this view of life, and see this decadent, sullied and vulgar world purified and beautiful in the camera of your innermost soul. Even the poet whose thoughts have never found expression in a single verse, or the painter who possesses no colours, and has never painted so much as a single square foot of canvas, can obtain salvation, and be delivered from earthly desires and passions. They can enter at will a world of undefiled purity, and throwing off the yoke of avarice and self interest, are able to build up a peerless and unequalled universe. Thus in all this, they are happier than the rich and famous; than any lord or prince that ever lived; happier indeed than all those on whom this vulgar world lavishes her affections.

After twenty years of life I realised that this is a world worth living in. At twenty five I saw that, just as light and darkness are but opposite sides of the same thing, so wherever the sunlight falls it must of necessity cast a shadow. Today, at thirty my thoughts are these: In the depths of joy dwells sorrow, and the greater the happiness

the greater the pain. Try to tear joy and sorrow apart, and you lose your hold on life. Try to cast them to one side, and the world crumbles. Money is important, but be that as it may, when it accumulates does it not become a worry which attacks you even in sleep? Love is a delight; yet should the delights of love, piling one upon another, begin to bear down on you, then you will yearn for those days long ago before you knew them. It is the shoulders of the state, the Cabinet, which are supporting the burden for the millions, its feet; and the onus of government weighs heavily upon them. Refrain from eating something particularly tasty, and you will feel you have missed something. Eat just a little, and you will leave the table with your appetite unappeased. Gorge yourself, and later you will feel uncomfortable

It was just as my meandering thoughts reached this point, that my right foot came down suddenly on the edge of a loose angular rock, and I slipped. To compensate for my left foot, which I had hastily shot out in an effort to keep my balance, the rest of me—dropped! Fortunately I came down on to a boulder about three feet across, and all that happened was that my colour-box, which I had been carrying slung from my shoulder, jerked forward from under my arm. Luckily no damage was done.

As I rose and looked around me, I noticed away off to the left of the track a towering peak shaped like an inverted bucket. It was completely covered from base to summit with dark-green foliage, but whether cryptomeria or cypress I was unable to tell.

Here and there among the greenery trail pale red patches of wild cherry in bloom, and overall hangs a haze so thick that it causes the colours to swim and blend, and makes it impossible to make out the gaps between trees and branches clearly. A little nearer is one bare mountain. It stands out sharply from its surroundings, and appears to be almost

close enough to touch. Its barren flank seems to have been sheered off by the axe of some colossus, and the angular, craggy rock-face plunges fantastically, straight down to the bottom of the valley far below. That one solitary tree that I can see there on the summit is a red pine I think. Even the patches of sky showing through the branches are clearly defined. About two hundred yards farther on, my path comes to an abrupt end, but looking up I see far above a figure wrapped in a red blanket moving down the mountain-side, and I wonder whether, if I climb, I will come out up there. This is a terrible road.

If it were only plain earth it would not take all that long, but imbedded in the ground are large stones. You can smooth the soil out flat, but the stones will stick up. You can break the stones into pieces, but not the rocks. There is nothing you can do about getting rid of the rocks. They sit atop the mound of broken earth unconquered, and with an almost contemptuous air of self assurance. There is nowhere here where Nature will yield us a road without a struggle. Thus since our opponent is so unaccommodating, and will not step aside, we must either climb over, or go round.

This would be no easy place to walk even if there were no rocks. As it is, the banks rise up high to left and right, and a hollow has been formed in the middle of the path. This hollow may perhaps be best described in terms of geometry. It is a triangle of about six feet in width, whose sides shelve steeply down to meet in a sharp angle, which runs right along the centre of the track. This is more like walking along the bed of a river than along a path. Since from the very beginning, however, I never intended to hurry on this trip, I will take my time, and deal with the innumerable twists and turns as I come to them.

Immediately below me a lark burst suddenly into song. But gaze down into the valley as I would, I could see no

sign of the bird; nor could I make out where he was singing. I could hear his voice clearly, but that was all. The ceaseless attack and vigour of his song made me feel that this vast limitless body of air was dashing backwards and forwards in a frantic effort to escape the unbearable irritation of a thousand flea-bites. That bird really did not stop even for an instant. It seemed that he would not be satisfied, unless he could sing his heart out incessantly day and night, throughout that idyllic springtime; not only sing, but go on climbing up and up for ever. There was no doubt, but that that was where the lark would die, up there among the clouds. Perhaps at the peak of his long climb, he would glide in among the drifting clouds, and there be lost for ever, with only his voice remaining, shrouded by the air.

The path swung sharply round a protruding corner of rock. A blind man would have gone headlong over the edge, but I managed, at some risk, to get past and work my way round to the right. There below me, I could see the rape-blossoms spread out like a carpet over the valley. Would a lark, I wondered, go plummeting down there?—No. Perhaps, I thought, he might come soaring up from those golden fields. Then I imagined two larks, the one diving and the other climbing, crossing each other's path in flight. It finally occurred to me that, whether diving, climbing, or crossing in flight, the vitality of the song would, in all probability, continue unabated.

In spring everything becomes drowsy. The cat forgets to chase the mouse, and men forget that they have debts. Sometimes, they even forget how to locate their own souls, and fall into a stupor. When, however, I gazed far out over that sea of rape-blossoms, I came to my senses. And when I heard the song of the lark, the mist cleared, and I found my soul again. It is not just with his throat that the lark sings, but with his whole being. Of all the creatures who

can give voice to the activity of their soul, there is none so vital, so alive, as the lark. Oh, this is real happiness. When you think thus, and reach such a pitch of happiness, that is poetry.

Suddenly, Shelley's song of the lark came into my head. I tried to recite it, but I could only remember two or three verses. These are a few of the lines from those verses:

We look before and after
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught,
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

However happy the poet may be, he just cannot pour out his joys in song with the same carefree and whole-hearted abandon as the lark. More obviously in Western poetry, but in Chinese poetry too, one often finds such phrases as 'countless bushels of sorrow'. It may well be that the poet's sorrow must be measured by the bushel, whereas that of the layman is not even great enough to be measured in pints. Perhaps, now I come to think about it, it is that since the poet is given to worrying more than the ordinary man, his senses have become much more acutely tuned. It is true that at times he experiences the most exquisite joy, but he also has far more than his fair share of immeasurable grief. Because of this, one should consider carefully before deciding to become a poet.

The path was level here for a short way. To the right lay a copse-covered hill, and to the left, as far as the eye could see, all was rape-blossom. Here and there I trod on dandelions, whose saw-toothed leaves stood up defiantly on all sides to defend the golden orb in the centre. I felt sorry that, being so engrossed in the sight of the rape-blossoms, I had stepped on the dandelions. However, looking back, I saw that the golden orbs were still nestling un-

disturbed among the protecting leaves. What a carefree existence! Once again I returned to my thoughts.

Perhaps sorrow is something which is inseparable from the poet, but when I listened to that lark singing, I felt not the slightest trace of pain or sadness; and looking at the rape-blossom I was only conscious of my heart leaping and dancing within me. The same was true with the dandelions, and the blossoming cherries, which had now passed out of sight. There in the mountains, close to the delights of Nature, everything you see and hear is a joy. It is a joy unspoiled by any real discomfort. Your legs may possibly ache, or you may feel the lack of something really good to eat, but that is all.

I wonder why this should be? I suppose the reason is that, looking at the landscape, it is as though you were looking at a picture unrolled before you, or reading a poem on a scroll. The whole area is yours, but since it is just like a painting or a poem, it never occurs to you to try and develop it, or make your fortune by running a railway line there from the city. You are free from any care or worry because you accept the fact that this scenery will help neither to fill your belly, nor add a penny to your salary, and are content to enjoy it just as scenery. This is the great charm of Nature, that it can in an instant, discipline men's hearts and minds, and removing all that is base, lead them into the pure unsullied world of poetry.

Objectively you may feel that the love of a man for his wife or his parents is beautiful, and that loyalty and patriotism are fine things. When, however, you yourself are actually involved with them, the violent flurry of pros and cons, advantages and disadvantages, will blind you to all beauty and splendour, and the poetry will be completely lost to you.

In order to appreciate the poetry, you must put yourself in the position of an onlooker, who being able to stand

well back, can really see what is happening. It is only from this position that a play or novel can be enjoyed, for here you are free from personal interests. You are only a poet while you are watching or reading, and are not actually involved.

Having said this, however, I must admit that most plays and novels are so full of suffering, anger, quarrelling and crying, that even the onlooker cannot keep emotion at arm's length. He finds himself, at some point or other, drawn in, and in his turn suffers, gets annoyed, feels quarrelsome and cries. At such times, the only advantage of his position is that he is unaffected by any feeling of greed, or desire for personal gain. However, the very fact that he is disinterested means that his other emotions will be much more intense than usual. This is almost unbearable!

After thirty years of life in this world of ours, I have had more than enough of the suffering, anger, belligerence and sadness which are ever present; and I find it very trying to be subjected to repeated doses of stimulants designed to evoke these emotions when I go to the theatre, or read a novel. I want a poem which abandons the commonplace, and lifts me, at least for a short time, above the dust and grime of the workaday world; not one which rouses my passions to an even greater pitch than usual. There are no plays, however great, which are divorced from emotion, and few novels in which considerations of right and wrong play no part. The trade-mark of the majority of playwrights and novelists is their inability to take even one step out of this world. Western poets in particular take human nature as their corner stone, and so are oblivious to the existence of the realm of pure poetry. Consequently, when they reach its borders, they come to a halt, because they are unaware that anything lies beyond. They are content to deal merely in such commodities as sympathy, love, justice and freedom, all of which may be found in that

transient bazaar which we call life. Even the most poetic of them is so busy dashing here and there about his daily business, that he can never even find time to forget about the next bill he will have to pay. No wonder Shelley heaved a sigh when he heard the song of the lark.

Happily, oriental poets have on occasion gained sufficient insight to enable them to enter the realm of pure poetry.

Beneath the Eastern hedge I choose a chrysanthemum,¹
And my gaze wanders slowly to the Southern hills.

Only two lines, but reading them, one is sharply aware of how completely the poet has succeeded in breaking free from this stifling world. There is no girl next door peeping over the fence; nor is there a dear friend living far away across the hills. He is above such things. Having allowed all consideration of advantage and disadvantage, profit and loss to drain from him, he has attained a pure state of mind.

Seated alone, cloistered amidst bamboo²
I pluck the strings;
And from my harp
The lingering notes follow leisurely away.
Into the dim and unfrequented depths
Comes bright moonlight filtering through the leaves.

Within the space of these few short lines, a whole new world has been created. Entering this world is not at all like entering that of such popular novels as *Hototogisu*³ and *Konjiki Yasha*.⁴ It is like falling into a sound sleep, and escaping from the wearying round of steamers, trains, rights, duties, morals and etiquette.

This type of poetry, which is remote from the world and

1 By the Chinese poet Tao Yuan-ming.

2 By the Chinese poet Wang Wei.

3 & 4 Popular novels written by two of Sōseki's contemporaries. *Hototogisu* was written by Tokutomi Roka, and *Konjiki Yasha* by Ozaki Kōyō. Both novels deal with emotions and human relationships.

its cares, is as essential as sleep in helping us to stand the pace of twentieth-century life. Unfortunately, however, all the modern poets, and their readers too for that matter, are so enamoured of Western writers, that they seem unable to take a boat and drift leisurely to the realm of pure poetry. I am not really a poet by profession, so it is not my intention to preach to modern society, in the hope of obtaining converts to the kind of life led by Wang Wei and Tao Yuan-ming. Suffice it to say that, in my opinion, the inspiration to be gained from their works is a far more effective antidote to the hustle and bustle of modern living than theatricals and dance-parties. Moreover, this type of poetry appears to me to be more palatable than *Faust* or *Hamlet*. This is the sole reason why in spring I trudge all alone along mountain tracks with my colour-box and tripod slung from my shoulder. I long to absorb straight from Nature some of the atmosphere of Yuan-ming's and Wang Wei's world; and, if only for a brief period, wander at will through a land which is completely detached from feelings and emotions. This is a peculiarity of mine.

Of course, I am only human. Therefore, however dear to me this sublime detachment from the world may be, there is a limit to how much of it I can stand at any one time. I do not suppose that even Tao Yuan-ming gazed continuously at the Southern hills year in and year out. Nor can I imagine Wang Wei sleeping in his beloved bamboo grove without a mosquito net. In all probability Tao sold any chrysanthemums he did not need to a florist, and Wang made money out of the government by selling bamboo shoots to the local greengrocer. That is the sort of person I am. However much I may be enthralled by the lark and the rape blossoms, I am still mortal enough to have no desire to camp out in the middle of the mountains.

One meets other people even in a place such as this; an

old man with his kimono tucked up at the back, and a headscarf knotted under his chin; a young girl in a red skirt; sometimes one even comes across a horse with his longer than human face. Even up here several hundred feet above sea level, surrounded by thousands of cypress trees, the air is still tainted by the smell of humanity. No, tainted is not the right word, for I am crossing this mountain in the hope of being able to spend the night in an inn at the hot-spring resort of Nakoi.

The same object may appear entirely different, just depending upon where you stand. Leonardo da Vinci once said to a pupil: 'Listen to that bell ringing. There is only one bell, but it may be heard in an infinite number of ways.'

Since our judgment of people is purely subjective, opinions about the same person, man or woman, may differ vastly. Anyway, since my object on coming on this journey was to rise above emotions, and to view things dispassionately, I am sure that people appear different to me now than they did when I lived right on top of them, in a cramped back street of that unstable and wretched city—the world of men. Even if I cannot be completely objective, then at least my feelings should be no more intense than if I were watching a Noh¹ play. At times even the Noh can be sentimental. Can anyone guarantee that he will not be moved to tears by *Shichikiochi*² or *Sumidagawa*²? The Noh, however, is three-tenths real emotion, and seven-tenths technique. Its greatness and charm do not lie in a skilful representation of emotions and human relationships exactly as they actually are, but rather in the fact that it takes plain reality, and clothing it as it were with layer after layer of art, produces a leisurely, almost lethargic pattern of behaviour, which is to be found nowhere in real life.

¹ The Noh is very elegant classical Japanese drama, incorporating both music and dancing.

² Two Noh plays.

I wonder how it would be if, while I am on this short journey, I were to regard events as though they were part of the action of a Noh play, and the people I meet merely as if they were actors. Since this trip is concerned fundamentally with poetry, I should like to take the opportunity of getting near to the Noh atmosphere, by curbing my emotions as much as possible, even though I know I cannot disregard them entirely. The 'Southern hills' and the 'bamboo grove', the skylark and the rape-blossom possess a character all their own, which is vastly different from that of humanity. Nevertheless, I should like, as nearly as possible, to view people from the same standpoint as I view the world of pure poetry. Bassho¹ found even the sight of a horse urinating near his pillow elegant enough to write a Hokku² about. I too from now on will regard everyone I meet, farmer, tradesman, village clerk, old man and old woman alike, as no more than a component feature of the overall canvas of Nature. I know they are different from figures in a painting, since each one I suppose will act and behave as he or she sees fit. However, I think it is just plain vulgar the way the average novelist probes the whys and wherefores of his characters' behaviour, tries to see into the workings of their minds, and pries into their daily troubles. Even if the people move it will not trouble me, for I shall just think of them as moving about in a picture; and figures in a picture, however much they may move, are confined within two dimensions. If of course you allow yourself to think that they are projected into the third dimension, then complications arise, for you will find them jostling you, and once again you will be forced to consider your clash of interests. It is clearly impossible for anyone in such a situation to view things aesthetically. From now on I am

¹ Bassho Matsuo (1644-1694) is one of Japan's greatest writers. He is particularly famous for his Hokku (Haiku) poems.

² The Hokku (Haiku) is a poem of seventeen syllables.

going to observe all those I meet objectively. In this way I shall avoid any undue emotional current being generated between us, and so, however animated the other person's actions may be, they will not easily affect me. In short, it will be just like standing in front of a picture, watching painted figures rush about excitedly. Three feet away from the canvas you can look at it calmly, for there is no danger of becoming involved. To put it another way, you are not robbed of your faculties by considerations of self interest, and are therefore able to devote all your energies to observing the movements of the figures from an artistic point of view. This means that you are able to give your undivided attention to judging what is, and what is not beautiful.

It was just as I had come to this conclusion, that I glanced up and saw that the sky looked threatening. I felt as though the uncertain clouds were weighing down right on top of me. Suddenly, however, almost without my noticing, they spread out, turning the whole sky as far as I could see into a rolling, awe-inspiring sea of cloud, from which there began to fall a steady drizzle of spring rain. I had long since left the rape-blossom behind, and was now walking between two mountains. However, I was unable to tell how far away they were, for the rain was so fine, that it might have almost been taken for a mist. From time to time a gust of wind would part the high curtain of cloud, revealing off to the right a dark-grey ridge of mountain. There seemed to be a range of mountains running along there just across the valley. Immediately to my left I could see the foot of another mountain, and at times within the filmy depths of haze, shadowy shapes of what might have been pine trees showed themselves, only to hide again in an instant. Whether it was the rain or the trees that was moving, or whether the whole thing was merely the unreal wavering of a dream, I did not know. Whatever it was, it struck me as most unusual and wonderful.

The road here grew unexpectedly wide, and since it was also quite level, walking was not the back-breaking business it had been before. This was just as well, for not having come prepared for rain, I should have to hurry. The rain was just beginning to fall in drops from my hat, when, about ten or twelve yards ahead, I heard the jingling of small bells, and from out of the blackness the shape of a pack-horse driver materialized.

‘I suppose you don’t happen to know anywhere to stay around here, do you?’

‘There’s a tea-house just over a mile up the road. You’ve got pretty wet, haven’t you?’

Still another mile to go! I looked back, watching the pack-horse driver, like some figure on a flickering magic lantern screen, melting gradually away into the rain, until finally he disappeared completely.

The raindrops, which had before been like chaff flying in the wind, were now getting larger and longer, and I was able to see each separate shaft clearly. My haori¹ of course was saturated, and the rainwater, which had soaked right through to my underclothes, had become tepid with the heat of my body. I felt really wretched, and so pulling my hat resolutely down over one eye, I set off at a brisk pace.

When I think of it as happening to somebody else, it seems that the idea of me soaked to the skin, surrounded by countless driving streaks of silver, and moving through a vast grey expanse, would make an admirable poem. Only when I completely forget my material existence, and view myself from a purely objective standpoint, can I, as a figure in a painting, blend into the beautiful harmony of my natural surroundings. The moment, however, I feel annoyed because of the rain, or miserable because my legs are weary with walking, then I have already ceased to be a character

¹ An outer coat.

in a poem, or a figure in a painting, and I revert to the uncomprehending, insensitive man in the street I was before. I am then even blind to the elegance of the fleeting clouds; unable even to feel any bond of sympathy with a falling petal or the cry of a bird, much less appreciate the great beauty in the image of myself, completely alone, walking through the mountains in spring.

At first I had pulled my hat down over one eye and walked briskly. Later I gazed down fixedly at my feet. Finally, very subdued, I hunched my shoulders and took one dejected step after another. On all sides the wind shook the tree-tops, hurrying a solitary figure on his way. I felt that I had been carried rather too far in the direction of detachment from humanity!

◆ 2 ◆

‘Anybody there?’ I called, but there was no reply.

Standing under the eaves, I peeped inside. The smoke-stained and grimy shōji¹ at the back of the shop had been closed, so I was unable to see into the room which lay beyond. Five or six pairs of melancholy-looking straw sandals hanging from the sloping roof, swung listlessly to and fro. Below these stood three solitary boxes of cheap cakes, around which were scattered a few small coins.

‘Anybody there?’ I called again. In a corner of the earth floor inside the doorway stood a hand-mill, on which were perched a cock and a hen, their feathers puffed out in sleep. Startled by the sound of my voice, they awoke and set up an excited clucking. Just in front of the threshold there was an earthen cooking furnace, half discoloured by the rain which had been falling a little while ago. On this had been placed a tea-kettle so blackened with smoke that I was unable to tell if it was earthen or silver. I was glad to see that there was a fire in the furnace.

Again there was no answer, but nevertheless I went inside and sat down on a bench. This made the chickens beat their wings and hop from the hand-mill up on to the matted floor of the shop itself. Had it not been for the screens, they might well have gone right through into the inner room. The cock crowed lustily, and to this the hen added her

¹ Translucent paper sliding screens.

reedy cackling, for all the world as though they thought I were a fox or a dog. A tobacco-tray, about the size of a two-litre rice measure, had been set on a low table, and in it a coil of incense was smouldering very slowly, heedless of the passage of time. The effect of this was to give an air of tranquillity to the room. The rain was gradually easing off.

Presently I heard footsteps in the back room. Then the smoke-stained shōji slid back, and an old woman came out.

I had known all along that someone must eventually come. It was obvious with the fire alight, coins scattered around the cake boxes, and the incense smouldering leisurely. Nevertheless, this was certainly different from Tokyo if you could leave a shop wide open and unattended without any qualms. Somehow I could not quite believe that coming into a shop and sitting down on a bench uninvited, and then waiting and waiting for ages really belonged to the twentieth century. I was thoroughly enjoying this remoteness from the everyday world, but more than this, I found the old woman's face charming.

Two or three years ago I went to see *Takasago* at the Hosho Noh theatre. I remember thinking at the time that it was like looking at some beautiful painting which had been brought to life. The old man in the play, carrying a broom over his shoulder, took five or six paces along the hashigakari¹, and very slowly and sedately turning his back on the audience, came face to face with the old woman. To this day I can still see their postures as they stood there facing one another. From where I was sitting I was able to see the old woman almost full-face, and I thought how beautiful she looked. In that instant her features were indelibly imprinted on my mind. The likeness between the

¹ A raised passage covered with a roof, which runs obliquely through the auditorium from the dressing rooms and wings to the stage proper. It is along this that the actors make their entrances and exits.

old woman in the tea-shop and that image in my mind was so striking that it quite took my breath away.

'Excuse me sitting down uninvited like this, Obahsan¹.'

'Not at all. I had no idea that anyone had come in.'

'It certainly did rain, didn't it?'

'Yes, it's terrible weather. It must have been very unpleasant for you out there. Heavens, you're soaked through. I'll light a fire so you can dry yourself.'

'If you would just be kind enough to make up the furnace a little, the heat will reach me over here, and I'll soon get dry. I've got rather cold sitting here.'

Certainly I'll make it up right away. And I'll bring you a cup of tea too.'

So saying, she stood up and shooed the chickens away. With much clucking they hopped from the grubby dark-brown matting straight down into the boxes of cheap cakes, and then flew out into the street, the cock letting his droppings fall on the cakes as he went.

'Here we are, a nice cup of tea.'

In no time at all the old woman had returned carrying a cup of tea on a shallow tray. The tea had been stewed for so long that it was almost black, but I could just make out a cluster of three plum-blossoms painted roughly with one stroke of the brush on the bottom of the cup.

'Would you like a cake?'

She brought over some of the assorted cakes on which the chickens had walked. I scrutinized them carefully to make sure there were no droppings on them, but the droppings had been left behind in the box.

Over her sleeveless top-coat, the old woman tied a cord round her shoulders and under her arms to keep the sleeves of her kimono back, and squatted down by the furnace. I

¹ Obahsan literally means grandmother, but is often used to any elderly woman as a friendly or affectionate term.

took my sketch-book out from inside my kimono, and began to draw her side-face as we talked.

'It's nice and peaceful here, isn't it?'

'Yes. As you can see it's just a small mountain village.'

'Are there any uguisu¹ here?'

'Oh yes, you can hear them singing almost every day—Even in summer.'

'I'd love to hear them. I never get the chance, and that makes me want to all the more.'

'It's a pity you came today. That rain a while ago has driven them all away.'

Just then there was a crackling, and the glowing embers sent out a sudden rush of hot air around the furnace.

'Why don't you come nearer? You must be absolutely frozen.'

I looked up and saw the column of blue smoke break against the eaves, and then thin out until only a few small wreathes were left weaving themselves in and out of the rafters.

'Oh this is wonderful. Thanks to you I'm coming to life again.'

'The weather's clearing up. Look, you can see the Tengu² rock over there.'

Growing impatient with the indecision of the overcast spring sky, the storm had resolutely swept down, completely clearing away the cloud from an angle of the mountain which lay before us. It was at this that the old woman was pointing. There, rising majestically into the air, was a tall tapering rock like a pillar from which large chips have been cut. This apparently was the Tengu rock. I gazed first at the

¹ A Japanese bird of the nightingale family.

² In Japanese mythology the Tengu is a goblin with a long pointed nose.

mountain, and then at the old woman. Finally, I looked half at one and half at the other, comparing them.

As an artist, I have only two impressions of old women's faces in my mind. The first is that of the old woman in *Takasago*, and the second that of the mountain witch drawn by Rosetsu. Having seen Rosetsu's picture, my conception of an old woman was as a rather weird creature; a person to be seen against a background of autumn-tinted leaves, or in a setting of cold moonlight. Thus when I saw the Noh play at the Hosho theatre, I was astonished that an old woman could have such gentle features. Unfortunately, I do not think I ever heard who carved that mask, but whoever it was, was undoubtedly an expert. Depicted in such a way even an old woman looks handsome, and has an air of gentle kindness. Such a person would not be out of place on a gold-leafed screen, and is not at all inconsistent with the idea of soft spring breezes and cherry-blossom. At all events, as I looked at the old woman standing beside me, her arms bare, her back straight, one hand shading her eyes and the other pointing away off into the distance, I thought how much more in keeping she was with the scenery of a mountain track in springtime, than with the Tengu rock. I picked up my book and began to sketch her. Just before I had finished, however, her pose broke. Feeling rather awkward, and not quite knowing what to do with my hands, I held my book to the fire to dry.

'You look very healthy Obahsan, I must say.'

'Yes, I'm glad to say I'm still quite active. I sew, and spin hemp, and I grind the flour for the dumplings.'

I wished suddenly that I could see her turning the millstone, but since I could scarcely make such a request, I changed the subject.

'I believe it's less than two and a half miles to Nakoi from here, isn't it?'

'Yes, I would say it's just about two miles. Are you going

to the hot-spring there, sir?’

‘If it isn’t too crowded I may stay there. That is if I feel in the mood.’

‘Well, it won’t be too crowded. Since the beginning of the war¹ people have gradually stopped going there. It’s just like a private house now.’

‘That’s wonderful. Oh, but perhaps they won’t let me stay there.’

‘Yes they will. You can stay there any time if you ask.’

‘There’s only the one inn there, isn’t there?’

‘Yes, just ask for Shioda, and you’ll soon find it. He’s the richest man in the village. In fact, it’s difficult to say whether the place is really a hot-spring resort, or just his country house.’

‘Well in that case, I don’t suppose he minds if he never has any guests.’

‘Will this be your first time at the hot-spring?’

‘No, I was there once before for a while, a long time ago.’

At this point we both lapsed into silence. I picked up my book again, and was quietly sketching the chickens, when the steady jingling of horse-bells reached my ears. Indeed it penetrated them to the very depths. This jingling had a rhythm all its own, and the monotonous regularity of it beat round and round in my head. I felt just as though the hand-mill which stood next to me were lulling me into a dream with its rhythmic grinding. I stopped sketching the chickens, and wrote on the same page:

It is spring,
And the bells of packhorses invade Inen’s² ears
Carried on the breeze.

Since I had first started up the mountain I had met five

¹ The Russo-Japanese war.

² Inen was a disciple of Basshō, who loved the tranquillity of nature.

or six horses. Every one of those five or six horses had worn trappings fitted with jingling bells! They were like creatures from some other world.

Presently, as I sat there beside the mountain path, beneath a sky already dimmed by the early evening of spring, the gentle and soothing sound of a packhorse driver's song broke through into my reverie. It was a song full of tenderness and compassion, yet somewhere locked in the depths there pulsed an irrepressible light-heartedness. I could not get it out of my head that the voice was coming from a figure in a painting. I scrawled the following lines slantwise across the page.

Swifter than the deer, a song comes on ahead through
the spring rain.

Leaving the packhorse to follow with his tinkling bells.

When I read this poem through, however, I had the feeling that it had not been written by me at all.

'Ah, here comes someone else,' said the old woman half to herself.

Since there was only the one road, everybody, both coming and going, passed close enough to the tea-house to be seen. Each one of those five or six horses I had met recently must, with the jingling of its bells, have made the old woman think, 'Ah, here comes someone else,' only to pass on its way up or down the mountain. In that tiny village, where if you did not like flowers there was nowhere to walk, she had lived with the loneliness of the track through one spring after another. I wondered for just how long she had been living there, counting the times she heard the bells day in day out, her hair growing whiter with each succeeding year. I turned to the next page and wrote :

The songs of packhorse drivers tell the passing days,
And Spring, white hair untinted, draws on to its end.

But this did not express my feelings properly. It probably needed a little more planning. I sat there gazing fixedly at the point of my pencil, trying to compress into seventeen syllables¹ the ideas of white hair, a great number of years, and the songs of the packhorse drivers in addition to the idea of spring, when the packhorse driver whose song had reached me earlier appeared in person in front of the shop, and came to a halt.

'Hello there!' he said in a loud voice.

'Why it's Gen. Are you on your way to town again?'

'Yes. If there's anything you need I'll be glad to bring it up for you.'

'Let me see. If you're going through Koji-chō, would you get me a holy tablet from the Reiganji temple for my daughter?'

'Yes, I'll get that for you. Just the one?—Your girl Aki must be happy, having married so well, eh Obasan²?'

'Well, she has no particular worries at the moment. Perhaps you could say she's happy.'

'Of course she's happy. Just compare her with that young lady down in Nakoi.'

'Yes, I feel really sorry for her. And she's so talented and beautiful too. Are things any better these days?'

'No, just the same.'

'Oh, what a shame,' said the old woman heaving a sigh.

'Yes, it's a shame all right,' agreed Gen stroking his horse's nose.

Clusters of raindrops still rested, after their long descent, on the leaves and blossoms among the thickly interwoven branches of the wild cherry tree outside. Just then, however, a passing gust of wind gave them a push, and unable to keep their balance, they came tumbling down in a

¹ Sōseki was writing a Hokku (Haiku).

² Obasan literally means aunt, but is used in the same way as Obahsan.

shower from their temporary nest. This startled the horse, and he tossed his long mane up and down. The sound of Gen's scolding voice saying, 'Whoa there;' mingled with the jingling of the horse's bells, roused me from my thoughts. The old woman was speaking.

'Gen, sometimes I still picture her now as she was on her wedding day, with her wide flowing sleeves, and her hair dressed up in a high Shimada¹ style. She was sitting on her horse, and'

'Yes that's right, we didn't come by boat, we came on horseback, didn't we Obasan?'

'Yes, and as her horse was standing under that cherry tree, some blossom fluttered down flecking her hair over which she had taken so much trouble.'

Once again I opened my sketch book. Such a scene as the old woman had described would make an excellent subject for either a picture or a poem. I could visualize her as she was on that day, and with a look of satisfaction I wrote:

Wise is the bride who goes horseback
After the blossom has all fallen from the bough.

Strangely enough, although I had a clear impression of the clothes, the hair-style, the horse and the cherry tree, the one thing I just could not picture was the bride's face. I was searching my mind for a face that would fit, trying now one type, now another, when suddenly the face of Millais' Ophelia came to me, and slipped neatly into place beneath the high 'Shimada' hair-style. 'No, that's no good,' I thought, and immediately allowed my carefully built up picture to disintegrate. The clothes, the hair-style, the horse and the cherry tree, all completely disappeared in an instant from the scene I had created. Somewhere deep within me,

¹ This is a high and very elaborate style worn particularly by brides. It somewhat resembles the style of the 'Geisha'.

however, the misty figure of Ophelia being carried along by the stream, her hands folded in prayer, remained. It was as indestructable as a cloud of smoke which, when you beat at it with a fan, merely thins and becomes less palpable. Somehow it gave me the sort of strange and wonderful feeling as if I had been watching a long-tailed comet streaking across the sky.

'Well,' said Gen, 'if you'll excuse me I'll be on my way.'

'Call in on your way back. After that terrible downpour it must be very difficult down there along that part where the track bends so much.'

'Yes, it is rather hard going,' said Gen as he began to walk off followed by his horse.

There go those bells again.

'Does he come from Nakoi,' I asked.

'Yes, that's Gembei.'

'Who was the bride he brought on horseback through the mountain pass?'

'Shioda's daughter. He mounted her on his grey, and led her down to the town at the time of her marriage.—My, how time flies. That was, let me see, five years ago.'

Those who lament their white hair only when confronted with it in a mirror are of a happy breed, but far more of a sage was that old woman who, merely by counting the passage of five years on her fingers, could appreciate how that consuming disease, time, presses on relentlessly.

'She must have been very beautiful,' I said, 'I wish I'd been here to see her.'

'Ha, ha, ha. You can still see her now. If you stay at the hot-spring resort, she's bound to come out to welcome you.'

'Is she still in the village then? It would be wonderful if she were still wearing those long billowing sleeves, and had her hair done up in a high "Shimada" style'

'Well, perhaps she'll dress up for you. Ask her and see.'

I thought this most unlikely, but was surprised to find

that the old woman was serious. This journey, on which I was trying to detach myself from emotion, would not have been very interesting had this sort of thing not occurred.

'Shioda's daughter is so much like the maid of Nagara,' continued the old woman.

'In looks, you mean?'

'Oh no, I mean the course of their lives.'

'Really? Who is this maid of Nagara?'

'Well, once upon a time, so they say, there lived in this village a girl whom men called the maid of Nagara. She was the daughter of a very rich man, and was of great beauty.'

'Go on.'

'As fate would have it, however, two men fell in love with her at the same time.'

'I see.'

'She could rest neither night nor day worrying whether to give her heart to the man called Sasada or to Sasabe. Eventually, in anguish at not being able to decide, she cast herself into the Fuchi river, and put an end to her life. Just before her death she composed this poem

From leaves of autumn flushed with love,
A pearl of dew shakes free
And falls to shatter on the earth beneath.
So too must I, to flee Love's stifling folds
Drop from the world.

I had little thought when I arrived at that small mountain village, to meet an old woman such as this, and to hear from her such a charming tale, told with such old-fashioned elegance.

'About six hundred yards down the hill, going East from here, is a five-storied pagoda quite near to the track. That's the tomb of the maid of Nagara. You should go and have a look at it on your way down to Nakoi.'

I made up my mind that I would do this.

'Shioda's daughter had the misfortune to have two men in love with her at the same time too,' said the old woman continuing her story. 'One was a man she had met while she was studying in Kyoto, and the other was the richest man in the castle town near here.'

'Really? Which one did she choose?'

'Well herself she undoubtedly wanted to marry the man in Kyoto, but for various reasons her father was against it, and made her marry the other one.'

'Well, at least she escaped having to throw herself in the river.'

'Yes, but although her husband thought her beautiful, charming and talented, and paid her every attention, somehow things did not go very well because she had been forced into the marriage in the first place. This state of affairs worried her parents very much. About this time the war broke out, and the bank for which her husband worked was ruined and had to close down. Soon after that she went back to live with her father, and since that time people have been saying what a callous, unfeeling woman she is. She used to be such a retiring, gentle girl, but lately she's become quite spirited and wild. Every time Gembei comes up here, he says how worried he is about her . . .'

I knew if I listened to any more my illusions would be spoiled. I had managed by degrees to reach an enchanted land from which I could look down on the world with complete detachment, but I felt now as though someone was demanding that I return the cloak of immortality. If, having laboriously fought every inch of the way up that steep and twisting track, I were to be foolish enough to allow myself to be dragged back down to the common everyday world, the whole point of my leaving home suddenly and wandering off like this would be lost. It is all very well to have a gossip and a chat, but you reach a point when you feel as though the smell of this wretched and unsavoury world

were seeping into you through the pores of your skin, and your whole body feels heavy with dirt.

‘There’s just the one track leading straight the way down to Nakoi, isn’t there Obahsan?’ I asked standing up, and throwing a silver ten sen coin down on to the table with a clatter.

‘If you turn off to the right just past the Nagara pagoda, and go down that way, it will save you about half a mile. The road’s bad, but that won’t worry a young man like you.— This is more than enough for the tea, thank you very much.— Mind how you go.’

◆ 3 ◆

I had a most unusual experience that first night at Shioda's. It was about eight o'clock when I arrived, and so I was unable to see what sort of house it was, or the layout of the garden. In fact it was so dark that I could not even tell which was East and which was West. I was hauled along a sort of winding corridor, and eventually shown into a small room about twelve feet by nine. This was not at all as I had remembered the place from the last time I was there. I had had my supper and a bath, and was sitting in my room drinking tea, when a young girl came in, and asked if it was all right to make the bed.

What struck me as rather odd was that the girl who had ushered me in when I had arrived, the girl who had served supper and shown me the way to the bathroom, and the girl who was now taking the trouble to make my bed for me, were all one and the same. She had, moreover, scarcely said a word the whole time. I do not mean to imply by this, however, that she was just a solid country lass.

She had tied the red obi¹ which was around her waist with a simplicity which suggested a young girl's indifference as to whether or not it enhanced her charms. Carrying an old-fashioned taper in her hand, she had led me to the bath-house now this way now that, around bend after bend along what appeared to be passageways, and down flights of

¹ A wide sash often knotted intricately at the back.

stairs. In front of me all the time were that same red obi and that same taper, and it seemed as though we were going along the same passage and down the same staircase again and again. Already I had the feeling of being a painted figure moving about on a canvas.

When she had come to serve supper, she had apologised for putting me in one of the family rooms, but had said that since nobody had been there recently, the guest rooms had not been dusted. Now, having made my bed, she wished me good night, and went out of the room. Her voice was certainly human enough, but in spite of this, in the silence that followed, after I had heard her footsteps gradually receding along those winding corridors and down those flights of stairs, I suddenly had the uncanny impression that there was not a living soul in the whole place.

Only once before had I ever had such an experience. A long time ago I went from Tateyama right across the province of Boshu to the Pacific coast, and then following the coastline I walked from Kazusa to Chosi. One evening during the trip I stopped somewhere and asked if I could put up there for the night. I say somewhere because I can no longer remember the name of the inn, or whereabouts it was. In fact I am not even sure that it was an inn at all. It was a large high house in which two women lived all alone. In reply to my request to stay the night, the elder of the two said, 'Certainly,' and the younger one said, 'This way, please.' She led me to the centre of the house past one spacious room after another, each of which was in a state of dilapidation and disrepair. The ground floor in this part of the house was built on a split level, and I had to go up three steps to get to my room. Just as I was about to go from the passageway into the room, a clump of bamboo growing slantwise under the eaves was caught by the evening breeze, and brushed first against my shoulders, and then up the back of my neck. A shiver of fear ran through me.

The floor boards of the verandah were already badly decayed, and I remarked that next year the shoots would push their way through, and the room would be alive with bamboo. The young woman gave a broad grin, but went out without saying a word.

That night I was unable to sleep because of the bamboo rustling so near to where my bed was. I opened the shōji, and in the bright summer moonlight allowed my gaze to wander over the grass-grown expanse of the garden which, unhindered by fence or wall, ran right down to an overgrown bank. Beyond this the ocean roared, and its large breakers rolled in to threaten the security of the world of men. I could not close my eyes all night, but lay in my ineffective mosquito net tense and watchful until the dawn. This, I thought, might well be a scene from some story book.

Since that time I had been on many trips, but not until now on my first night in Nakoi, had I felt like that again.

I was lying dozing in bed when, opening my eyes, I happened to see high up on the wall a scroll in a red-lacquered frame. Even lying on my back as I was, I could read clearly the Chinese characters written on it. They said :

Bamboo sweeps across the stairs,
But no dust rises
For 'tis but a shadow.

It was signed 'Daitetsu'. I am by no means a connoisseur of art, but I have always loved the style of calligraphy of Takaizumi who was a priest of the Obaku sect.¹ Ogen, Sokuhi and Mokuan all have their good points too, but Takaizumi's writing is the boldest and most elegant of all. Looking at these characters on the scroll, I was certain that they had been written by Takaizumi, because of the light and shade in the strokes, and because of the movement of

¹ A part of the Zen sect of Buddhism.

the brush. But the signature 'Daitetsu' showed that in fact I was mistaken. Perhaps, I thought, Daitetsu had also been a priest of the Obaku sect. If this were so, however, I could not account for the fact that the paper looked so extraordinarily new. Yes, there was no doubt about it, this scroll had been written very recently.

Looking sideways, my eyes lighted on a picture of a crane by Jakuchu hanging in an alcove. When I had first entered the room my professional instinct had told me immediately that this was a masterpiece. Most of Jakuchu's pictures are full of the most delicate colours, but this crane had been painted with one stroke of the brush, making no concession to popular taste. The way in which the egg-shaped body perched lightly on the one slender leg on which the crane was standing, showed that the artist had painted this to suit himself. His light-heartedness and disregard for convention were expressed right down to the tip of the bird's beak. Next to the alcove was a simple arrangement of shelves, and then an ordinary cupboard. I wondered what was in there.

I began to drift gently into sleep and into dreams.

There was the maid of Nagara with her long billowing sleeves, riding a white horse through a mountain-pass, when out leapt the two men Sasada and Sasabe, and each tried to drag her off. Suddenly the girl turned into Ophelia; first climbing out along the branch of a willow, and then being carried away by the stream, singing in a beautiful voice. Thinking to save her, I grabbed a long pole and ran after her along the shore of Mukōjima.¹ She did not seem in the least unhappy, but smiling and singing drifted with the current down to wherever it would take her. I put the pole on my shoulder, and yelled, 'Hey, come back! Come back!'

¹ An island near Tokyo.

At this point I awoke to find that I was damp with perspiration under the arms. What a strange conglomeration of the poetic and commonplace that dream had been, I thought. Long ago during the Sung dynasty in China a Buddhist priest named Ta Hui said that having attained a state of supreme enlightenment, there was nothing he could not do if once he set his mind to it. Nevertheless, he was a victim of mundane thoughts in his dreams, and for a long time this caused him a great deal of suffering. I can quite imagine how he felt. It must have seemed to a man who had devoted his whole life to the arts, that not to be able to dream beautiful dreams was a sign of still being shackled by the world. I felt that most of my last dream was material for neither a picture nor a poem. Turning over in bed to try to get to sleep again, I saw that the moon was now shining on the shōji, casting on them oblique shadows of two or three branches of the tree outside. What a beautifully fresh and crisp spring night it was.

I thought that it was perhaps just my fancy, but I had the feeling that somebody was singing softly. I strained my ears to try and determine whether a song had broken out of my dreams into reality, or whether this was a real voice which, because of my drowsiness, seemed to have been drawn into the obscurity of some distant land of dreams. Yes, somebody was definitely singing. The voice was undeniably thin and low, but nevertheless there it was, a gentle pulse rippling through the spring night which was all but asleep. The strange thing is, however, not that I heard the tune, but that when I listened for the words they came to me clearly, although there was no reason why they should have done, since they were not being sung anywhere near where I was sleeping. They were the words of the maid of Nagara's song, and seemed to be repeated over and over again.

From leaves of autumn flushed with love,
A pearl of dew shakes free

And falls to shatter on the earth beneath.
So too must I, to flee Love's stifling folds,
Drop from the world.

The voice had at first sounded near the verandah, but had now faded away into the distance. It is true that when something comes to an end suddenly it gives a feeling of suddenness, but you do not, however, feel the loss too keenly. When a voice ceases cleanly and decisively, it arouses a corresponding feeling in the listener. However, when faced with a phenomenon like this song, which can go on and on becoming fainter and fainter until eventually it disappears without your realising it, you find yourself breaking the minutes up into seconds and dividing the seconds into fractions, trying to pinpoint the exact time at which it will end; and all the time the pain caused by the anticipation of the loss grows more and more acute. It is like being with a sick man who appears ever on the verge of death but never dies, or watching a flame which gutters continually but never quite goes out. It throws your feelings into complete confusion, and drives out every thought save the one: Is this the end? Is this the end? There was something in this song which embodied all the regrets of mankind at the transience of spring in this ephemeral world.

Until now I had resisted the temptation to get up, and had lain quietly in bed, but as the voice went farther and farther away it seemed to call to me more and more strongly. I knew it was luring me on, but nevertheless I wanted to follow. The fainter it grew the more I longed to rush headlong after it, so that even if I could not be where it was, at least my ear could keep track of it, and it would not be lost to me completely. Just then, it seemed that the next instant, however pleadingly I might listen, there would be no response, and unable to bear it any longer, I slipped out of bed in spite of myself and slid back the shōji. As I did so the lower part of my body from the knees down was

bathed in moonlight, and the wavering shadow of a tree fell slantwise across me.

I did not of course notice such things as these immediately upon opening the shōji. I peered straight ahead of me in the direction from which my probing ear told me the voice was coming. There reclining against the trunk of what, judging by the blossoms, I took to be an aronia, was a dim shadow which appeared to shun all contact with the moonlight. I had my wits about me sufficiently to notice this, but before it could really register properly, the black shape moved sharply away to the right, crushing the shadows of blossom underfoot as it went. I had a fleeting glimpse of the tall smoothly gliding figure of a woman, before she was hidden from view by an angle of the overhanging roof.

I stood there in a daze with my hand still on the shōji, clad only in the yukata¹ that had been laid out for me. Presently, however, as I came to myself, it was born in upon me just how cold spring can be in the mountains. 'Well, that's that,' I thought, and climbing back in between the sheets, I fell to thinking. I pulled out my watch from under the pillow and looked at the time. Ten past one. I pushed it back under the pillow again and returned to my thoughts. What I had seen could not possibly have been an apparition. If not an apparition then, it must have been human; and if human it must have been a woman. Perhaps it was Shioda's daughter. If this were so, however, I did not consider it exactly the height of propriety that she, a woman divorced from her husband and now back living with her father, should, in the middle of the night, be out in the garden running as it did straight out on to the mountain-side. It was no good, I just could not sleep. I lay there listening to the tick-tick-tick-tick of the watch under my pillow.

¹ A light-weight kimono, sometimes used to sleep in.

I had never before been troubled by the ticking of a watch, but that night it sounded as though it were saying, 'Think-think-think-think, think-think-think-think,' and repeating the same piece of advice over and over again: 'Don't-sleep-don't-sleep, don't-sleep-don't-sleep.' Confound it!

Even something frightening may appear poetic if you stand back and regard it simply as a shape, and the eerie may make an excellent picture if you think of it as something which is completely independent of yourself. Exactly the same is true with disappointed love. Providing that you can divorce yourself from the pain of a broken heart and, conjuring up before you the tenderness, the sympathy, the despair and yes, even the very excess of pain itself, can view them objectively, then you have aesthetic, artistic material. There are those who purposely imagine their hearts to be broken, and crave for the pleasure they get from this form of emotional self-flagellation. The average person dismisses them as foolish, or even a little mad, but there is absolutely no difference, inasmuch as they both have an artistic standpoint, between the man who draws an outline of misery for himself and then leads his life within it, and him whose delight it is, to paint a landscape which never existed, and then to live in a potted universe of his own creation. This being the case then, there are many artists who, outside their everyday lives, in the role of artist are more foolish, more insane than the ordinary man. We tramp around the countryside in search of suitable material, continually complaining from morning till night of the hardships we have to undergo. When, however, we are describing our journey to someone else, we show not even the slightest hint of discontent. Not only do we tell of the interesting and pleasant things that happened to us, which is only natural, but we even babble on proudly about those hardships long ago of which at the time we complained so bitterly. This is not done with any conscious intent of deceiving or cheating

the listener. The inconsistency arises because while actually on the journey our feelings are just the same as those of anyone else. It is only afterwards when we tell our experiences to others that we revert to being artists. Putting it as a formula, I suppose you could say that an artist is a person who lives in the triangle which remains after the angle which we may call common sense has been removed from this four-cornered world.

Because of this lack of common sense, the artist is not afraid to approach those areas, both in the natural and in the man-made world, from which the average person shrinks back, and in consequence is able to find the most exquisite pearls of beauty. This portrayal of beauty where it is commonly believed that none exists, is generally called 'poetic embellishment'. It is nothing of the sort. There is, in fact, no need for embellishment, since in all things there lies beneath the surface an intrinsic beauty which is a reality, and which has always existed in all its brilliance merely waiting to be discovered. The reason why nobody appreciated the beauty there is in a steam engine before Turner depicted it on canvas, or realised that a ghost may be a thing of beauty until Ohkyo pointed it out to them, is three-fold. First, most people walk around in a stupor, half blinded by the mundane nature of their thoughts; secondly, the fetters and bars of mediocrity make this world a difficult place to break out of; and finally, the man in the street is constantly being goaded by worries of whether or not such and such will get him a good reputation, or whether a certain course of action will be to his advantage.

The shadow I had just seen, considered simply as a shadow and nothing more, was charged with poetry. So much so, that nobody who saw or heard it could possibly fail to appreciate the fact.—A hot-spring in a secluded village—the shadow of blossoms on a spring night—a voice singing softly in the moonlight—a figure flitting

through the shadows—every one of them a subject to delight any artist. Yet for all that I had engaged in an investigation which was quite out of keeping with the situation, and probed about pointlessly trying to find reasons for everything. I had been privileged to see the world of pure poetry, and had tried to apply to it the yardstick of logic. Moreover, all because of an unpleasant sensation, I had ridden roughshod over the rarest delicacy and elegance crushing them into the ground. My claim to be able to rise above human emotions then, was obviously nothing more than idle boasting. I should still have to discipline myself more before I could say with any confidence that I was a poet or an artist. I remember hearing once that long ago an Italian painter named Salvador Rosa was so set on studying the ways of robbers that he risked his life by joining a band of mountain brigands. It was a shameful thing if I, having wandered off suddenly from home with just a sketchbook tucked inside my kimono, did not have the same amount of resolution.

How, I wondered, could you regain a poetical frame of mind at times like this? I came to the conclusion that it could be done, if only you could take your feelings and place them in front of you, and then taking a pace back to give yourself the room to move that a bystander would have, examine them calmly and with complete honesty. The poet has an obligation to conduct a post-mortem on his own corpse and to make public his findings as to any disease he may encounter. There are many ways in which he may do this, but the best, and certainly the most convenient, is to try and compress every single incident which he comes across into the seventeen syllables of a Hokku. Since this is poetry in its handiest and most simple form, it may be readily composed while you are washing your face, or in the lavatory, or on a tram. When I say that it may be readily composed, I do not mean it in any derogatory sense.

On the contrary, I think it is a very praiseworthy quality, for it makes it easy for one to become a poet; and to become a poet is one way to achieve supreme enlightenment. No, the simpler it is, the greater its virtue. Let us assume that you are angry: you write about what it is that has made you lose your temper, and immediately it seems that it is someone else's anger that you are considering. Nobody can be angry and write a Hokku at the same time. Likewise, if you are crying, express your tears in seventeen syllables and you feel happy. No sooner are your thoughts down on paper, than all connection between you and the pain which caused you to cry is severed, and your only feeling is one of happiness that you are a man capable of shedding tears.

This was what I had always claimed, and now I was going to try and put my theory into practice. Lying in bed I started to write a series of Hokku about the night's happenings. Since this was to be a serious venture, I lay my sketchbook open next to the pillow so that I could write down the lines as soon as they came to me. I knew that if I did not do this my mind would go off at a tangent, and they would be lost.

Aronia blossoms decked with dew:
Fool would he be who shook the bough.

These were the lines I wrote first. Although when I read them through I did not find them particularly engaging, neither did I find them too unpleasant. I next wrote:

The shadows of a spring night blend and blur,
But there amidst the blossoms I feel sure
A woman stands.

I felt that this captured the feeling of a spring night, but expressed nothing else. It did not trouble me, however, since all I really wanted to do was to help myself relax. My third attempt was:

Fox or woman, woman or fox
That figure in the misty moonlight standing?¹

I thought that this was rather like comic verse, and even though I had written it myself, I found it amusing. Things were going very nicely I thought, and warming to my subject, I scribbled the following lines as fast as they came into my head.

Not blossoms but the midnight stars of spring she plucks,
And weaves them into garlands for her hair.

She stands, damp hair just washed cascading down her back,
Streaking the clouds on this spring night with beauty.

Spring! And from a shadow comes a voice
Bestowing on the night the gift of song.

The spirit of the aronias that must be
Which on this moonlit night has ventured forth.

The song now flows, now gently ebbs away,
Wandering through the springtime 'neath the moon.

There she stands so utterly alone,
And beaten Spring draws slowly to its close.

As I read these lines through, I became sleepy and began to doze.

Perhaps spellbound is the best word to describe the condition I was in. Nobody can be conscious of himself when he is fast asleep, just as no one can ignore the world around him when he is wide awake. There lies, however, between these two states a strip of no-man's land in which you cannot be said to be awake, since everything is too obscure, yet on the other hand you are not asleep for a small spark of life still remains. It is as though 'awake' and 'asleep' had been poured into the same jar and stirred with the brush of poetry until thoroughly mixed. Imagine the bright colours

¹ The fox in Japanese legends often assumes human guise.

of Nature shaded off until they almost, but not quite, fade into a dream; or this clear-cut world adrift in a sea of mist. Use the magic hand of sleep to smooth off all the sharp corners from reality, and then set it, thus tempered, gently pulsating. This is the state I mean. In such a condition your soul is just like smoke which, crawling along the ground, seems always on the point of rising into the air but never quite manages to do so. It tries to leave your body, but cannot bear the parting. Again and again it is on the verge of breaking out, but hesitates every time. Always at the last moment it fights to remain an entity, and twines itself about you lest its vast energy should be dissipated. Eventually, however, you feel its grip growing weaker and weaker.

It was while I was wandering in this no-man's-land of semi-consciousness that I heard the door of my room slide open. There in the doorway the phantom-like shape of a woman gradually materialised. I was neither surprised nor alarmed, but felt quite at ease as I lay there looking at her. I say 'looking at', but that is too strong a word, for actually she had slipped behind my closed eyelids. The apparition glided into the room, but I could hear no sound of footfalls on the matted floor. She was like some sprite moving on the surface of the water. Her skin was pale, and she had a wealth of jet-black hair which ran tapering to a point down the nape of her long graceful neck. Since my eyes were half closed, the overall effect was of holding up to the light one of those vignettes which are all the fashion nowadays.

The figure stopped in front of the cupboard. The door opened, and in the darkness I caught a glimpse of white as a pale arm emerged slowly from its sleeve. The door of the cupboard closed again, and the floor of my room, rising and falling in waves, bore the figure back to the doorway. As she passed through, the door slid itself shut behind her. My eyelids became heavier and heavier, and sleep gradually

stole over me. I think that the condition I was in must have been very like that of a person who, having died, is in a period of suspension before being reborn into perhaps a cow or a horse.

How long I slept, wandering between man and horse, I do not know, but eventually I was awakened by the sound of a woman laughing. Opening my eyes, I saw that the curtain of night had long since been drawn aside, and the whole world was light again. The glorious spring sunshine had painted a dark lattice-work of bamboo on the shōji. As I looked out at the world through the circular window let into the shōji, it seemed that there was nowhere left for anything eerie to hide itself. My mysterious apparition had presumably returned to the land from which it had come, far far away across the Styx.

I got up, and went down to the bath-room just as I was. I lay back leisurely in the bath for about five minutes, just keeping my face above water, having neither the energy to wash myself, nor to get out. Why, I wondered, had I felt so peculiar last night. It was extraordinary, I thought, that just crossing the boundary from day into night should cause the world to fall into such utter confusion.

I felt very fit, but could not be bothered to dry myself. Still wet, therefore, I walked over to the bath-room door and opened it, thus letting myself in for another shock.

‘Good morning. Did you sleep well last night?’

This was said at almost the exact instant that I opened the door. I had not expected to find anybody on the other side of the door, so this greeting, coming suddenly as it did, took me by surprise. Before I had a chance to reply, the person who had just spoken went round behind me.

‘There you are, slip this on.’ So saying she draped a beautifully soft kimono around me. Gradually I pulled myself together enough to say :

'Er . . . thank you . . . er . . . ' I turned round to say this, and as I did so the woman drew back a little.

It has long been an established principle that the novelist must describe the looks of his hero or heroine in the most minute detail. If all the words and phrases which have been employed for this purpose by Western and Oriental writers from classical until modern times were collected together, they might well rival the great Buddhist Sutras in volume. Moreover, were I merely to pick out from this terrifyingly large number of epithets all those which adequately described the woman who was now standing there a little apart from me, they would make a list I know not how long. She held her body inclined at an angle, and was looking at me contemptuously as though enjoying my discomfort. Never in all my thirty years of life had I ever seen such an expression on anyone's face.

According to artists, the ancient Greek ideal of sculpture was to produce a figure which embodied what may be summed up as 'energy in repose'. That is to say a figure in which vital energy is on the point of being, but has not quite been motivated. The attraction of such a figure never palls, but becomes greater the more you look at it, for you always wonder what this energy would become were it unleashed: a whirlwind perhaps, or thunder and lightning. Thus it is that Greek art has continued to hold a wealth of meaning for generation after generation down through the centuries. Were the figure to move, all the great dignity of mankind which is dormant in the enormous potential force would be expressed. In the course of expressing this, however, the figure would be forced to change to some other position in which a different set of conditions prevailed. Admittedly every one of these new positions would have its own individual potentiality, but once having moved, the figure could never again return to its original state of harmony. Any new situation would be as ugly as that resulting

were a beautiful river to subside suddenly, revealing a bed of mud. It is for this reason that I think that wherever you have motion, you must also have vulgarity. The reason for the failure of Hokusai's comic pictures, and Unkei's statues of the two Nio¹ lies in this one word 'motion'. Motion or repose? That is the burning question which governs the fate of us artists. One ought, more or less, to be able to put the qualities of beautiful women through the ages into one or other of these categories.

Looking at this woman's features, however, I felt at a loss, and was unable to decide. She stood there quietly, her mouth set in a thin line, and her eyes darting about restlessly, as though anxious not to miss even the smallest detail. In contrast to the fullness and composure of the lower part of her classically oval face, her forehead was narrow and formed a so-called widow's peak in the centre. Her eyebrows, moreover, almost met together, and twitched fretfully as though there were a drop of mint oil drying between them and causing a cold tingling sensation. Her nose was in perfect proportion, being neither too sharp and flippant, nor too round and dull. It would have made a beautiful picture. Considered separately, each one of her features had a distinct characteristic of its own, but all crowding in upon me in mad confusion as they were, it is no wonder that I felt bewildered.

Picture yourself standing on a piece of solid ground which until now you have always considered to be safe. Suddenly, it starts to buck and heave throwing you this way and that, and there is nothing you can do about it. Realising that such violent movement is unnatural to you, you do your uttermost to regain your former stance. All your efforts, however, are thwarted by the impetus of the original

¹ Two mythological strong kings, who were bodyguards to the goddess Kwannon.

shock-wave which first threw you off balance, and you continue to move against your will. You are just on the point of giving up hope, and of resigning yourself to the fact that you will be forced to keep moving indefinitely. If you can imagine what your expression would be like in such a situation, then you know just how that woman standing before me looked.

Thus it was that behind the look of contempt I could see a desire to cling to someone, and beneath her sneering attitude I caught a glimpse of prudence and good sense. She tried to appear as though if she gave free rein to her wit and high spirits she could handle a hundred men with ease, but in spite of herself she could not contain the gentle compassion which seeped through the hard exterior. There was absolutely no consistency in her expression. She was a person in whom understanding and bewilderment were living together under the same roof and quarrelling. This lack of consistency in her expression was evidence of the conflicting nature of her feelings, which in turn reflected the instability of the life she had lived. Hers was the face of one who is oppressed by misfortune, but is struggling to overcome it. She was undoubtedly a very unhappy woman.

‘Thank you.’ I repeated the words with a slight bow.

‘Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.—Your room has been dusted. Go and have a look. I’ll come and see you later.’

So saying, she turned lightly on her heel and hurried away along the passage. Her hair was swept up in a high, butterfly-shaped style which revealed her slender white neck.

That black obi she is wearing is probably only *faced* with satin.

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I wandered absently back to my room, and saw that, as she had said, it had been tidied and dusted. I still felt a little uneasy about what had happened the night before, and so I had a look in the cupboard just to put my mind at rest. In the lower part there was a small chest of drawers from the top of which trailed part of a printed muslin sash. This suggested that somebody might have come and taken some clothes or something in a hurry. The upper part of the sash disappeared from view into the folds of some delightfully feminine kimono. At the side of the chest was a small pile of books. The top one was *Orategama* by the Chinese Buddhist priest Haku-un, and under this was a copy of the classic *Tales of Ise*. Perhaps what I had seen the night before had not been an apparition after all, I thought.

I sat down aimlessly on a cushion in front of the low table which was made of ebony or some such expensive foreign wood. Then it was that my eye chanced to fall on my sketchbook. It looked very impressive lying there open, with a pencil still between the leaves. I wondered how those poems that I had feverishly scribbled down last night would look in the cold light of day.

Aronia blossoms decked with dew :
Fool would he be who shook the bough.

I was surprised to see that beneath this someone had written :

Aronia blossoms decked with dew :
Disturbed as dawn's light perches on the bough.

This had been written in pencil, and was therefore rather difficult to read. The writing looked too firm to be a woman's, and too graceful to be a man's. I looked at my next poem.

The shadows of a spring night blend and blur,
But there beneath the blossoms I feel sure
A woman stands.

Underneath this had been written :

The shadows of a spring night blend and blur
And blossoms and woman are as one.

Fox or woman, woman or fox
That figure in the misty moonlight standing?

This had been amended to :

Lord or lady, lady or lord
That figure in the misty moonlight standing?

Had these been written in an attempt to copy my poems, to improve them, or as an expression of agreement with my taste? Were they foolish, or were they meant to make me feel foolish? I just did not know.

She had said that she would come and see me later, so she might arrive at any minute, or when my meal was brought. Anyway, I thought, when she did come, I would get more idea of why she had written the poems. Thinking of the meal made me wonder what time it was. Looking at my watch I saw that it was after eleven o'clock. I really had had a good sleep. Missing breakfast and just getting up in time for lunch was probably good for my stomach, I reflected.

I slid back the shōji on the right-hand side of my room, and looked out into the garden, trying to determine where the events of the night before, which still haunted me, had

actually taken place. I had been right about the tree, it was indeed an aronia, but the garden was larger than I had thought. Peeping out from the thick carpet of green moss, which, they say, is so delightful to walk on barefooted, were five or six stepping stones. Off to the left, a red pine growing among some rocks leaned out over the garden from a steeply rising cliff face. Beyond the aronia was a small thicket, from the centre of which a clump of tall bamboo stems stretched their green lengths up and up, basking in the spring sunshine. My view to the left was interrupted by the ridge of the roof, but nevertheless it was obvious from the general layout of the place, that the ground dipped gently down to the bath-house.

The mountain sloped down to become a hill, and the hill sloped down to a level strip of land about a quarter of a mile in width. This in its turn shelved down into the sea and rose again sharply forty miles away to form the island of Mayajima, which was about fifteen miles in circumference. Such then was the geography of Nakoi. The hot-spring hotel had been closely terraced against the foot of the hill, and its garden extended about half way up, making full use of the rugged scenery. This made it seem that house and hillside were but a single unit; the one complementing the other. There were two storeys at the front, but only one at the back, so sitting on the verandah and dangling my legs over the edge, I was easily able to touch the moss below. I could now see why I had had to go up and down all those flights of stairs, and why I had thought that the house was so strangely planned.

Next I walked over to the left hand side of the room, and opened the window. At some time or other water had collected in a natural hollow about six feet by six, and now its calm surface held the reflection of a wild cherry tree. Two or three small bushes of variegated bamboo growing around the corner of the rock added further colour to the

scene. Some way off, I could see a hedge of what looked like box-thorn. Occasionally I heard the sound of voices coming from the other side, where there appeared to be a track running up the steep hillside from the beach. Beyond this track orange trees grew on the gentle southern slope which ran down to a large bamboo grove gleaming whitely in the sunlight. I had never realised before that bamboo leaves have this silvery sheen when seen from a distance. Across the valley, the hillside above the bamboo grove was covered with pine trees, and between the red trunks five or six stone steps were clearly visible. Probably, I thought, they led up to a temple.

Pulling back the shōji, I stepped out on to the verandah which, I found, ran all the way round an inner court. Opposite me on the first floor of the front part of the house, was a room from which I thought, if my sense of direction were right, the sea ought to be visible. It amused me to realise that although technically on the ground floor, judging by the rail of the verandah, the room in which I was living, and that room across there were at the same height. In fact from the point of view of anyone taking a bath, I was on the dizzy heights of the second floor, since the bath-house was below ground level.

The house was very large, but except for the room opposite, one room on the same floor as mine in the right wing of the house, and possibly also the family's rooms and the kitchen, everywhere was shut up. This seemed to suggest that, apart from myself, there were scarcely any guests. Even though it was broad daylight, nearly all the shutters were still closed, and should anybody ever go so far as to open them, I doubted very much if they would close them again at night. I was not even sure whether or not they locked the front door. This was an ideal place for someone like myself who was trying to get away from the world.

It was almost twelve o'clock by my watch, but there was

still no sign of anything to eat. It gradually dawned on me just how hungry I was. Suddenly, however, a line from a Chinese poem came into my head. 'Totally alone upon the barren mountainside', and imagining myself to be in just such a situation I forgot all about food. Indeed it seemed that it might not be a bad thing to miss a meal. It was too much trouble to paint, and it seemed ludicrous to write a Hokku, when there I was immersed in that blissful state of self-forgetfulness which is itself poetry. I thought that perhaps I might read, but I could not bring myself to fetch the two or three books which were tied to my tripod. It seemed to me, lying there leisurely among the shadows of blossoms on the verandah, and feeling the warmth of the spring sunshine on my back, that I was sampling the greatest delights that this world has to offer. I knew that if I were to think, I would be dragged off along some side track. It was dangerous to move. Had it been possible I would have even stopped breathing. I just wanted to stay there quietly for about a fortnight, as though I were a plant which had pushed its way up through the matted floor.

At last I heard someone walking up the stairs and along the passageways. As they came nearer, I thought that I could make out the steps of two people. No sooner had they stopped outside my door than one person walked away again without a word. I waited, expecting to see once more the woman I had met that morning in the bathroom. When the door slid back, however, it was not she that was standing there, but the young girl who had shown me to my room the night before. I felt somehow as though I had been cheated.

'Sorry to have kept you waiting.' So saying she placed a small portable dinner table in front of me. She made no excuse, however, for not having brought me any breakfast. On the table was a wooden bowl, and a plate of broiled fish garnished with parsley. Removing the lid, I saw that

the bowl contained clear soup at the bottom of which I could see the pink and white of shrimps lying among some young ferns. I thought the colours so lovely that for a while I just sat there staring into the bowl.

'Don't you like it?' the girl asked.

'Oh yes, I like it. I'll eat it in a moment,' I replied; but to tell the truth I thought it a great pity to eat something which was so delightful to look at. I remember reading a story about Turner in an art book once. It seemed that one evening at a dinner he gazed for a long time at the salad on his plate, and then remarked to the person sitting next to him that he found its colour cool and refreshing, and that it was one which he often used. I just wished that I could have let Turner see the colour of those shrimps and ferns. There is not a single Western dish, with perhaps the possible exception of salad and radishes, which could be said to have an attractive colour. What the nutritional value is I am unable to say, but from the artistic point of view their food is extremely uncivilized. Japanese food on the other hand, whether it be soup, hors d'oeuvres or raw fish is always beautiful. It is so pleasant to see that it is worth going to a tea-house just to look at the dishes laid out before you, even if you come away without eating a single mouthful.

'There's a young lady living here, isn't there?' I asked replacing the bowl on the table.

'Yes, sir.'

'Who is she?'

'The young mistress, sir.'

'Is there another older mistress then?'

'There was, but she died last year.'

'And the master?'

'Oh yes sir, he's still alive. The mistress is his daughter.'

'The young lady, you mean?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Are there any other guests?'

'No, sir.'

'Just me then?'

'Yes, sir.'

'What does the young mistress do with herself every day?'

'Well, she sews . . . '

'And?'

'She plays the samisen.'¹

This was both unexpected and interesting.

'What else does she do?' I asked.

'She goes up to the temple.'

Another unexpected answer. I found this samisen playing and going to the temple rather strange.

'Does she go there to pray?'

'No sir, she goes to see the priest.'

'Is he learning to play the samisen then?'

'No, sir.'

'Well then, why does she go there?'

'She goes to see Daitetsu, sir.'

Now I began to understand. This must be the same Daitetsu who wrote the poem which was hanging on the wall. I thought when I first saw it that it had been written by a Zen priest. That book of Haku-un's in the cupboard must have been borrowed from him too.

'Does somebody normally use this room?'

'Yes sir, the mistress.'

'Then she must have been in here until I arrived last night?'

'Yes.'

'Oh, I'm sorry to have turned her out of her own room. By the way, why does she go to see Daitetsu?'

'I'm afraid I don't know.'

¹ A three-stringed Japanese musical instrument of the guitar family.

'What else?'

'I beg your pardon?'

'I mean, what other things does she do?'

'Many other things.'

'Such as?'

'I don't know.'

This brought the conversation to an abrupt end. At length I finished my meal, and the girl took the table away. As she slid open the door, I caught sight of the woman with the 'butterfly' hairstyle across the top of the shrubbery in the inner court. She was standing on the first-floor verandah with her elbows resting on the rail, and her face cupped in her hands. This pose, added to the fact that she was gazing intently at something below, made her look for all the world like a statue of Kwannon the omniscient goddess of mercy. Her present air of serenity was in complete contrast to her appearance that morning. Since she was looking downwards, it was impossible from where I was sitting to see the expression in her eyes. I wondered whether, if I could have seen them, she would have presented a different picture. Someone long ago once said apparently, that nothing speaks for a man better than his pupils. This is quite true, for the eye is the most expressive and vital organ in the human body, and will mirror your feelings however much you may try to conceal them. From beneath the rail on which the 'butterfly' was leisurely leaning, two real butterflies came dancing erratically upward, now drawing together, now fluttering apart again. This then was the scene that confronted me as the door slid back. The noise of the door, however, disturbed her, and looking up sharply from the butterflies, she turned her attention towards me. Her unwavering gaze shot through the air like a poisoned arrow, and struck me between the eyes. Before I could recover from my surprise, the young

girl slid the screen across again. Immediately the complete lassitude of spring returned.

Once again I sprawled out full length on the floor, and very soon the following lines came drifting into my mind.

Sadder than the moon's lost light,
Lost ere the kindling of dawn,
To travellers journeying on,
The shutting of thy fair face from my sight.

Suppose for a moment that I had been in love with 'the butterfly', and been dying to meet her. Then I too would have written just such a poem to express the mingled feelings of joy and regret which, before I had time to be surprised, such a brief glimpse of her as I had just had would undoubtedly have aroused in me. I might also have added:

Might I look on thee in death,
With bliss I would yield my breath.¹

Fortunately I had already left the triteness of falling in love far behind me, and could not have felt such pangs even if I had wanted to. Nevertheless, I thought that those few lines captured the poetry of the situation admirably. It was both amusing and pleasant to think of the poem as applying to 'the butterfly' and myself, and to pretend that it described our relationship, even though I knew that such a state of affairs was impossible. We were, it is true, joined together by a thin thread, because fate had decreed that I should see her in circumstances similar to those in which the poem had been written, thus making it partly real. Fate or no fate, however, so slender a tie could not prove painful. Moreover, this was no ordinary thread. It was as delicate as the rainbow spanning the sky, and as flimsy as mist trailing across the moors, or gossamer sparkling with dew; and as such it was exceedingly beautiful to look at,

¹ Written by Sōseki in English.

but could be broken at will. Ah, but supposing that while I were looking at it, it should become as thick and strong as a hawser, what then? No, there is no fear of that happening. I am an artist, and she is not like the normal run of women.

Suddenly the door opened, and turning over on to my side I saw her standing there: 'the butterfly', the other end of the thread. She was carrying a tray on which was a green celadon porcelain bowl.

'Lying down again? It must have been very annoying for you to have been disturbed so many times last night. I'm afraid I was a terrible nuisance,' she said with a mischievous laugh. There was nothing at all timid or bashful about her, and of course no trace of embarrassment either. I felt that she was definitely ahead in the game.

'Thank you for what you did this morning.' When I came to think about it, I realised that this was the third time I had referred to her helping me on with the kimono that morning. Not only that, but each time all I had been able to get out was 'Thank you'.

While I was still trying to get up into a sitting position, she came over quickly and squatted down next to me.

'Oh, don't bother to sit up. We can talk perfectly well while you are lying down,' she said in an apparently friendly voice. I thought that this was perfectly true, so I just rolled over on to my stomach, and leaning on my elbows, rested my chin on my hands.

'I thought you might be bored, so I've come to make you some tea.'

'Thank you.'—There it was again.

Looking into the cake bowl which she had brought I saw that it contained some green 'yokan' made from bean jelly. I think that if all cakes, yokan are my favourite. It is not that I especially enjoy eating them, but I consider that their smooth fine texture, and the way in which they become semi-transparent when the light falls on them, makes them

indisputably an *objet d'art*. These yokan were particularly pleasant to look at, for their green-tinged lustre made them look as though they were precious stones, or as though they had been fashioned from alabaster. They so matched the bowl in colour and in glaze, that it seemed as though the very porcelain itself had just given birth to them. As I looked at them, I had an overwhelming desire to stretch out my hand, and gently run my fingers over the glistening surfaces. There is not a single Western cake which can give one so much pleasure. Cream, I admit, has a soft colour, but for all that there is something rather heavy about it. Jelly looks like a jewel, but its trembling and shaking deprive it of the solidity of a yokan; while that intricately shaped heap of sugar and milk which they call blancmange is an absurdity which is beyond the power of words to describe.

'Hm—beautiful,' I said.

'Gembei brought them back with him just now. I hope you like them.'

Apparently then Gembei must have stayed overnight down in the town. I made no reply, but just continued to look at the yokan. I was not interested in where, or by whom they had been bought. It was enough for me merely to know that they were beautiful.

'I like the shape of this bowl very much. It has a lovely colour too. It's almost as beautiful as the yokan.'

The woman gave a short low laugh, and a vague flicker of contempt played about her mouth. I wondered if she had thought I was trying to be funny. Taken as a joke it certainly deserved scorn, for as such it was just the sort of remark that fools make when they are attempting to be clever.

'Is it Chinese?' I asked.

'Pardon?' She was not the least concerned with the bowl.

'Somehow it looks Chinese to me,' I went on, holding it up and examining the underside.

'Are you interested in that sort of thing? Would you like to see some more?'

'Yes, I would please.'

'Father is very fond of curios, and has all sorts of things. I'll tell him about you, and ask him to invite you to have a cup of tea sometime.'

When I heard the word 'tea', my enthusiasm waned a little. There is nobody as ostentatious, or as persuaded of his own refinement of taste as the man who performs the tea-ceremony.¹ He deliberately reduces the wide world of poetry to the most cramped and limiting proportions. He is self-opinionated, over-deliberate in his actions, and a fussy old woman about trifling niceties. Moreover he approaches the ceremony with unnecessary awe and respect, and goes into ecstasies as he drinks the frothy tea. If such a jumble of petty rules and regulations can be said to constitute elegance and good taste, then the boys in the regimental barracks at Azabu must be fairly wallowing in it. Oh yes, if this is true, then every mother's son of the 'right turn' and 'eyes front' brigade would make an exceptionally fine tea-man. Those who take part in the tea-ceremony are really only tradesmen, merchants and the like who have not the first idea of what the words 'artistic taste' mean. They have swallowed whole the teachings of the great tea-ceremony master Rikyu, and without any sense of elegance, or indeed of purpose, merely go mechanically through the motions. By so doing, they convince themselves that they are men of refinement, but this is nonsense. All they are really doing is making fools of those who truly do have the ability to appreciate elegance.

¹ This is a ceremony in which tea is made and drunk according to a very intricate set of rules. It is said to foster self-discipline, and to give one a sense of refined beauty.

'When you say 'tea', do you mean the tea-ceremony?' I asked.

'Oh no, this is tea without any ceremony. You need not even drink it if you do not want to.'

'Well in that case, I'd be delighted.'

'Father loves to show off his nick-nacks, so ...'

'You mean I ought to say how nice I think they are?'

'Well, he's growing old, and it pleases him to receive compliments.'

'All right, I'll praise them a little then.'

'You might even force yourself to praise them a lot.'

'Ha, ha, ha.—By the way, from your language I would say you were not a country girl.'

'Meaning that from my character you would say I was?'

'As far as character is concerned it's better to be a country girl.'

'Then I have something to be proud of.'

'You've lived in Tokyo though, haven't you?'

'Oh yes, in Kyoto too. I'm rather a vagabond. I've been all over the place.'

'Which do you like best, here or Tokyo?'

'There's no difference.'

'But surely life must be more comfortable in a quiet place like this?'

'Whether you are comfortable or not depends entirely upon your frame of mind. Life is whatever you think it is. What is the use of running away to the land of mosquitoes, because you are uncomfortable in the land of fleas?'

'But why not go to a land where there are neither mosquitoes nor fleas?'

'Is there such a country?' she said edging closer. 'If there is, show it to me. Go on, show it to me.'

'All right, I will if you like.' So saying, I took out my sketchbook, and drew a woman on horseback, looking at a mountainside covered with wild cherry trees. I finished

it in a moment, so it could hardly be called a picture, just a rough impression.

'There you are, get into this picture. There are no mosquitoes or fleas here,' I said, and pushed the book right under her nose. I was sure that the situation would cause her neither surprise, embarrassment nor discomfort. I watched her for a moment. At length she passed it off by saying:

'What a cramped and uncomfortable world. It is all width and no depth. Do you like a place like this where the only way to move is sideways? You must be a regular crab.' This made me burst out laughing.

A nightingale came near the eaves and began to sing. Then breaking off in mid-song, he flew away and perched on the branch of a tree some distance away. We both stopped talking, and sat there for a while waiting to hear if the bird would sing again. It seemed, however, that he had lost his voice for good.

'I suppose you met Gembei up in the mountains yesterday?'

'Yes.'

'Did you go and see the maid of Nagara's tomb, the five-storied pagoda?'

'Yes.'

Suddenly, with no further preamble, the woman began to recite the words of the maid of Nagara's song in a flat even voice. I had no idea why.

From leaves of autumn flushed with love,
A pearl of dew shakes free
And falls to shatter on the earth beneath.
So too must I, to flee Love's stifling folds
Drop from the world.

'Ah,' I said, 'I heard that song up at the tea-house.'

'Did the old woman teach it to you? She used to be a

maid here. That was before I . . . ' Here she looked searchingly at my face, so I pretended to know nothing.

'It was when I was still young,' she went on. 'Even when she was no longer employed here, she used to come and see me, and every time I would tell her that story. But she just could not learn the words of the song. Gradually, however, by hearing it over and over again, she managed to commit it all to memory.

'Ah, that explains it. I wondered how she had come to learn something so difficult. But that's a sad song isn't it?'

'Yes, I suppose it is, but I would never have sung a song like that. In the first place the maid of Nagara gained nothing by throwing herself in the Fuchi river, did she?'

'No that's true. Well, what would you have done in her position?'

'What would I have done? I should have thought that was quite simple. I would merely have taken both Sasado and Sasabe as lovers.'

'What both of them?'

'Yes.'

'That's very clever.'

'Not at all. It's the obvious thing to do.'

'I see. Well, that means that you would end up in neither the country of mosquitoes nor the country of fleas.'

'Well, it isn't necessary to adopt the mentality of a crab in order to carry on living.'

'Hoh—hokeyo—.' Our forgotten nightingale began to get his voice back, and in no time at all was sending forth the most unexpected high trills. Once he had got properly started again, the notes seemed to come more easily. Hanging upside down, and puffing out his throat, he vibrated it to the very depths as the notes burst from him. 'Hoh, hokeyo—, hoh, hokeyo—', on and on he ran.

'That is real poetry,' said the woman.

◆ 5 ◆

'Excuse me sir, but am I right in thinkin' you're from Tokyo?'

'Do I look as though I were?' I asked.

'Look? Why, I didn't have to look sir. I could tell you was from Tokyo as soon as I heard you speak.'

'Can you tell which part?'

'Well now, let me see. Tokyo is such a stupidly big place I should say it was one of the posher areas—like Kojimachi for instance, or Koishikawa maybe? Or else perhaps Ushigome or Yotsuya.'

'Hm yes, somewhere around there. You know Tokyo well, don't you?'

'Oh, yes sir. You wouldn't think it to see me here now, but I was born an' bred in Tokyo.'

'Ah, that explains it. I thought you looked a bit of a live wire.'

At this he let out a loud guffaw, and then suddenly became serious.

'But it's pitiful when a man comes down to this,' he said.

'Whatever made you drift into the country like this?'

'“Drift” is the right word sir. There's no gettin' away from that. That's just exactly what I have done. Well, it was like this: I was out of work, and just couldn't get a job for love nor money, so'

'Have you always had a barber's shop?'

'Oh, I don't own this place. I'm only an assistant here. What's that you say? Whereabouts in Tokyo was I. Well, there's this place called Matsunagachō over Kanda way—and a pokey filthy hole it is too, I can tell you. It's not the sort of place a gentleman like yourself would ever have heard of. But there's a bridge called Ryukanbashi near there What's that? Oh, you've never heard of that either. Hm, Ryukanbashi's quite well known'

'Hey, would you mind putting a little more soap on my face please, it's hurting rather.'

'Hurting' sir?' I'm very pertic'ler about shavin'. I never feel satisfied until I've gone over the face again like this against the grain of the beard, so's I can prise each individual hair out of its hole.—No, the trouble with your modern barber is that 'e don't shave you, 'e just tickles you with the razor. Just bear it a bit longer, sir.'

'Bear it? That's exactly what I have been doing for a long time. Rub some soap on, or at least some warm water—please.'

'You mean you can't stand it no longer? It didn't ought to hurt as much as that. The trouble is you've let your beard grow too long.'

He had been pinching a lump of my cheek like grim death, but now with a show of reluctance he released it, and taking down a meagre piece of red soap from a shelf, ran it once over the whole of my face, having first given it a quick flick in some water. To have a piece of soap applied to my face directly, was not the sort of treatment I was used to in a barber's shop, and I must confess I did not like it much. Moreover when I looked at the water in which the soap had been dipped, I shuddered to think how long it had been standing there.

I was now required to exercise that privilege to which every customer in a barber's is entitled: namely that of inspecting himself in the mirror. This, however, is a right

which since I had come into the shop I had thought I might well dispense with. A mirror is failing in its obligations unless it has an even surface, and presents a truthful image of one's face. The man who hangs a mirror which is not possessed of these qualities on the wall, and then urges you to look at yourself in it, is just as guilty of wilfully damaging your appearance as the man who says he is an expert photographer and then produces a bad picture of you. It may well be that snubbing vanity is one means of improving the character, but nevertheless, to show someone his face at less than its true value, and then to have the audacity to say, 'this is you', is unnecessarily insulting. The unavoidable mirror into which I was expected to gaze with tolerance, had most decidedly been insulting me from the very outset. When I moved my head to the right my face became all nose, and when I moved it to the left my mouth became a slit which extended right up to my ears. If I lay back, I looked like the front view of a completely flattened toad; and if I leaned slightly forward, my body became foreshortened, and my head swelled up like a balloon. All the time I was in front of the mirror, I was continually changing from one monster into another. Admittedly the face which the mirror had to reflect was not very handsome, but I came to the conclusion that the monstrosity before me was produced by a combination of the mirror's faulty construction, and the fact that in places the silvering had peeled off at the back. I was not concerned by the visual abuse which was being hurled at me, but as I am sure anyone else would have done, I found it unpleasant to have to sit before my warped tormentor for any length of time.

This was no ordinary barber. When I first peeped into the shop, I saw him sitting there cross-legged, apparently very bored. He was pulling hard on a long pipe and puffing the smoke out at a toy flag of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. There is, I admit nothing strange in this, but it was after I

had entered the shop and committed my head to his care that I first became disconcerted. The unpardonable fashion in which he handled my head while he was shaving me caused me to have grave doubts as to whether all rights of its ownership had passed to him, or whether I still retained some small say in the matter. I felt sure that even were it nailed on to my shoulders, it would not remain there long.

The way in which he set about wielding the razor made it quite clear that he knew nothing at all of the laws of civilization. The razor scraped across my cheek, and as it worked up towards my ear, the artery in my temple started throbbing so wildly that I thought it would burst. Next he moved down to my chin, where his flashing sword produced the weirdest crunching noises, like someone walking over icy ground. The terrible thing was that he considered himself the finest barber in the country.

To make a bad situation worse, the man was drunk. Everytime he said 'Si—ir', my nostrils were assailed by an unusually potent gas. At this rate, I thought, the razor is liable to take matters into its own hands. Since even the barber himself had no idea as to where he was going or what he was doing, it was completely impossible that I, who had merely lent him my face, should have the slightest notion. Since my face had been entrusted to him as the result of a mutual understanding, I did not intend to complain about any discomfort or even a slight nick with the razor, but what worried me was that he would suddenly have a brainstorm and I would end up with my throat cut.

'Only them as has no experience uses soap for shavin', sir. But p'raps in your case it can't be helped, 'cos you've really got a tough beard.' So saying he put the piece of soap, thin as it was, back up on the shelf. The soap, however, chose to disobey his orders, and immediately tumbled down on to the floor.

'I don't recall havin' seen you around here sir. Have you been here long?'

'Only about two or three days.'

'Ah. Whereabouts are you stoppin'?'

'At Shioda's.'

'Oh, you're a guest there, are you? I thought p'raps you might be. To tell you the truth, it was through old Mr Shioda that I got this job down here. Yes, I knew him back in Tokyo. Used to live in the same area. He's a good sort, and he's got his head screwed on the right way. He lost his wife last year, and now all he does is mess about with them there curios of his. They say he's got some marvellous stuff which'd fetch a tidy penny if it was sold.'

'He's got a beautiful daughter, hasn't he?'

'You want to watch out there.'

'Why, is there . . . ?'

'Why? Well it was long before you came here sir, but she's divorced, that's why.'

'Really?'

'Is that all you've got to say, 'really'? I'm tellin' you she 'ad no business to leave 'er 'usband. It was just that the bank went broke, and because she couldn't play the lady any more, she up and left him. She's got no sense of gratitude. She's all right while the old man's alive, but nobody's goin' to look after her once he's gone.'

'No, I suppose not.'

'Stands to reason. I mean she don't get on with her elder brother, who lives in the family house, either.'

'Is there a family house?'

'Yes, it's up there on the hill. You ought to go up an' pay 'em a visit sometime. There's a lovely view from up there.'

'I say, go over with the soap again, will you? It's hurting again.'

'Shavin' do seem to hurt you, don't it sir? It's because

your beard's too tough. With whiskers like that you ought to shave every three days without fail. If it hurts when I shave you, it'd hurt you anywhere.'

'Well, I will in the future. I'll come and let you shave me every day.'

'Do you fancy stayin' here as long as that then sir? It's dangerous. Don't do it. No good can come of it, and who knows what trouble you'll land yourself in, if you get dragged into such a business.'

'Why?'

'Well, Shioda's daughter's pretty enough to look at, but she's not all there.'

'Why do you say that?'

'Why? Well sir, everybody in the village says she's mad.'

'There must be some mistake.'

'But we have proof. No, don't do it. It's too risky.'

'Don't worry about me. But tell me, what proof do you have?'

'Well, it's a funny story. Take it easy, an' have a cigarette, and I'll tell you about it.—Would you like your hair washed?'

'No, that's all right thanks.'

'Well, I'll just give you a massage to get rid of the dandruff.'

Hereupon, the barber placed all ten fingers on my head, regardless of the fact that the nails were thick with dirt, and proceeded to agitate them violently backwards and forwards. I could feel his nails gouging each individual root. It was just as though a colossal rake were being pushed and pulled across my scalp at whirlwind speed. I do not know how many thousands of hairs there are on my head, but I was convinced that he was tearing up each one by the root, and raising angry weals all over the resulting exposed surface. The vibration was sufficient to pass right through my skull into the brain itself. By the time he had finished, I was suffering from concussion.

'How's that? That's better, isn't it?'

'You really do go at things tooth and nail, don't you?'

'Eh? A nice massage like that makes everybody feel better.'

'I feel as though my head had been pierced in several places.'

'As bad as that? It's this weather wot does it. You always feel tired in spring.—Have a fag sir. You must get fed up with yourself, bein' the only one at Shioda's. You must come and have a bit of a chat sometimes. Some'ow, if you're from Tokyo it's hard to talk to someone who isn't. Er, does the young lady come and entertain you then sir? The trouble with her is, she aint got the faintest idea of right an' wrong.'

'You started to say something about her just now, before you began poking holes in my head.'

'So I did. I don't know. I'm so scatter-brained, I'm always jumpin' from one topic to the other, without ever finishing a story properly. Well, as I was sayin', the priest fell head over heels in love with her'

'What priest?'

'Why, the young novice up at the Kankaiji temple.'

'You haven't mentioned anything about a priest yet, novice or otherwise.'

'Haven't I? I'm so terrible hasty. Well this priest was good-lookin' in a rugged sort of way. 'E was the type that women go for. Anyway, he fell head over heels in love with old Shioda's daughter, and at last wrote a letter to her.—Hang on a minute. Did he write, or did he go and see her? No, that's right, he definitely wrote her a letter. Now where was I?—Er . . . What was I goin' to say?—I'm a bit mixed up. Oh, yes. That's right, that's what happened. It came as a shock see, so'

'Who was shocked?'

'The woman, of course.'

'When she received the letter?'

'If she was the sort of woman to be shocked by a letter, it would at least show some modesty. But she don't shock that easy.'

'Then who was shocked?'

'Why he was when he went to tell her he loved her.'

'But I thought you said he didn't tell her.'

'Give me strength. You got it all wrong. It was gettin' the letter that was a shock.'

'Then it must have been the woman who was shocked after all.'

'No, no, no, the man!'

'Well, if it was the man, it must have been the priest.'

'That's right it was the priest.'

'Why was he shocked?'

'Why was he shocked? Well he was in the main hall of the temple, conductin' a service with the abbot, when she suddenly comes rushin' in . . . Cor, ha, ha, ha. There's no gettin' away from it, she must be cracked and no mistake.'

'What happened then?'

'Well, she suddenly flings her arms round Taian's neck, and says, "If you really love me so much, let's make love here before Buddha."''

'Did she now?'

'Taian didn't know where to put his face. He was so ashamed at havin' written to a mad woman, that he crept away secretly that night, and died.'

'Died?'

'Well, I presume he died. He could hardly 'ave gone on livin', after havin' been shamed like that.'

'I don't know about that.'

'Maybe you're right. I suppose 'is dyin' wouldn't have looked too good: her bein' mad an' all. P'raps he's still alive.'

'That's a very interesting story.'

'Interestin' 's not the word for it. It set the whole village laughing fit to bust. But it shows you just how mad that woman is: she never took a blind bit of notice. A steady man like yerself ought to be alright sir, but her bein' what she is, it wouldn't be advisable to go flirtin' with her.'

'Oh, I'll be *very* careful. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.'

A spring breeze wafted up from the warm beach, bringing with it a hint of the sea, and making the short curtain across the entrance of the barber's shop stir sleepily. In the mirror I caught a fleeting glimpse of a swallow as, body aslant, he dived across the space beneath the curtain. An old man of about sixty or so was sitting under the eaves of the house opposite, silently shelling molluscs. Again and again there came the dull metallic clack of his knife striking the shell, and again and again the reddish meat fell into the obscurity of his basket, and a shell, glinting in the sunlight, was sent sailing two or three feet across the heat-hazy ground. I could not tell whether the huge heap which had been piled up there was of oyster, clam or razor-shells. From time to time the mound would collapse, and some of the shells would sink down to the bottom of a sandy stream. It seemed to me as though they were falling off the edge of this unstable world, to be buried in some dark shadowy region beneath. No sooner had the old shells been buried, however, than new ones would take their place, and the mound would grow again beneath the willow tree. The old man had no time to think of anything but shellfish, and he just went on steadily casting shells on to the shimmering ground. It seemed as though his basket were bottomless, and his spring day an unending source of tranquillity.

The sandy stream ran under a small bridge scarcely twelve feet across, carrying the water of spring down towards the sea. There, where the spring river flowed out to meet the spring tide, fathom upon fathom of fishing nets had been hung up in uneven banks to dry in the sun. It was

these, I suspected, which gave the warm smell of raw fish to the gentle breeze as it passed through their meshes on its way up to the village. Between the nets the surface of the sea showed grey, undulating sluggishly like molten lead.

This scenery and the barber had nothing at all in common, and had he been a more forceful personality, strong enough to impress me as powerfully as my natural surroundings, then I would surely have been struck by the incongruity of their co-existence. Fortunately, however, he was not a very striking character, and for all his brash city ways, and his caustic wit, he was certainly no match for the perfect harmony and serenity of Nature. He had persistently tried to shatter this aura with his interminable chatter, but so formidable was his opponent that he had been reduced to the level of a barely perceptible speck of dust hovering in a ray of spring sunshine. One is not aware of any conflict between things or people, however incompatible their strength and bulk or their physical and spiritual characteristics may be, unless they are both possessed of an equal power. Indeed, if the disparagement in power between the two is exceptionally great, then all conflict may gradually be erased and the energy which generated it be absorbed by a greater force. It is for this reason that the disciple sits at the feet of the master, that the man of low intelligence reveres the disciple, and oxen and horses become the obedient servants of the man of low intelligence. My barber was at the moment playing out some ridiculous farce, with the whole limitless scenery of spring-time as his backdrop. He, who was doing his uttermost to destroy the tranquillity of spring, had only succeeded in adding to it. I felt that I had fallen into the company of a meddling fool. This braggart with all his cheap talk was no more than a component colour in the landscape, blending perfectly with his surroundings on that peaceful spring day.

Since, looked at in this light, the barber would have made a fine subject for a painting or a poem, I remained parked where I was, chatting with him about this and that, long after my shave was finished. While we were talking, a young priest popped his small head under the entrance curtain and said, 'Hullo. Shave, please.' He was wearing a white cotton kimono tied with a padded obi. Over the top of this was a loose robe of coarse material, which looked like a mosquito net. He seemed a very happy-go-lucky fellow.

'Ah, Ryonen. How are you? I bet you got a good tickin' off from the abbot for wastin' your time the other day.'

Oh no I didn't. He said I'd done very well.'

'Oh, so he praised you for stoppin' to go fishin' while you was out on an errand, did he?'

'Yes. He said, "Ryonen, you were quite right to play on the way. It shows a maturity beyond your years."'

'And as I might have expected, his praise has given you a swelled head. Look at it; all lumps and bumps. It's a shockin' job to shave a freak of a head like this. I'll let you off this time; but don't come in again until you've kneaded it back into shape.'

'If it were in good shape, I'd go to a better barber.'

'Ha, ha, ha. Your head may be a queer shape, but it doesn't affect your tongue.'

'Yes, and your hand may not be very steady when you're working, but it doesn't stop you lifting a glass, does it?'

'Why, you young whippersnapper. Whose hand isn't . . .'

'I didn't say it, the abbot did. And don't get so angry; remember your age.'

'Huh! That's not funny.—Is it, sir?'

'Hm? What?' I said.

'Confounded priests. Bloody well livin' up there high above the stone steps, with nothin' to do, and all day to do it in. I suppose that's why they all have such a ready

tongue. Even this baby priest here doesn't mind what he says. Hey! Lean yer head back a bit.—"Back," I said.—If you don't do as I tell you, you'll get cut. Understand? The blood will flow!

'It hurts. You don't have to be so rough.'

'If you can't even stand this, how do you expect to become a priest?'

'I am a priest already.'

'Gercha, you're still only half-baked. By the way, how did Taian die?'

'He isn't dead.'

'Not dead? What do you mean? He must be.'

'After that business, he pulled himself together and went to the Daibanji temple in Rikuzen. He's devoted himself to his studies. Everyone says he's become very wise. It was a good thing that that happened to him.'

'What was good about it? I can't see that it's good, even for a priest, to take off in the middle of the night. You want to be careful. Women always bring you nothin' but trouble.—Talkin' about women, does "Nut-case" still come up to see the abbot?'

'I've never heard of a woman called "Nut-case".'

'You know who I'm talkin' about idiot. Does she, or doesn't she?'

'No "nut-case" as you call it comes; but Mr Shioda's daughter does.'

'She'll never get any better, however much the abbot prays for her. She's under a curse from her former 'usband.'

'Mr Shioda's daughter is a fine woman. The abbot speaks very highly of her.'

'I dunno. Everythin' up there above them stone steps is upside down. But I don't care what the abbot says; once mad, always mad.—Well, there you are: all shaved. Run along an' get another tickin' off.'

'No, I think I'll take my time so I'll be praised again.'

'Please yerself, you prattlin' imp.'

'Huh! You withered up piece of human refuse.'

'What did you say!'

But the newly shaven head, covered now only with dark blue shadow, had already darted beneath the curtain, and was being fanned by the spring breeze.

◆ 6 ◆

I had slid open all the imprisoning screens, and was sitting at my desk in the fading twilight. The hotel was comparatively large, and my room was separated from the region of human activity where the few other occupants lived by innumerable twisting corridors, with the result that no sound came to disturb my thoughts. Today, things were particularly quiet. I wondered perhaps whether the landlord, his daughter, the young maid and the man servant had all slipped away somewhere without my knowing. If they had, I thought, it would be no ordinary place to which they had gone, but a land of haze or of clouds. Or possibly they had drifted far across a languid sea, never touching the tiller, and not caring whether or not they were moving, until they had reached that place where sky and ocean meet, and where it becomes difficult to distinguish the white sail from the clouds and the water, and eventually even the sail is puzzled to know where to draw the line between itself and its surroundings. It also occurred to me that they might simply have vaporized and become part of the spirit of spring. If this were so, then their hitherto substantial forms would now be no more than haunting currents, swirling somewhere between heaven and earth, so completely invisible that even with a microscope no trace of them would be found. My next idea was that they had all turned into larks and, having sung to their hearts' content,

translating the golden colour of spring rape-blossoms into music, had now flown off into the deep-purple folds of dusk. Or could they have lengthened the already long spring day by becoming gad-flies, to whom a day is a lifetime? Perhaps engrossed in their unsuccessful attempts at sipping the sweet dew from the stamens, they had been trapped beneath a falling camellia blossom, and were even now lying amidst the fragrance contentedly sleeping their lives away. Anyway, be that as it may, everything was completely quiet and still.

The spring breeze, which was passing drowsily through the empty house, came neither to gratify those who welcomed it, nor to spite those who wished to keep it out. It came and went quite naturally: an expression of the impartiality of the universe. I sat with my chin resting in my hands, thinking that if only my heart were as free and open as my room, the breeze would, unbidden, have found its way there too.

You are conscious of the ground you are standing on, and so fear that it may give way beneath you. You are aware that the heavens are above you, and so you quake with the fear of being struck by lightning. Life is an inescapable rat-race in which you are constantly being spurred on by materialistic values to wrangle and squabble with your neighbour. For us who live in this world with its East and West, and who have to walk the tight-rope of advantage and disadvantage, love which is free of self-interest is an enemy. And yet, visible wealth is as worthless as dust, and fame which has been avidly grasped is, it seems to me, like stolen honey which looked sweet while in the making, but in which the cunning bee has left his sting. The so-called pleasures in life derive from material attachments, and thus inevitably contain the seeds of pain. The poet and the artist, however, come to know absolute purity by

concerning themselves only with those things which constitute the innermost essence of this world of relativity. They dine on the summer haze, and drink the evening dew. They discuss purple, and weigh the merits of crimson, and when death comes they have no regrets. For them, pleasure does not lie in becoming attached *to* things, but in becoming a part *of* them by a process of assimilation. And when at last they succeed in this, they find there is no room to spare for their ego. Thus, having risen out of the quagmire of materialism, they are free to devote themselves to the real essentials of life, and thereby obtain boundless satisfaction. I have not written about these things with the intention of holding up a boggy-man to frighten the corrupt and mercenary children of the city, nor because I wish to prove that I as an artist am more exalted than they are. My sole purpose has been to point out the gospel contained in this state of affairs, and to invite all those who so desire to take advantage of it. Let me be more precise: the road which leads to the realm of poetry and art is open to everybody without exception. It is, I agree, pointless merely to count off on your fingers the years you have spent on this earth, and to pine for your lost youth. Nevertheless, by looking back over your life and reviewing all its various events in turn, you should be able to recall those times when, with heart aflame, you lost yourself in pure happiness. If you cannot do this, then you have nothing left to live for.

I do not say that pleasure for the poet lies in devoting himself exclusively to one subject, or being transformed into just one thing. Sometimes he will become a solitary petal; sometimes a pair of butterflies. He may even, like Wordsworth, become a host of daffodils: his heart brushed and set dancing by a gently rustling breeze. There are times, however, when he finds himself absorbed into his natural surroundings, without being aware of precisely what it is that has captured his heart. One man might explain the

way he felt by saying that he had been mesmerized by the brilliance of Nature; another that it was as if he could hear the notes of an ethereal harp coming from somewhere deep within his soul. Yet another might describe his condition by saying that he seemed to be wandering on and on through a vast expanse, but getting nowhere because he was unfamiliar with the ground and everything there was incomprehensible to him. Everyone is at liberty to describe this condition any way that seems best to him. I was in just such a state of mind as, with my elbows resting on the ebony desk, I sat there gazing vacantly into space.

I was not thinking of anything, and I was certainly not looking at anything. Moreover, since nothing particularly striking had entered my field of consciousness, I could not be said to have been absorbed by anything either. I was, however, moving. It was not motion within the world, or even outside it; but for all that, I was moving. I was not going towards a particular flower or bird, nor against humanity. I was simply being carried along in a trance.

If pressed for an explanation, I would say that my soul was moving with the spring. Imagine all the colours, breezes, elements and voices of spring solidified, ground to powder and blended together to form an elixir of life, which had then been dissolved in dew gathered from the slopes of Olympus, and evaporated in the sun of fairyland. I felt now as though the vapour rising from just such a precious liquid had seeped through the pores of my skin and, without my being conscious of it, saturated my soul. The reason why the process of being assimilated into an object is pleasant is that it is usually accompanied by stimulation. In my case, however, this was not so, since it was impossible to say into what I had become assimilated. This absence of stimulation meant that I was filled with an indescribably profound and beautiful calm. Mine was no

fleeting sense of wild elation like a wave raised momentarily by the wind only to subside again in an instant. No, the state I was in may best be likened to that of a vast ocean flowing across its unfathomable bed from continent to continent. The only difference is that I did not possess quite the same degree of vital energy as the ocean. This in fact was a good thing, for the manifestation of great vitality automatically gives rise to the anticipation of its exhaustion. Where it exists in a normal degree, however, there is no such worry. Not only had my soul become so faint that I seemed far removed from all anxiety as to whether or not my strength would some day drain from me, but it had also risen above its usual state of mediocrity. When I say that it had become faint, I do not mean to imply that it had grown weaker in any way, but simply that it had become more tenuous. I think the words 'nebulous' and 'limpid' which poets often use, describe this state admirably.

I wondered how it would be if I tried to express this condition on canvas, although I realised of course that it was not at all suitable material for a conventional picture. What the majority of people call a picture is nothing more than a direct reprint on silk of what the painter has seen around him, possibly after it has been filtered through an aesthetically critical eye. For them a picture has fulfilled its purpose if a flower looks like a flower, water reflects the light like water, and people behave as they do in real life. The only way the artist can create a painting which is not just simply run of the mill, is to bring his subject to life by giving it his own interpretation. No artist who tries to do this would consider that he had succeeded in producing a picture, unless his own personal viewpoint were apparent in every single brush stroke, for he is concerned with trying to highlight exactly what it is about the corner of Creation he is embracing that has inspired him. Moreover, he would not

make so bold as to claim that the picture were his own unless it clearly expressed his conviction, that although his opinions and perceptions owe nothing to those who have gone before, and are not governed by old traditions, yet nevertheless they are the most correct and the most beautiful.

However great the difference in depth of perception between these two types of artist may be, they have one thing in common: they both wait for some definite outside stimulus before putting brush to canvas. In my case, however, there was no such clearly defined subject. Although all my senses were on the alert, search as I might, I was unable to find in the objects around me any combination of shape, light and shade, strength and delicacy of line, and of course colour which was suitable for expressing how I felt. Since this feeling of mine had not come from without, or if it had, not from my visible surroundings, I could not point out any one thing as its source. Sometimes, as then, the feeling of inspiration exists by itself, independent of any material object, and my present problem was how I might express such a feeling as a picture. No, that is not strictly true: the real question was what object could I find which embodied it to such a degree that others looking at my painting would be able to feel as nearly as possible the way I was feeling at that moment.

All that is required to produce the average picture is something to paint. With the second type that I mentioned, however, it is necessary that the artist's feelings should be compatible with his subject. There is yet a third case in which he has to choose a subject which fits his inspiration. This is easier said than done, for very often even if he succeeds in selecting the components of his picture, he cannot cast them into any definite form. Let us suppose, however, that he does manage to produce such a form; the chances are that it will not be anything recognizable, and

thus in the eyes of the general public it cannot be considered a picture. Even the artist himself will acknowledge that it does not represent anything which exists in the natural world. He will consider it a great achievement if he can convey a fraction of what he felt at the time he received his inspiration, and if he can bring that same unshakable tranquillity to even a few lives. I do not know whether anyone in the past has ever achieved this tremendous feat completely, but there are works in which the artist has had some degree of success. There are for example the paintings of bamboo by Wên T'ung, the landscapes of various types by the Unkoku school and by Ike Taiga, and the character sketches of Buson.¹ Since the vast majority of Western painters only take a fleeting glance at the substantial world, and are not at all concerned with matters which lie on such a refined and non-material plane, I should imagine that very few of them would be able to express so ethereal a sense on canvas.

It is unfortunate that the type of feeling which Sessyu² and Buson strove so hard to convey tends to be over simple, and is lacking in variety. From the point of view of technique, I could not of course hope to equal such great masters, yet the feeling I wished to depict was slightly more complex than theirs. It was this complexity which made it impossible for me to capture it completely within the bounds of a single picture. I now changed my position, and instead of resting my chin in my hands, continued to think with my arms folded on the desk. It made no difference; the ideas still would not come. You have to paint as though, in the instant when the right colours, shapes and mood all

¹ Wên T'ung — Chinese painter (1018-1079)

Unkoku Togan — Japanese landscape painter (1547-1618)

Ike Taiga — Japanese landscape painter (1723-1776)

Yosa Buson — Japanese painter and poet (1716-1783)

² Sessyu Toyo — Japanese painter (1420-1506)

fell into place, your soul suddenly became aware of its own existence. You must feel like a father who has searched the length and breadth of the land for his long lost child, with his purpose never out of his thoughts whether sleeping or waking, and who one day chances to meet him at some cross roads and cries instantly, 'Ah, here you are—at last!' This is a very difficult thing to do, but if I could do it, it would not matter to me what the people who saw my picture said about it. I would not be in the least upset even if they sneered and said it was not a picture at all. If something of what I felt were contained in the harmony of the colours; if I could breathe some of this power into the curve and sweep of the lines; if the overall tone of the picture spoke even fractionally of the pleasure I had experienced, then I would not care if the resulting shape were a cow, a horse, or somewhere between the two. No, I would not mind in the least, but somehow the ideas just would not come. I sat staring at my sketchbook until my eyes almost bored through the page. I schemed, and thought, and contrived, but it was no good: I could not give shape to my feelings.

I realised that it had been a mistake ever to try and turn such an abstract condition into a painting, and I put my pencil down. Since people are not all that different from one another, there must have been somebody, somewhere who had felt the same as I, and had tried to perpetuate his feelings by some means or other. Yes, but by what means I wondered.

Music! The word suddenly flashed into my mind. Of course! Music was the voice of Nature which, fathered by necessity, had been born in exactly such circumstances. I now became aware for the first time that music is something which must be listened to and learned. Unfortunately, however, I knew nothing whatsoever about this form of communication.

I thought next that I might possibly have some success with poetry, and so I stepped into the third realm. I seem to remember that Lessing argued that poetry can only be concerned with those events which are relevant to the passage of time, and thus established the fundamental principle that poetry and painting are two entirely different arts. Looked at in this light, it did not seem that poetry was suited to the mood which I had been so anxiously trying to express. Perhaps time was a contributory factor to the happiness which reached right down to the innermost depths of my soul. There was, however, no element in my present condition which had to follow the course of time and develop successively from one stage to another. My happiness was not due to the fact that one event arrived as another left, and was in turn followed by a third whose eventual departure heralded the birth of number four. It was derived from the atmosphere which pervaded my surroundings: an atmosphere of unvarying intensity which had remained with me there in that one place from the very beginning. It is those words 'remained in that one place' that are important, for they mean that even if I should try to translate this atmosphere into the common medium of language, there would be no necessity for the materials which had gone into creating it to be placed in any chronological order. All that would be necessary surely is that they be arranged specially as are the components of a picture. The problem was what features of my surroundings and what feelings should I use to represent this vast and vague state. I knew, however, that once having selected these, they would make admirable poetry—in spite of Lessing's contentions. However Homer and Virgil may have used poetry is beside the point. If you accept that it is suitable for expressing a mood, then it should be possible, providing that the simple special requirements of graphic art are fulfilled, to produce a verbal picture of that mood

without making it the slave of time, and without the aid of events which follow each other in a regular progression.

Well that is enough of argument. I have forgotten most of *Laokoon*¹ and it is quite possible that if I read it through carefully I might find that I was on rather uncertain ground. Anyway, I had decided to try my hand at poetry since I had failed to produce a picture, and I sat rocking my body backwards and forwards, my pencil pressed firmly to the page. I tried and tried to make the point of that pencil move, but for some time I had no success whatsoever. Imagine that all at once you forget a friend's name. You feel that it is on the tip of your tongue, yet somehow it just will not come out. You know, however, that unless you keep on trying to remember, the name will slip back into the recesses of your mind. This is exactly the feeling one has when attempting to compose poetry. Let me take a more concrete example to illustrate the point. When you are making paste and first begin mixing the powder into the water, it presents not the slightest resistance to your chopsticks. Gradually, however, it starts to thicken, and the hand with which you are stirring feels a little heavy. You pay no attention to this, but continue until the mixture becomes so glutinous that you are scarcely able to stir any more. Finally the paste becomes so thick that it clings to the chopsticks, and they become bogged down.

My pencil moved fitfully on the page, but by persevering I succeeded in producing the following lines in about thirty minutes.

The months of spring are short as fleeting youth,
Yet sadness like the stems of fragrant plants is long.
Petals fall silently to earth in an empty garden,
And in the deserted hall a simple harp lies silent.

¹ This is the title of the work in which Lessing discussed the differences between poetry and painting.

Immobile in his web the spider hangs
As fingers of smoke trace round the bamboo beams.

On reading them through I had the impression that any one of these lines could have been turned into a picture. Why, I wondered, was it easier to write poetry than to paint. I thought that perhaps I should not have abandoned my attempt at painting, when with a little more effort I might have been successful. However, I had a desire to put into words a sentiment that could not be expressed on canvas. Once again I racked my brains, and eventually wrote :

Seated alone in silence undisturbed,
Within my heart a shaded light I see.
How futile the activity of man.
Oh, can I e'er forget this state
Where for one day tranquillity I find
And see how busy were the ages past for me?
Where can I lay this yearning soul to rest?
Far, far away among the milk-white clouds.

This time I read right from the beginning through all the lines I had written. I found them quite interesting, but considered as a description of my present ethereal state they definitely lacked something. I thought that I should have to continue my search, and decided while I was about it to write one more poem. As I sat there pencil in hand, I happened to glance towards the open doorway, and caught a glimpse of a beautiful shadowy form pass across the three foot space. 'Good heavens,' I thought.

By the time I had chanced to look up, this lovely figure was already half-hidden by the shōji which flanked the doorway. It had apparently been moving before I had noticed it, and now as I stared in amazement, it passed out of sight. I gave up all idea of writing poetry and fixed my gaze on the doorway.

In less than a minute the shadowy form reappeared from the opposite direction. It was the slender figure of a woman wearing a long-sleeved bridal gown. There was something forlorn about her as she walked noiselessly along the first floor verandah opposite. I let the forgotten pencil slip from my fingers, and suddenly caught my breath.

As so often happens in blossom time, a cloudy haze had gradually descended to deepen the dusk, bringing warning that at any moment it would rain. But over there, twelve yards away across the inner courtyard, the woman in the bridal gown continued her same graceful walk back and forth along the verandah. She had about her an air of serenity as she moved through the heavy air, her figure playing hide-and-seek among the evening shadows.

She said nothing, and looked neither to left nor right. So smoothly and quietly did she walk that not even her own ears could have caught the sound of her skirts trailing along the verandah. Her kimono from the waist down was covered with a bright design, but I was too far away to tell what it was. I could see, however, that the design and the plain background colour shaded gently together like the day and night whose border the woman herself was now treading.

I did not know why she had put on that gown with its long flowing sleeves, and was walking up and down the long passageway so persistently. Nor did I have any idea how long she had been at this unusual exercise dressed in such a totally unexpected way. Moreover, it was impossible to say in what, if anything, she was interested. However, it gave me a weird sensation to see this decorous and calm figure continually disappearing from view to reappear a moment later in the doorway, as she repeated her absolutely incomprehensible performance. She looked too unconcerned for this to be a lament at the passing of spring, and yet if

she was unconcerned, why was she arrayed in such beautifully fine silk.

The colours of that late spring day were beginning to deepen, and gave an unreal, dream-like tint to the world as it lingered for a moment on the threshold of the long dark night. Against this background the woman's strikingly beautiful obi, which looked to me to be made of gold brocade, stood out in vivid relief. Every few seconds, however, enveloped by the dusky shades of evening, the bright material would vanish into the void; only to appear a moment later in another place. It was just like looking at a galaxy of brilliant stars which, with the approach of dawn, fall back one by one into the purple depths of the heavens.

As I watched the gates of night swing wide open to swallow this bright and elegant figure into the lonely darkness, I felt that there was a touch of the supernatural about the way in which this woman, who, dressed as she was, should have been the centre of attraction in a setting the visible world without any apparent regret, and with no signs of trying to draw back. Peering into the rapidly approaching gloom, I could see that she was still calmly walking up and down the same stretch of verandah at the same unhurried, even pace. She would, I thought, have had to be extremely naive not to be aware of the evil that was overtaking her. But it was uncanny if she was aware of it and yet did not consider it an evil. If this were the case, it meant that black was her natural home, and the reason why she could stroll about so nonchalantly between existence and non-existence was that this phantom shape which she had temporarily assumed was now returning to the obscurity from whence it had come. The way in which the pattern adorning her gown merged with the unavoidable black surround seemed to point to her origin.

At this point my thoughts turned on to another tack. Imagine a beautiful girl who is apparently sleeping peacefully,

but who, without gaining consciousness at all, dies. How heartbreaking it would be for those sitting around the sick-bed in such circumstances. If her pain had gradually become worse and worse until it had reached unbearable proportions, then not only would she herself have felt that life was not worth living, but her loved ones too might have reconciled themselves to the fact that death would be a merciful release. When, however, the child merely drifts into sleep and then dies, they wonder what they can possibly have done to deserve such a thing. To be carried off over the Styx like that without a chance to prepare oneself is, they think, tantamount to being tricked into a fatal ambush. If death must come, they would like to be forewarned so that they can resign themselves to the inevitable and pray for the soul of the dying girl. The chances are, however, that if they knew she were going to die before the actual event, they would not raise their voices to the Lord Buddha to ask him to receive this person who had already taken one step towards the next world, but would instead call out to the girl herself to make her return to them. To a person who is on the verge of slipping unawares from the sleep of this world into the sleep of eternity it may be painful to be called back, for it is merely adding one more strand to the rope of human passions which bound her to life, and which otherwise would soon have broken. She herself might say if she could, 'In the name of mercy, do not call me. Let me sleep in peace.' Nevertheless they would still want to call her.

I thought that the next time I saw the woman through the doorway, I might call out to her to rouse her from the coma into which she had fallen. No sooner had the shadow glided like a dream back into view, however, than my tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of my mouth. I made up my mind that the next time I would call without fail, but again I could not. As I was trying to work out why it was

that I was unable to say anything, the woman passed by yet again. It was obvious that she had not the slightest idea that there was somebody over here who kept watching for her, and who was worrying about her so anxiously. It irked me the way she seemed to consider it beneath her dignity to notice such a person as I. I was still saying, 'Next time, next time,' to myself, when the layer of clouds, as if unable to hold back any longer, let fall a melancholy screen of fine rain which completely hid the figure from sight.

Brrr! It was cold. Towel in hand, I went down for a warm bath. I undressed in a small matted room, and then went down the four steps into the bathroom which was about twelve feet square. There appeared to be no shortage of stones in these parts, for both the floor, and the lining of the sunken bath tank in the centre were of pebbles set in cement. The tank was about the size of the vats they used to make bean-curd, being roughly four feet deep. This place was called a mineral spring, so there were presumably many mineral ingredients in the water. As, in spite of this, it was clear and transparent, I found it very pleasant to bathe in. From time to time some of the water found its way into my mouth, but it had no distinctive taste or odour. This spring was said to have medical properties, but I never took the trouble to find out what ailments it was supposed to cure. Since I myself was not suffering from any illness, the idea that the spring might have any practical value did not enter my head. As I stepped into the tank all I was thinking of was a poem by the Chinese poet Pai Le-tien that expresses the feeling of pleasure which the mere mention of the words 'hot spring' rouses in me.

The waters of the spring caress;
And smooth away all coarseness from my skin.

All that I ask of any hot spring is that it give me just such

a pleasant feeling, but if it is unable to do so, in my opinion it is worthless.

The water came up to my chest, and I stood there soaking myself thoroughly. I do not know from where the hot water gushed, but it was constantly pouring over the sides in an attractive stream. I was happy, and very much at ease as there in the springtime I felt beneath my feet the warmth of those stones which were never dry. So gentle and quiet was the falling rain that it was able to dampen the spring without the night being aware of it, and yet clusters of rain-drops had gradually formed on the eaves, and now their rhythmic 'drip, drip' as they fell to earth reached my ears. The steam which completely filled the room from floor to ceiling was so confined that it escaped wherever it could find a crack or even a tiny knot-hole.

The cold mists of autumn; the tranquil haze which hangs over the world in spring; the blue smoke rising from cooking fires at evening; all these are capable of drawing my ephemeral form up with them into the limitless expanse of the heavens. Yes, there are many things which can charm me, and whose cry finds an answering echo within me; but only on a spring evening, with my body softly enveloped in clouds of steam from a hot bath, can I feel that I belong to a bygone age. The steam which draped itself around me was not so dense that I was unable to see. Nor yet was it as thin as a layer of sheer silk which may easily be torn aside to reveal the ordinary mortal figure beneath. I was isolated in a warm rainbow: shut in on all sides by steam from which I could never emerge however many layers I might pull aside. One can talk of becoming drunk on wine, but I have never heard the phrase 'to become drunk on vapour'. Even if there were such a phrase, it could not of course be used of mist, and is rather too strong to use of haze. Nevertheless it does become apt when used to de-

scribe the steam rising from a hot bath, but then only in the context of a spring evening.

Leaning my head back against the side of the tank, I let my weightless body rise up through the hot water to the point of least resistance. As I did so I felt my soul to be floating like a jelly-fish. The world is an easy place to live in when you feel like this. You throw off the shackles of common sense, and break through the bars of desire and physical attachment. Lying in the hot water, you allow it to do with you as it likes, and become absorbed into it. The more freely you are able to float, the easier life becomes, until if your very soul floats, you will be in a state more blessed than had you become a disciple of Christ. Following this train of thought, even the idea of drowning is not without a certain refinement and elegance. I believe it was Swinburne who, in one or other of his poems, described a drowned woman's feeling of joy at having attained eternal peace. Looked at in this light, Millais' 'Ophelia', which has always had a disturbing effect on me, becomes a thing of considerable beauty. It had been a constant puzzle to me why he had chosen to paint such an unhappy scene, but I now realised that it was after all a good subject for a picture. There is certainly something aesthetic in the sight of a figure being carried along by the current free from all pain, whether it be floating, beneath the surface, or rising and sinking by turns. Moreover, it will undoubtedly make an excellent picture if both banks are decked with many kinds of flowers whose colours blend unobtrusively with those of the water, the person's clothes and her complexion. If the facial expression is perfectly peaceful the picture becomes almost mythical or allegorical. A look of convulsive agony will destroy the whole mood, while one which is absolutely composed and devoid of all passion will fail to convey any of the girl's emotions. What expression ought one portray to be successful? It may well

be that Millais' 'Ophelia' is a success, but I doubt whether he and I are of the same mind. Still, Millais is Millais, and I am myself; and I wanted to express the aesthetic quality of drowning according to my own convictions. It seemed, however, that it was going to be a difficult task to find the face I wanted.

Still floating in the bath, I composed the following eulogy on drowning.

Beneath the earth where all is black as night,
The drenching rain seeps down
And frost descends to chill;
But in spring water,
Buoyed by waves or lying in the deep,
There is no pain.

As I lay there absently murmuring the lines over to myself, I heard the sound of a samisen. Although I am supposed to be an artist, I am ashamed to say that in fact such knowledge as I have about this instrument is decidedly unsound. My ear would never detect anything unusual even if the second string were sharp or the third flat. Nevertheless, in that small mountain village on a spring night, to which even the rain lent an added sense of pleasure, it was delightful to listen idly to the distant strains of a samisen as I floated body and soul in the hot water. It was too far away for me to be able to recognise either the words or the tune of what was being played, and this gave the music a certain charm. Judging from the mellow tone, I thought the instrument might be one of the thicker-necked samisens which, I believe, the blind minstrels of the Kyoto area used to accompany folk songs.

When I was a boy there was a wine shop called Yoro-zuya just beyond the gate of our house, and on quiet spring afternoons the proprietor's young daughter, O-Kura, would always practise singing and playing long epic ballads. As

soon as she began, I would go into the garden to listen to her. Just in front of our tea-garden, which was a little over forty square yards in size, three pine trees stood in a row along the eastern side of the guest rooms. They were tall trees with trunks about a foot in circumference, but the interesting thing was that they only looked elegant when viewed as a group. As a child, I remember, it gave me a great deal of pleasure to look at these trees. Beneath the three pines, there was a slab of some kind of reddish rock on which stood a metal lantern blackened and rusted with age. It was always there like some cantankerous and obstinate old man who refused to budge, and I used to love to sit and gaze at it. Around the lantern wild spring flowers and tall grasses whose names I did not know pushed through the thickly moss-covered ground. They appeared to pay no attention to the changing world about them, nor to fear the wind that might destroy them. Alone they gave off their fragrance, and alone they were happy. I used to seek out a small space where I could kneel among the flowers without crushing them, and there I would crouch quietly. To gaze at the lantern beneath the pine trees, to smell the perfume of the flowers and to listen to the sound of O-Kura playing and singing ballads in the distance became my daily routine.

O-Kura would have left behind her long ago the age when she wore red silk ribbons in her hair, and now probably presented a rather dowdy domesticated picture as she served behind the shop counter. I wondered whether she was happily married, and whether the swallows still looked as busy as ever, carrying in their beaks mud for their nests. Somehow I just could not get those swallows and the smell of rice-wine out of my head.

Were the three pine trees still standing there as elegantly as before? The metal lantern would doubtless be broken. Did the spring flowers remember a small boy who knelt

among them? No, even in those days they had gone their own sweet way without a word, so there was no reason why they should remember now. Nor would they have retained the memory of O-Kura's voice as every day she sang: 'The hempen gown of the wandering priest . . .'

At the sound of the samisen, this unexpected panorama had opened up before me, and I found myself in the mysterious and wonderful world of the past. Once again I was that small boy who had lived twenty years ago. Suddenly the door of the bathroom slid open. 'Somebody has come in,' I thought, and without changing my position I raised my eyes towards the door. Since I was lying with my head resting on the side farthest away from the door, I was able to see the steps which led down to the bath, diagonally opposite to me and approximately twenty feet away. As yet, however, no one had come into view. For a while the only sound was of raindrops falling from all around the eaves, for the samisen had stopped playing at some time or other.

At length something appeared at the head of the steps. Although large, the room was lit only by one small hanging lantern, and so even had the air been completely clear, it would still have been difficult to distinguish anything accurately at this distance. To make matters worse, however, this evening the rising steam was unable to escape, being shut into the bathroom by the fine drizzle outside, and it became absolutely impossible to tell who was standing there. Whoever it was put one foot down on to the second step, but as at that moment the light was not falling directly on them, I could not make out whether it was a man or a woman, and was thus at a loss what to say.

The dark shape descended to the next step without a sound, making it seem that the stone underfoot was as soft as velvet. Indeed, anyone judging from the sound would have been excused for thinking that there had been no movement at all. The shimmering outline had now become a

little more clearly discernible. Being an artist, I have an unusually good sense of perception concerning the structure of the human body, and no sooner had this unknown person moved down a step than I realised that I was alone in the bathroom with a woman.

I was still floating there, trying to decide whether or not to give any indication of having seen her, when quite suddenly and without any reserve she appeared directly before me. She stood there surrounded by swirling eddies of mist into which the gentle light suffused a rose-tinted warmth, and the sight of her lithe and upright figure, crowned with billowing clouds of jet-black hair, drove all thoughts of good manners, civility and propriety out of my head. My whole being was filled with the realisation that I had discovered a beautiful artistic subject.

I have no complaint to make against classical Greek sculpture, but whenever I see one of those nude paintings which seem to have become the lifeblood of contemporary French art, I feel that somehow it is lacking in refinement, for it is obvious that the artist has gone to extremes to express the beauty of uncovered flesh. I cannot say that such paintings have ever perturbed me unduly, but I have, from time to time, been annoyed at my inability to define why I thought them indelicate. I know that in covering up the human body one is concealing a thing of beauty, and yet to leave it uncovered makes it common. The modern painters of nudes are not even content with reproducing as it is the body they have deprived of attire, but thrust it to a nauseating extent on to the clothed world round about. They forgot that it is a natural thing for man to wear clothes, and attempt to give nudity all the rights. Instead of leaving well alone, they try with all their might to get the nakedness to scream out to you from the canvas. When art is carried to such lengths it debases itself by coercing the people who look at it. If you struggle

to make a thing of perfect beauty appear more beautiful, you will only succeed in detracting from it. This idea is expressed, with regard to everyday life, in the proverb: 'From Perfection there is only one road—down.'

Placidity and simplicity both indicate the presence of that underlying depth which is an indispensable ingredient of art and literature. The shortcomings of modern art may be attributed to the way in which the so-called tide of civilisation is indiscriminately sweeping aside the 'old guard' in its impatient haste to advance. Nude paintings provide a good example of this. In the cities we have Geisha, those women who trade on their physical charms, and to whom the art of flattery is a means of earning a living. When they are with a 'client', their sole expression is one of anxiously trying to impress him with their appearance. The nude beauties who fill the perennial salon catalogues to overflowing are similar to these Geisha. Not only are they unable to forget their own nakedness, but they use to the uttermost every muscle in their bodies to make the viewer aware of it.

There was, however, no trace of any such vulgarity about the exquisite form before me. As soon as you use the words 'stripped of clothes', you have already descended to the level of ordinary mortals; but this woman looked as natural as if she had been conjured up in a cloud in the age of the gods, before there were any clothes to cover the body or any sleeves to put arms through.

Wave upon wave of steam rolled upwards refracting and diffusing the late spring light, and filling the entire room with a warmly scintillating rainbow. There in the opalescent depths rose her pure white form, gradually shading into hair so dimly visible as to make it difficult to determine whether indeed it was black or not. What a superb figure.

The line of her neck on both sides turned lightly inwards, and then sloping easily downwards, rounded the

ample shoulders and flowed on down her arms, separating at the ends to form the fingers. Beneath the two well-formed breasts the wave of her body subsided for a while to rise again gently as the firm full line of her abdomen. This fullness receded in its turn, and faded at the line of her groin. From here the thigh muscles stood out slightly, being tensed to preserve her balance. The long sweeping undulation of her leg was deflected by the knee and sent curving down to the heel. Here the whole intricacy of line was resolved and carried finally to the sole of her tapering foot. Such complexity yet unity of structure was surely unique. It would be impossible to find a shape so natural, so soft, so lacking in resistance and yet so unobtrusive.

It was not in fact thrust flagrantly into view like the average nude, but being only dimly visible in the midst of a strange aura of enchantment which lent mystery to all within it, gave no more than a subtle hint of its full beauty. There was about it that same artistically perfect combination of atmosphere, warmth and sense of the ethereal that exists in a picture in which the artist suggests the presence of a horned dragon merely by dotting a few scales here and there in an inky black haze. If it is true that a dragon on which every single scale has been carefully painted looks ludicrous, then conversely the naked human body when looked at with deference retains its sublime loveliness. When I first caught sight of this figure I thought it might be some beautiful maiden who had fled down to earth from the kingdom of the moon, and who now stood there hesitating, surrounded by the rainbow which had pursued her.

The whiteness of the woman's skin came floating towards me, and I feared that with one more step my maiden from the moon would degenerate into a being of this common world. Just then, however, her thick blue-black hair streamed around her with a swish like the tail of some gigantic legendary turtle cleaving through the waves. Next

moment her white figure was flying up the steps tearing through the veils of mist. A clear peal of feminine laughter rang out in the corridor and gradually echoed away into the distance, leaving the bathroom quiet again. The water washed over my face, so I stood up. As I did so, startled waves lapped against my chest, and splashed noisily over the sides of the tank.

◆ 8 ◆

I had been invited to have tea with old Mr Shioda. Besides myself, the other guests were Daitetsu the abbot of the Kan-kaiji temple, and a young layman who was about twenty-four or twenty-five years of age. To get from my room to the old man's I just had to go down the passage to the right, and turn left at the end. His room was about twelve feet long by nine feet wide, but seemed smaller because of the large rosewood table set in the centre. Looking towards the place he had indicated I should sit, I noticed instead of a cushion, there was a beautiful rug spread there, which was obviously Chinese. Strange and wonderful houses and willow trees had been woven into a hexagon in the middle, and the surround was an almost metallic shade of indigo. In each of the four corners was a pattern of brown rings interwoven with a creeper-like design. I doubt whether such a rug would ever be used in a Chinese sitting-room, but it looked very nice as a substitute for a cushion. Just as the merit of Indian chintz and Persian tapestry lies in their conservatism, so the charm of this rug lay in its lack of frivolous detail. This lack is not only noticeable in Chinese carpets, but in all their furniture and ornaments. Looking at them, you cannot fail to realise that they were created by a stolid, patient people. What makes these objects so superlative is their ability to absorb one's interest utterly and completely. Japan produces her works of art with the

attitude of a pick-pocket, while in the West everything must be on a grand scale, and is inseparable from the material world. It was with these thoughts in mind that I took my seat. The young man sat down next to me, occupying half the rug.

The abbot was seated on a tiger skin whose tail stretched out near my knees and whose head was underneath our host. Mr Shioda was completely bald, but had a bushy white beard, giving the impression that the hair had been transplanted from his head to his face. He now placed the teacups on their saucers and carefully arranged them on the low table. Turning to the abbot he said: 'How are you? It's been quite a time since we had a guest, so I thought it would be nice if we all had some tea together.'

'Thank you for the invitation,' replied the abbot. 'I was only thinking today that it had been so long since I had been to see you, that I really would have to call in.' He was a man of about sixty, whose once round face had now collapsed into the mellow lines of age. In fact he looked for all the world like a picture of Dharma Buddha which someone had sketched with rapid unsteady strokes. He seemed to have been a close friend of Mr Shioda's for a long time.

'I presume this gentleman is the guest you were speaking of,' he continued.

Nodding his head in assent, Mr Shioda tilted the small vermilion teapot and allowed a few precious drops of the green-tinged amber liquid to trickle into each of the cups. I could feel the delicate aroma gently assailing my nostrils.

'You probably find it rather lonely right out here in the country by yourself, don't you?' the abbot asked me as soon as the tea had been poured.

For reply I made as non-committal a noise as possible. To say that I was lonely would have been untrue, and yet if I said I was not, it would necessitate giving a long explanation.

'No, Abbot,' broke in Mr Shioda, 'this gentleman has come here to paint, so he has plenty to do.'

'Oh really? That's splendid. I suppose you belong to the Nansō school.'

This time I answered with a plain 'No'. I felt sure the abbot would not have understood if I had said that I painted in the Western style.

'No, he paints in that Western style.' Once again Mr Shioda, in his role as host, had taken upon himself the task of answering for me.

'Oh, the Western style? Then you must paint the same sort of things as Kyuichi here. I saw one of his pictures for the first time the other day, and I must say it was very pretty.'

'Oh no, it wasn't any good at all,' protested the young man, speaking at last.

'Did you show one of your paintings to the abbot then?' Mr Shioda asked him. Judging from the way he spoke and from his attitude, I thought they might be related.

'Well, I didn't exactly show it to him; he just happened to catch me painting down by the Kagami pond.'

'Hm. Did he now?—Well, the tea's poured out, so please start.' So saying he placed a cup before each of us. Although the cup itself was large, there was only a very small amount of tea in the bottom. The dark grey exterior of the cup was covered with deep red and pale yellow brush strokes, but whether these were meant to form a picture, a pattern or a devil's mask motif I could not imagine.

'It's by Mokubei,' explained old Mr Shioda simply.

It's very interesting,' I replied with equal brevity.

'There seem to be a lot of imitations about—have a look at the bottom, the name's written there.'

I picked it up, and in order to see better turned towards the shōji on which were thrown the warm elliptical shadows of the leaves of a 'haran' plant standing in a pot outside.

Bending my head forward I peeped inside the cup, and there sure enough was the name 'Mokubei' in small letters. I do not think the name is particularly important as far as the appreciation of an object is concerned, and yet apparently it is something which collectors set great store by. Instead of putting the cup back down on the table, I raised it to my lips.

For the man of leisure there is no more refined nor delightful pursuit than savouring this thick delicious nectar drop by drop on the tip of the tongue. The average person talks of 'drinking' tea, but this is a mistake. Once you have felt a little of the pure liquid spread slowly over your tongue, there is scarcely any need to swallow it. It is merely a question of letting the fragrance penetrate from your throat right down to your stomach. On no account should it be swilled round the mouth and over the teeth, for this is extremely coarse. 'Gyokuro' tea escapes the insipidness of pure water and yet is not so thick as to require any tiring jaw action. It is a wonderful beverage. Some complain that if they drink tea they cannot sleep, but to them I would say that it is better to go without sleep than without tea.

While I was engrossed in these thoughts, Mr Shioda had brought out a cake bowl which was the colour of sapphires. The skill and precision with which the craftsman had shaved away large lumps of the porcelain to leave parts of the wall so thin as to be translucent was truly amazing. When I held it up to the light, it seemed as though the spring shadows had darted into the bowl, and then become trapped having forgotten the way out. I was glad that it was empty.

'I heard how you admired celadon porcelain, so I thought I would show you a little today.'

'What celadon porcelain is that you're talking about?' broke in the abbot. 'Oh, the cake bowl. Yes, I like that too. By the way,' he went on to me, 'do you think it would be

possible to paint a Western style picture on a fusuma¹? If it would, I'd like to ask you to do one for me.'

I could hardly refuse outright, but I was not sure whether the abbot would like my painting. It would, I felt, have been a great pity if I spent a considerable amount of effort on it, only to have him say that he did not care for the Western style of painting; so I said, 'I don't think it would go well on a fusuma.'

'No, perhaps it wouldn't. If Kyuichi's picture which I saw the other day is anything to go by, it might be a little too gaudy.'

'Oh, mine was no good, I was only messing about,' said the young man modestly, obviously acutely embarrassed.

'Where is that what's-its-name pond you mentioned just now?' I asked him out of curiosity.

'It's in a secluded spot down in the valley behind the Kankaiji temple—it was only that I learned a little Western painting when I was at school, so I thought I'd go down there to while away the time.'

'The Kankaiji temple?'

'That's where I am,' the abbot answered. 'It's a nice place. It looks right down on the sea, and—well, you must come and see for yourself while you're here; it's not half a mile away. Look, you can see the stone steps that lead up to the temple, from the verandah there.'

'May I really come up and visit you sometime?'

'Yes, of course. I'm always there. Mr Shioda's daughter often comes.—Speaking of O-Nami, I haven't seen her today.—Is there anything wrong with her, Mr Shioda?'

'She's probably gone out somewhere. I don't suppose she went to your place Kyuichi, did she?'

'No, I didn't see her.'

'I expect she's gone off on one of her lone walks again,'

¹ An opaque, paper-covered sliding door or screen.

put in the abbot. 'Ha, ha, ha. She certainly has a sturdy pair of legs. I had to go down to Tonami the other day on a clerical matter, and when I got near Sugatami bridge I saw someone that I thought looked remarkably like O-Nami. Sure enough, when I got closer I found it was her. There she was with her kimono tucked right up at the back, and wearing a pair of straw sandals. Well, she suddenly turned to me, and burst out with, "Hello, Abbot. What are you standing there gaping for? Where are you going?" It quite took me aback, I can tell you. Ha, ha, ha, ha. When I asked her where on earth she'd been, dressed like that, she said that she'd been gathering parsley. And then she said, "I'll give you some, Abbot," and without more ado she thrust a bunch of the muddy parsley into my sleeve. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.'

'Did she really? I' said the girl's father with a sickly grin. He then turned the conversation sharply back to curios with: 'I'd like you to have a look at this.'

The old damask silk bag which he had just taken down from a rosewood book-shelf appeared to contain something quite heavy.

'Have you ever seen this, Abbot?'

'What on earth is it?'

'An ink-stone.¹'

'Oh, really. What kind of an ink-stone?'

'Well, it is said to have been a prized possession of the calligrapher Sanyo, and'

'No, I've never seen it.'

'The spare lid was decorated by Shunsui, and'

'No, I don't think I've ever seen it. Come on, hurry up.'

With an air of great importance Mr Shioda untied the string at the neck of the damask bag, exposing one corner of a red oblong stone.

¹ A stone on which a solid stick of ink is rubbed down and mixed with water.

'It's a lovely colour, isn't it?' remarked the abbot. 'Is it "Tankei" stone?'

'Oh yes, of course. It's of excellent quality, and it has "bird's-eye" markings in the grain.—Nine of them.'

'Nine!' The abbot appeared very impressed.

'And this is the spare lid which was decorated by Shunsui,' went on the old man, taking out a thin lid from its figured satin wrapping. On it was written a Chinese poem of seven characters in Shunsui's handwriting.

'Ah yes. Shunsui has a nice hand; a very nice hand. But I think that Kyohei was the better calligrapher.'

'I think that the least skilful of all was Sanyo. There's no doubt he was a genius, but I find his writing singularly uninteresting.'

'Ha, ha, ha. I know how much you dislike Sanyo's writing, Abbot, so I've taken his scroll down from the wall for today, and put another one up in its place.'

'Oh, have you?' said the abbot, turning round to look at the alcove behind him where the scroll usually hung. In the alcove was a low wooden dais which had been polished until it shone like a mirror. On this stood an old tarnished copper vase in which magnolia sprays about two feet high had been arranged. The present scroll was by the Chinese calligrapher Wu Tsu-lai, and around the edges was the dark lustre of gold brocade with which it had been carefully bound. The scroll itself was not of silk but paper. The passage of time, however, had matched the colour of the paper with that of the cloth on which it was mounted, giving to the whole a harmony which was independent of the writing it contained. I felt sure that the gold brocade too had not possessed its present dignity when it had first been woven, for now the colours had faded, and the gold thread frayed. The more gorgeous parts had become obliterated, making the sober portions more prominent. The ivory rod from which the scroll was suspended could be seen protruding

from both sides, its whiteness standing out in sharp relief against the dark red of the wall. In spite of this splash of colour, and the magnolias which appeared to be floating there lightly in space, the whole alcove seemed very dull, even gloomy.

Still looking at the scroll the abbot said, 'It's by Tsu-lai, isn't it?'

'Yes. I wasn't sure whether you liked his work very much either, but I thought at least he would be better than Sanyo.'

'He's far and away the better calligrapher. The Japanese scholars who lived when Yoshimune was Shogun¹ copied everything Chinese slavishly, and their writing wasn't very good. But for all that, you know, there is a certain quality about it.'

'Wasn't it Tsu-lai who said that generally speaking the Japanese were better calligraphers than the Chinese?'

'I don't know. I don't think they were as good as all that. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.'

'By the way, Abbot, who did you learn calligraphy from?'

'Me? Why, Zen priests don't go in for reading and writing you know.'

'No, but who did you learn from?'

'I studied Takaizumi's writing a little when I was young, that's all. But I'm always willing to write something if anyone asks me to. Ha, ha, ha. By the way,' he urged, 'how about showing us that ink-stone.'

All eyes now turned to the ink-stone as it was very slowly drawn out of the damask bag. It was about twice the usual thickness, measuring roughly two inches, and it was approximately four inches wide by six inches long, which is the average size. On the lid, which was of pine-bark polished in its natural rough state, were two unreadable Chinese characters written in red lacquer.

¹ Tokugawa Yoshimune was Shōgun (military leader) of Japan from 1716 to 1735.

'This lid,' began the old man, 'this lid is no ordinary one, and so as you can see, although it is undeniably of pine-bark . . .' So saying he let his eyes rest on me. As an artist, however, I felt unable to enthuse about the origin and history of a pine-bark lid, so I said, 'I think a pine lid is rather common, don't you?'

Mr Shioda raised his hands in a horrified gesture, and seemed on the point of saying, 'Good gracious!' Instead he replied, 'If it were just any old pine lid, it might be common I agree, but this one was made by Sanyo himself from bark that he stripped from a pine tree in the garden when he was in Hiroshima.'

Thinking that, as I had suspected, Sanyo had been a man of little taste, I said, 'Now I know that it was made by Sanyo himself, it seems even more clumsy than before. I feel that it would have been better had he left the rough bark alone, and not polished it like that.'

Hereupon the abbot let out a loud guffaw, and came to my support by saying, 'You're absolutely right; it makes the lid look cheap and tawdry.'

The young man looked pityingly at old Mr. Shioda's face. Mr Shioda himself pushed the lid sullenly to one side, thus revealing the true shape of the ink-stone underneath.

The most striking and attractive thing about the stone was the figure which had been carved on the upper surface. In the middle, a lump of the stone had been left slightly raised up in relief, and this was in the form of a spider's body. Radiating from the body were the eight legs, each of which ended at one of the 'bird's-eye' markings. The remaining 'bird's-eye' was in the centre of the body, and gave the impression that a drop of yellow juice had been spilled there and then smudged. A channel about an inch deep had been gouged out around the perimeter, beyond the compass of the legs. Surely, I thought, one was not supposed to mix the ink in there, for it looked as though it would hold over

a quarter of a pint of water. Presumably one took a drop of water from the container with a small silver spoon, poured it on to the spider's back, and there ground down a little of the precious ink tablet. If this were not so, then in spite of its name the ink-stone was really no more than a desk ornament.

The old man opened his mouth to speak, and looked as though at any moment he were going to dribble. 'Look at the arrangement and the markings. They're beautiful.'

He was quite right. The more one looked, the more attractive the colours became. I could imagine breathing on the cold surface, and watching the breath absorbed and turned into a mist which would permeate the richness of the colour beneath. The most remarkable thing was the colour of the 'eyes', or rather the almost imperceptible way in which their colour gradually merged and blended with the surround, throwing one's vision out of focus. When I readjusted my gaze, the 'eyes' looked as though they were right down in the transparent depths, like black beans set in a mauve-coloured jelly. An ink-stone which has even one or two of these 'bird's-eyes' is rare, and there are scarcely any at all which have nine. Should all these markings be spread equidistantly, then to think that the stone has been artificially made, is to commit a gross and unpardonable slander against one of Nature's greatest rarities.

'Yes, it certainly is wonderful. Not only is it pleasant to look at but it feels nice too,' I said, passing the ink-stone to the young man next to me.

'Do you understand such things, Kyuichi?' asked the old man with a laugh.

'No, I don't!' replied Kyuichi, flinging the words out roughly. He then passed the incomprehensible ink-stone back to me, as if he thought it a waste for him to be gazing

at it. After I had turned it round once more, carefully feeling the pleasant surface beneath my fingers, I handed it on politely to the abbot. He placed it on the palm of his hand and stared at it for a time, and then as though this did not satisfy him, he polished the back of the spider on his brown cotton robe in the most inexcusable fashion, and once again gazed with admiration at its lustre.

'You know, Mr Shioda,' he said, 'this really does have a lovely colour. Have you ever used it?'

'No. If anything happened to it, it could never be replaced, so I've kept it just the same as the day I bought it.'

'Yes, I expect this type of ink-stone is rare even in China.'

'Yes indeed.'

'I'd very much like one too. Perhaps I'll ask Kyuichi to get one for me. How about it Kyuichi; will you bring one back with you?'

'I'll probably be killed before I have a chance to find one,' laughed the young man.

'Oh, I was forgetting. This is no time to be talking of ink-stones. When do you leave?'

'Within the next two or three days.'

'Are you going down to Yoshida to see him off, Mr Shioda?'

'Well, I'm getting old, and in the normal way I would just say good-bye here. But since I don't know whether I'll ever see him again, I have decided to go.'

'You don't have to go to all that trouble, uncle,' Kyuichi said. Apparently then he was the old man's nephew. Now I came to think about it, there was a resemblance between them.

'Let your uncle come and see you off,' put in the abbot. 'There's no reason why he shouldn't if he goes downriver by boat, is there, Mr Shioda?'

'No. It would be very difficult if I had to cross the mountains, but by boat, even though it is a long way'

This time the young man kept silent and raised no objection.

'Are you off to China then?' I asked him.

'Yes.'

Although I felt this monosyllable to be scarcely an adequate answer, I had no reason to pry into his affairs, so I let the matter rest. I looked at the shōji and noticed that the 'haran' leaves had moved.

'Kyuichi! What are you thinking of?—He's been called up to go to the war because he was with the volunteers before.'

The old man went on to explain to me that his nephew would have to leave very soon for the Manchurian plains.

Since my arrival I had been under the impression that this was an idyllic dream-like mountain village where birds sang, petals fell to the earth and hot water gushed forth in streams, but where nothing else ever happened. How wrong I had been, for Reality had crossed the seas and mountains to this isolated old village to call again to battle the descendants of that once mighty clan, the Taira, the warriors of Mediaeval days. The time might now come when this young man's blood would trickle from his veins to be lost in a greater crimson tide that would stain the bleak and barren plains of Manchuria. Or possibly the time might come when from the point of the long sword he had buckled on, he himself would send another rivulet to join the tide, and another soul wafting upwards like a wisp of smoke. Yet here he sat now, next to a painter for whom dreaming was the only thing of value that life had to offer. He sat so close that had that painter listened carefully he could have even heard the beat of the young man's heart—a beat in which perhaps already were echoes of a rising tide rolling across a plain hundreds of miles away. Fate had brought these two together under the same roof, and then had left without a word.

◆ 9 ◆

'Are you studying?' asked a woman's voice. I had come back to my own room, and was reading one of the books which I had brought along on the trip tied to my tripod.

'Come in. You're not disturbing me at all.'

Without any further preamble the woman walked boldly into the room. Her well-shaped neck rose gracefully from the neck-band of her kimono, and the first thing that caught my attention as she knelt down in front of me was the contrast between the pallor of her neck and the subdued colour of the neck-band.

'I see you're reading a foreign book. I expect it's all about the most complicated things, isn't it?'

'Not really.'

'Well then, what is it about?'

'That's a difficult question. To tell you the truth I'm not absolutely sure myself.'

'Ha, ha, ha. And you call that study?'

'It isn't meant to be study. I just lay the book open on the desk, and pick out passages to read at random.'

'Do you enjoy that?'

'Yes, I enjoy it.'

'Why?'

'Why? Well, because that's the most interesting way to read a novel.'

'What a strange person you are to be sure.'

‘Yes, I suppose I am a little odd.’

‘What’s wrong with reading a novel from the beginning?’

‘Because if you start reading from the beginning, you have to go on to the end.’

‘That seems a peculiar reason. What’s wrong with reading to the end?’

‘Nothing at all, naturally. I do it myself when I want to read the story.’

‘But if you don’t read the story, what else is there left?’

‘Yes, she’s a woman all right,’ I thought, and decided to test her a little.

‘Do you like novels?’

‘Me?’—a pause, and then, ‘Well—you know,’ she added vaguely. Apparently not very much.

‘You don’t know yourself one way or the other, do you?’

‘I don’t really mind whether I read them or not,’ she said in a voice which suggested that in her eyes novels had no claim to existence.

‘If that’s the case, surely it doesn’t matter whether you start from the beginning, from the end, or pick out odd pieces here and there. I can’t see why you find my way of reading so curious.’

‘Ah, but you and I are different.’

‘How?’ I asked, looking deep into her eyes. Her gaze, however, did not waver for an instant, which made me feel that it was I who was being examined.

‘Ha, ha, ha. You mean you don’t know?’

At this I stopped my frontal attack and decided to try a flanking movement. ‘But surely you must have read quite a bit when you were young.’

‘I still consider myself to be young even now, you unkind man.’ Yet again the hawk I sent up missed its prey. The woman was constantly on her guard.

‘If you can say that in front of a man, you must be getting

on in years,' I remarked, returning with some difficulty to press my original attack.

'You must be quite old yourself if you have enough experience to make such a statement. Are you still interested in the flights and frolics of love at your age?'

'Yes, very. I shall be interested in them as long as I live.'

'Really? I suppose that is what makes you an artist.'

'Exactly. And because I am an artist I find any passage of a novel interesting even when it is out of context. I find it interesting talking to you—so much so in fact that I'd like to talk to you every day while I'm here. I'll even fall in love with you if you like; that would be particularly interesting. But however deeply I were to fall in love with you it would not mean that we had to get married. If you think that marriage is the logical conclusion to falling in love, then it becomes necessary to read novels through from beginning to end.'

'What an inhuman way of falling in love you artists have.'

'Not "*inhuman*"; *non-human*. It is because we read novels with this same non-human, objective approach that we don't care about the plot. For us it is interesting to flip open the book as impartially as if we were drawing a sacred lot, and to read aimlessly at wherever it falls open.'

'Hm, it does sound interesting, I agree. Tell me a little about the passage you were just reading. I want to know where its interest lies.'

'It's no good telling you about it. A painting isn't worth a brass farthing if you just describe it to someone, is it?'

'Ha, ha, ha. Well, read it to me.'

'In English, you mean?'

'No, in Japanese.'

'It will be a job to read English as Japanese.'

'That's all right; it will give you the right feeling of detachment.'

I thought that this might be amusing for a little, so I consented to her request. Very slowly and hesitantly I began to translate the part of the book I had been reading into Japanese. If there is such a thing as an objective way of reading, then mine was certainly it. The woman too seemed to be listening in a completely detached manner.

“Waves of tender emotion radiated from the woman—from her voice, from her eyes and from her skin. Helped by the man she went aft. Did she go to look at Venice in the dusk, and did the man give her his hand to set the lightning coursing through his veins?”—Since I’m being objective about this, I’m just giving you the gist of what is written. I may leave out some parts.’

‘That doesn’t matter at all. I don’t even mind if you put in some things of your own.’

“They stood side by side leaning on the rail, separated by less than the width of the woman’s hair ribbon which fluttered in the wind. Together they said farewell to Venice as the palace of the Doges faded from view in a pale flush of red like a second sunset.”’

‘What is a Doge?’

‘That isn’t important. The Doges were the ancient rulers of Venice. I don’t know for how many generations they ruled, but anyway their palace is still standing even to this day.’

‘Who are the man and woman in the story?’

‘I don’t know either. That’s what is so interesting. It doesn’t matter what their previous relationship might have been. Don’t you see that there is something interesting about that situation, which is independent of what comes before or after, just as there is about you and I being together here?’

‘I suppose so. They seem to be on a boat.’

‘It’s immaterial whether they are on a boat or the top of a hill; just take it as it’s written. And before you ask why,

as I can see you're going to, I'll tell you. It's because if you probe for these details you turn yourself into a detective.'

'Ha, ha, ha, ha. In that case I won't ask.'

'The average novel invariably reads like a detective's report. It is drab and tedious because it is never objective.'

'Let's get on with the next instalment of objectivity. What happens after that?'

'“Venice sank lower and lower until it became scarcely more than a line stretching across the horizon. The line broke into a series of dashes as here and there a column rose up into the opal sky. Gradually these too disappeared from view, and were finally followed by the very highest belfry which had towered over all. It's gone, said the woman. Having left Venice she felt as free as the wind, but the knowledge that one day she would have to return gripped at her heart like a vice. The man and woman stared out at the darkening bay, watching the stars which were becoming more numerous every minute, and the gentle movement of the foam-flecked sea. As he held her hand, the man had the feeling that he had taken hold of a still quivering bow-string.”'

'That doesn't sound very objective to me.'

'No, but you can listen to it objectively. Still, if you don't like it I'll skip a little, shall I?'

'No, I don't mind it.'

'Well, if you don't, I certainly don't.—Now let's see, where was I?—er—this part is rather complicated. It's very difficult to trans—I mean to read.'

'Leave it out if it's difficult.'

'All right, let's just pick out the best parts. “Just for tonight”, says the woman. “Only one night? No, that's too cruel. We'll make it many, many nights.”'

'Who says that, the man or the woman?'

'The man. If you remember, the woman doesn't want to go back to Venice, so the man says this to console her.—

"As he lay there on the deck in the small hours of the morning, his head pillowed on a coiled halyard, the memory of that moment when he had clasped the woman's hand—a moment like a single drop of hot blood—swept over him in a great wave. Staring up into the darkness he determined that come what may he would save her from falling into the abyss of a forced marriage. Having decided this he closed his eyes.—" "

'What happens to the woman?'

'"The woman wandered along the road in a daze, as though she had no clear idea of where she was going. Like one who has been spirited away through the air, only unfathomable mystery" It becomes rather difficult to read after that. Somehow it doesn't make a complete sentence—"only unfathomable mystery"—There doesn't seem to be a verb.'

'Who needs a verb? It's perfect as it is.'

'Hm?'

Suddenly there came a deep rumbling, followed by the creaking and groaning of every tree on the mountainside. As we turned instinctively towards each other, I noticed that the solitary camellia spray which was in a small vase on my desk was swinging to and fro. 'Earthquake!' gasped the woman in a frightened whisper, and relaxing her formal kneeling posture, she sank sideways into a sitting position and rested her arms on the desk. Slowly our two bodies moved closer together. At that moment with a staccato beating of wings a pheasant flew out of the nearby bamboo thicket.

'A pheasant,' I said looking out of the window.

'Where?' asked the woman relaxing still more and leaning her body against me. Our faces were now almost touching, and I could feel the breath coming from her delicate nostrils lightly brush against my moustache.

'Objectivity, remember?' she said firmly, and quickly sat upright again.

'Of course,' I replied promptly.

Outside, the spring rainwater which filled a hollow in one of the rocks had been goaded into drowsy motion by the earthquake. Since, however, the tremors which passed up through the rock had set the body of water moving as a whole, the surface remained unruffled save for a filigree pattern of lightly etched lines. The impression this gave was one of passive activity, so to speak. The reflection of wild cherry blossoms which had hitherto bathed in the pool undisturbed was now spreading and contracting, writhing and squirming in sympathy with the ripples. What struck me as extremely interesting, however, was that in spite of all its contortions it was still clearly recognisable as cherry blossom.

'That's delightful,' I said. 'It is pretty and it has variety. To be attractive motion must be just like that.'

'If only people could ride the blows of life in that fashion, they would be secure however much they were pushed around.'

'That would only be possible if they were detached and objective.'

'Ha, ha, ha, ha. You really do love objectivity, don't you?'

'You're not exactly averse to it yourself. That business of the wedding gown yesterday . . . ' I began accusingly.

'Will you give me a nice present?' she asked suddenly in a coaxing voice.

'Why?'

'Well, you said you wanted to see me in my bridal gown, so I put it on for you specially.'

'Who, I did?'

'I was told that a certain artist who had come across the

mountains was kind enough to make such a request to the old lady up at the tea-house.'

I could not think of any appropriate reply to this. The woman went on with scarcely a pause for breath.

'It's a waste of time to put oneself out to be obliging to someone as forgetful as you, isn't it?' she said, her voice filled with derision and bitterness. This was the second shaft in quick succession which she had released at point-blank range. The tide of battle was gradually turning against me, and I found it difficult to see how I was going to make up so much lost ground.

'And yesterday evening in the bathroom, that was also out of kindness then,' I said rallying slightly to meet the crisis.

There was no answer.

'I'm terribly sorry. How can I make it up to you?' I pressed on as much as I could, but with no effect. The woman just sat there with a far away expression on her face, staring at the scroll which had been written by the abbot Daitetsu. At length—

'Bamboo sweeps across the stairs,
But no dust rises
For 'tis but a shadow.'

She murmured the words softly to herself, and then turning to face me again she said, 'What did you say?' as though she had suddenly remembered that I had spoken. She asked the question in a deliberately loud voice, but I was not going to fall for that trick.

'I met the abbot earlier on,' I remarked demonstrating the same 'passive activity' as the pool of water which had been disturbed by the earthquake.

'The abbot of the Kankaiji temple? He's fat, isn't he?'

'He asked me to paint a Western style picture on a

fusuma. Those Zen priests do say the most ridiculous things, don't they?'

'That's probably why they get so fat.'

'I met a young man too.'

'I expect that was Kyuichi.'

'Yes, that's right.'

'You seem to know him very well.'

'No, I don't know anything about him except his name. He's a rather taciturn person, isn't he?'

'No, he's just shy. He's still only a boy.'

'A boy? He must be as old as you.'

'Ha, ha, ha, ha. Do you think so?—He's my cousin you know. He just came to say good-bye because he's off to the front.'

'Is he staying here?'

'No, he's at my elder brother's place.'

'Oh, so he came here especially to have tea?'

'He prefers plain warm water to tea. It would have been better if my father hadn't invited him, but he would do it. I expect Kyuichi was dreadfully bored. I would have let him go before it finished if I'd been at home, but'

'I heard from the abbot that you'd gone out somewhere. He wondered whether you were on one of your lone walks.'

'Yes, I was. I took a stroll down by the Kagami pond.'

'I'd like to go there too.'

'Yes, you must go and see it.'

'Is it a good place for painting?'

'It's a good place for dying.'

'I have no intention of dying yet a while.'

'I have. Perhaps very soon.'

I looked up sharply, thinking this too forthright a joke for a woman to make. I was surprised to find, however, that she was serious.

'Will you paint a beautiful picture of me floating in the

water?—Not in any pain you understand—but floating easily and peacefully in my eternal rest.'

'What! ?'

'Aha! That startled you. Go on, admit it. That startled you, didn't it?'

The woman slid gracefully to her feet, and having walked the three paces to the door, paused on her way out to look back at me with a trace of a smile hovering about her lips. For a long time I just sat there gazing vacantly into space.

I went down to have a look at the Kagami pond. The path behind the Kankaiji temple dipped between cryptomeria trees into the valley beneath. Here it forked, and both branches skirted the perimeter of the pond before climbing the opposite hillside. The area around the pond was covered with a thick scrub of variegated bamboo. Indeed, in some places this grew up so densely on either hand that it became almost impossible to proceed quietly. The water was visible between the trees, but never having been there before, I had no idea how far it extended in either direction. I walked on, and presently was able to see that the pond was smaller than I had imagined, being less than a quarter of a mile in length. It was extraordinarily irregular in outline, and here and there down by the water's edge there were many natural boulders. The constant outcrops which thrust forward into the waves formed an unsymmetrical contour which could scarcely be called pond-shaped.

The valley was filled with hundreds of trees of many different kinds, some of which had not as yet put forth their spring buds. In some places, where the branches were sparse enough to allow the spring sunshine to stream through in undiminished glory, there were even plants and flowers sprouting up beneath the trees. Among these I caught an occasional glimpse of the pale form of a miniature violet. In Japan, violets always give the impression that they

are dozing. By no stretch of the imagination could one call them 'a flash of divine inspiration' as did one Western poet. It was just as my thoughts reached this point that I realised I had stopped walking. I decided to remain where I was until I grew bored with the place, and considered myself very lucky to be able to do so. If I had done such a thing in Tokyo I would either have been run down immediately by a tram, or moved on by a policeman. In the city they are unable to tell the difference between a law-abiding citizen and a vagrant. Moreover, they pay enormous salaries to detectives who are the biggest rogues of all.

I eased my law-abiding buttocks down on to the cushioning grass. One could remain in such a place as this for five or six days without the fear of anybody making a complaint. That is the beauty of Nature. It is true that if forced Nature can act ruthlessly and without remorse, but on the other hand she is free of all perfidy, since her attitude is the same towards everyone who harasses her. There are any amount of people with the ability to judge without fear or favour between Iwasaki and Mitsui,¹ but only Nature could, with icy indifference, set at nought the might of all the princes since time began. Her virtue is far beyond the corrupting reach of this world, and she looks down with an absolute impartiality from the seat of judgment which she has established in infinity. It is a much wiser policy to plant acre after acre of orchids and lead one's life in solitude encompassed by their sheltering stems, than to surround oneself with the hoi-polloi and so court the same pointless misanthropic disgust as befell Timon of Athens. Society is forever holding forth about fairness and justice. If it really believes these to be of such importance, it might do well to kill off a few dozen petty criminals per day, and use their

¹ Iwasaki and Mitsui were the founders of the Mitsubishi and Mitsui companies respectively. These were and still are two of the largest concerns in Japan.

carcasses to fertilize and give life to countless fields of flowers.

I felt somehow that my thoughts had become too serious. After all, I had not come down to the Kagami pond merely to make adolescent observations on life. I took out a cigarette from the packet of *Shikishima* in my sleeve, and struck a match. I felt the match-head rasp against the box, but I could see no flame. Nevertheless I held the match to the end of my cigarette and inhaled. It was not until I finally saw the smoke coming out of my nostrils, however, that I became aware that the cigarette really was alight. A tiny wisp of smoke rising from the matchstick in the short grass, formed a long-tailed dragon which went rapidly to join its ancestors in eternity. I slithered slowly down to the water's edge. The grassy bank which had served me as a cushion ran right on into the natural pond, but I managed to stop just in time to save my feet from a tepid soaking. Having come to a halt, I squatted there staring into the water.

The part of the pond near where I was sitting was not very deep, and on the bottom I could see long slender tendrils of weed which looked as though they had given up the ghost. This is the only phrase I can think of which describes their appearance. The pampas grass up on the hill knew how to attract and yield to the touch of the wind, but this weed was waiting for some sign of affection from a flirtatious wave. Lying submerged in water which was obviously not going to move in a hundred years, it had preened itself and struck a pose waiting for the time when it too could play the coquette. It had waited in vain through an endless succession of days and nights, its long unsatiated desire to love expressed in the tip of every stem, until now it led a paralysed existence, unable to die.

Picking two handy stones out of the grass, I stood up. Out of kindness I threw one of the stones at the patch of water directly in front of me. As I did so two bubbles came

gurgling to the surface, but disappeared immediately. Those two words, 'disappeared immediately', kept echoing around in my brain. Peering down into the water, I saw that about three strands of weed had begun to move sleepily, and I was just about to cry out, 'You've been noticed,' when a muddy cloud rose up from the bottom and hid them from view. 'May your soul rest in peace.'

I flung the next stone resolutely out into the centre of the pond where it made a dull 'plop'. The imperturbable water, however, took not the slightest notice. I had now grown tired of throwing stones, and leaving my colour-box and hat where they were, I walked off a few yards to the right up a gentle incline.

I was now standing beneath the spreading branches of a large tree, and suddenly felt cold. Over on the far bank camellia bushes bloomed among the shadows. Camellia leaves are too deep a green, and have no air of light-heartedness even when seen in bright sunlight. These particular bushes were in a silent huddle, set back five or six yards in an angle between the rocks, and had it not been for the blossoms I should not have known that there was anything there at all. Those blossoms! I could not of course have counted them all if I had spent the whole day at it; yet somehow their brilliance made me want to try. The trouble with camellia blossoms is that although they are brilliant they are in no way cheerful. You find that in spite of yourself your attention is attracted by the violent blaze of colour, but once you look at them they give you an uncanny feeling. They are the most deceitful of all flowers. Whenever I see a wild camellia growing in the heart of the mountains, I am reminded of a beautiful enchantress who lures men on with her dark eyes, and then in a flash injects her smiling venom into their veins. By the time they realise that they have been tricked it is too late. No sooner had I caught sight of the camellias opposite than I wished I had not done

so. Theirs was no ordinary red. It was a colour of eye-searing intensity, which contained some indefinable quality. Pear blossoms drooping despondently in the rain only arouse in me a feeling of pity, and the cool aronia bathed in pale moonlight strikes the chords of love. The quality of camellia blossoms, however, is altogether different. It speaks of darkness and evil, and is something to be feared. It is, moreover apparent in every gaudy petal. These blossoms do not give the impression that they are flattering you, nor do they show that they are deliberately trying to entice you. They will live in perfect serenity for hundreds of years far from the eyes of man in the shadow of the mountains, flaring into bloom and falling to earth with equal suddenness. But let a man glance at them even for an instant, and for him it is the end. He will never be able to break free from the spell of the enchantress. No, theirs is no ordinary red. It is the red of an executed criminal's blood which automatically attracts men's gaze and fills their hearts with sorrow.

As I stood watching, a red flower hit the water, providing the only movement in the stillness of spring. After a while it was followed by another. Camellia flowers never drift down petal by petal, but drop from the branch intact. Although this in itself is not particularly unpleasant since it merely suggests an indifference to parting, the way in which they remain whole even when they have landed is both gross and offensive to the eye. If they continue like this, I thought, they will stain the whole pond red. Already the water in the immediate vicinity of the peacefully floating blossoms seemed to have a reddish tint. Yet another flower dropped and remained as motionless as if it had come to rest on the bank. There goes another. I wondered whether this one would sink. Perhaps over the years millions of camellia blossoms would steep in the water and, having surrendered their

colour, would rot and eventually turn to mud on the bottom. If that should happen, then they might imperceptibly build up the bed of this old stagnating pond until in thousands of years time the whole area would return to the plain it had been originally. Now a large bloom plunged downwards like a blood-smeared phantom. Another fell, and another, striking the water like a shower of pattering raindrops.

Wondering how it would be to paint a beautiful woman floating in such a pond as this, I walked back down to the water's edge. Here I smoked another cigarette, and fell to musing once more. Suddenly the words which O-Nami at the hotel had said to me jokingly came flooding back into my mind, and I felt as though my heart were a raft that was being pitched and tossed by great waves. Suppose I painted *her* floating in the water beneath those camellias, with blossom after blossom dropping on her from above. I wanted to create the impression that the camellia blossoms would continue to fall, and the woman remain floating there throughout all eternity, but I was not sure that this would make a good picture. According to *Laokoon*—but who cares about that? Providing that a painting expresses the desired feeling, it makes not the slightest difference whether or not it conforms to any principles. I knew, however, that it was going to be no easy task to express so non-human a concept as eternity while using a human subject. First and foremost was the problem of the girl's face. I wanted to use O-Nami's face, but her expressions were all wrong. Her look of suffering would be so overpowering that it would destroy the whole effect, while her outbursts of immoderate gaiety would be even worse. Thinking that perhaps I ought to use someone else's face, I ran through all the women I knew counting them off on my fingers, but none of them was satisfactory. O-Nami was the most suitable after all, yet there was something lacking. That much I realised, but since I could not

put my finger on the deficiency, it was impossible to make the appropriate alteration to her expression as I pictured it in my mind. If I added jealousy, the feeling of uneasiness would be too strong. What about hatred? No, that was too violent. Anger? No, that would completely shatter the harmony. I dismissed bitterness because, with the exception of the poetic bitterness of love, I consider it too vulgar. Having thought over various other possibilities, the answer suddenly dawned on me. I had forgotten that there exists among the many emotions one called compassion. It is unknown to the gods, and yet it is the very emotion that can elevate man to near-deity. There was not a trace of compassion in O-Nami's expression; that was what was missing. The instant I saw a flicker of this emotion pass across her features roused by some momentary impulse, I would be able to complete my picture; but when or even if that time would come I had no way of knowing. Her usual expression was only a faint mocking smile accompanied by a frown which showed a burning determination to win at all costs. This by itself was useless to me.

I heard the harsh rustling sound of someone treading among the bamboo undergrowth, and the plan of my picture, which was two thirds completed in my head, crumbled. Looking up I saw a man going towards the Kankaiji temple, having presumably come down the neighbouring hillside. He was wearing a tight-sleeved kimono, and carried a bundle of faggots on his back.

'Lovely weather,' he said, untying a towel from around his head. As he bowed the blade of a hatchet thrust into his belt flashed in the sunlight. He was a powerfully built man of about forty, and I had a feeling that I had seen him somewhere before. He treated me with the easy familiarity of an old friend.

'Do you paint too, sir?' he asked noticing my open colour-box.

'Yes. I came down to have a look at this pond because I thought I might paint it, but this is a lonely place, isn't it? Nobody seems to come here.'

'Yes, it certainly is isolated You must have had a terrible time of it in all that rain up in the pass.'

'Eh? Oh, you're the packhorse driver I met there.'

'That's right. I cut firewood like this, and take it down to the town,' said Gembei, for it was he. Lowering his bundle to the ground, he sat down on it and took out a tobacco pouch. This was so old that it was impossible to tell whether it was paper or leather. I offered him a match.

'Don't you find it a job having to cross the mountains every day like that?'

'No, I'm used to it. Besides, I only go once every three days, or sometimes every four days; it all depends.'

'I wouldn't want to do it even once in four days.'

'Ha, ha, ha, ha. I try and keep it down to once in four days because the trip's hard on the horse.'

'So the horse is more important than you, is he? Ha, ha, ha, ha.'

'Well, I wouldn't quite say that'

'By the way, this pond is extremely old, isn't it? How long has it been here, for heaven's sake?'

'For ages.'

'For ages? What do you mean by ages?'

'Well, from a very long time ago.'

'A very long time ago. I see.'

'I know it's been here for years and years, because this is where the Shioda girl drowned herself.'

'Shioda? At the hot spring, you mean?'

'That's right.'

'You say she drowned herself? But she's still alive and well.'

'No, no, no. I'm not talking about the present Mr Shioda's daughter. This was years ago.'

'Years ago? How long?'

'Oh, way back in olden times.'

'And why did *she* drown herself?'

'It seems, sir, that she was just as beautiful as this Mr Shioda's daughter.'

'Go on.'

'One day a bōronji came along ...'

'You mean one of those wandering minstrels?'

'Yes. You know, they used to go from place to place playing a flute, and begging. Well, Shioda's beautiful daughter saw him while he was staying at their place, and it was a case of love at first sight.—What they call Fate, I believe. Anyhow, she said she simply had to marry him, and burst into tears.'

'Did she? Well, well, well.'

'But her father wouldn't hear of it. He said that a bōronji wasn't a fit husband for her, and quickly threw him out of the house. The girl followed him, and then when she got as far as this she threw herself into the water from somewhere near that pine tree you can see over there.—It caused a tremendous stir in the village.—The girl had a mirror with her when she drowned herself, so the story goes. That's why even to this day this is called the Kagami pond.'

'I see. So this pond has already been somebody's grave, has it?'

'Yes, a very extraordinary affair, indeed.'

'How many years ago was this supposed to have happened?'

'Oh, years and years back.—But you know sir, between you and me ...'

'Yes?'

'There's been somebody mad in every generation of the Shioda family.'

'You don't say.'

'There's a curse on them, and no mistake. Everybody

makes fun of O-Nami Shioda because they say she's become strange lately.'

'Ha, ha, ha, ha. Nonsense.'

'Maybe you're right. But her old lady was definitely queer in the head.'

'Does she live with the family?'

'No, she died last year.'

'Hm,' was all the reply I made as I watched a thin coil of smoke rise from the tobacco ash which my companion had knocked from his pipe. Gembei shouldered his load again and left.

I had come to this pond to paint, but it was clear that if I continued musing and listening to such tales I would not produce a solitary picture even if I remained here for days. Since I had gone to the trouble of bringing my colour-box with me, I felt that the least I could do today would be to make some preliminary sketches of the place. Fortunately the scenery opposite would need very little rearranging to turn it into a picture, and I thought that I might make some sort of attempt at painting it.

In an angle of the tortuous shore-line away to the right, a rock lifted its rugged bulk over ten feet out of the thick stagnant water. The bamboo which I mentioned before completely covered the precipitous side of the rock and reached right down to the water's edge. At the top, an enormous ivy-mantled pine tree about three arm spans in circumference had wrenched itself askew and leaned more than half its length out over the water. It was probably from the top of that rock that the woman had jumped clutching the mirror to her breast.

I sat down on my tripod and cast an appraising eye over the materials that would go to make up the picture. There was the pine tree, the bamboo, the rock and the water. I could not decide, however, how much of the latter I ought to include, for the ten foot high rock cast a reflection of

equal length into the depths and the bamboo was so clearly mirrored that it appeared to have continued its luxuriant growth right out into the water. Moreover, the image of the enormous towering pine tree stretched far across the pond. It was obvious that I would not get the whole scene on to the canvas in the proportions in which they appeared to me, and this led me to think that it might be interesting to paint just the reflections. I felt sure that I would astonish people if I showed them a canvas which depicted only water and reflections, and claimed that it was a picture. Mere astonishment, however, was worthless. I wanted to find some way to present these things which would astonish people because it forced them to admit that they did constitute a picture. Staring intently at the surface of the water, I sought for a solution.

Strangely enough I could think of no expedient while looking at just the reflections, and I felt that I needed to compare them with their actual counterparts. I allowed my gaze to travel slowly from the tip of the rock's reflection up to where image joined reality, and then on again upwards appreciating as I did so not only the overall atmosphere of permanence and solidity, but also every detail of the wrinkled surface. When finally my eyes reached the top of that dangerous rock, I dropped my sketchbook and brush in surprise, and froze like a toad beneath the hypnotic stare of a snake.

The shadows of the spring evening were beginning to deepen, and the last rays of sunlight slanted down through the green foliage making a patchwork quilt of light and shade as a backdrop to the rock. Into this I could see a face clearly interwoven. It was the face of the woman who had startled me as she stood beneath the aronia blossoms; who had startled me by entering my room as a phantom; who had startled me when wearing her wedding gown; and who had startled me in the bathroom.

For a second I sat rooted to the spot with my gaze fixed on the woman's face. She too stood perfectly immobile on top of the rock, drawing her supple body up to its full height. It was an exquisite moment.

Suddenly without thinking I leaped to my feet, and as I did so she swung round nimbly. I had scarcely time to glimpse a snatch of red like a camellia blossom in her obi before she jumped down the other side and was gone. The evening sun rested gently on the tree tops, subtly dyeing the trunk of the great pine, and making the bamboo look an even darker green.

Once again I had been startled.

◆ 11 ◆

Thinking it a pity to waste the spring twilight by staying indoors, I had come out for a walk. Going up the flight of stone steps which led to the Kankaiji temple I had made up the following lines to express the simple child-like awe with which the sight of the stars filled me.

Turn your face up—two, three,
And count—four, five,
The stars in the spring sky—six, seven, eight

There was no particular business that I had wanted to discuss with the abbot, nor had I even felt the desire for a chat. I had simply left the hotel on the spur of the moment and strolled along aimlessly until I came to the large stone lantern set at the foot of the steps. For a while I had just stood there running my hand lightly over the stone surface on which was carved, 'No alcohol or strongly flavoured vegetables are to be brought into the temple.' Then quite suddenly I had felt a surge of happiness and had begun to climb.

In *Tristram Shandy*, Sterne states that there is no method of writing more in accordance with the will of God than his. He says that he composes the opening gambit by his own efforts, but that thereafter it is a matter of fervent prayer and leaving the movement of the pen to God. Accordingly he has, of course, no idea of what he is going

to write or of his ultimate destination. He only holds the pen, and it is God who does the writing. Thus, apparently, he is free from all responsibility. My stroll, and Sterne's method of writing had much in common, since they both drank at the well of irresponsibility. On my side, however, the lack of responsibility was greater, for I had not even relied on God. Sterne got rid of his responsibility by thrusting it on to his Heavenly Father, but I, who have no God to take it from me, finally dispose of mine by throwing it into a ditch with the rest of the rubbish.

I had no intention of climbing the stone steps if the ascent should prove laborious. At the first signs of fatigue I would have withdrawn from the fray. However, stopping on the first step, I had unaccountably felt a sense of pleasure, and so had proceeded to the second. On the second step I had had the urge to compose a poem. In silence I regarded my shadow. There had seemed something strange and mysterious about the way in which it was arrested and broken by the edge of the third step; and because of this air of mystery, I had continued my climb. I had gazed up at the heavens and seen a host of small stars blinking out at me from the sleepy depths. This had struck me as poetic, and once again I had gone on, until in this way I had eventually reached the top.

Here I had been reminded of something that happened a long time ago when I went on a trip to Kamakura. I had been roaming around having a look at the five most famous temples there, and I am almost certain that this particular incident took place at an outer shrine of the Enkakuji temple. I was slowly plodding up a flight of stone steps, just as at the Kankaiji, when a priest wearing a saffron robe and with a flat-crowned head emerged from the gateway at the top. I was going up, and the priest was coming down. When we drew level he asked me sharply where I was going. I stopped and replied that I wanted to have a look round the

temple grounds. 'There's nothing to see,' he said curtly, and hurried away down the steps. His unexpectedly frank and easy manner took me unawares, and I was still standing at the top of the steps watching his flat-crowned head bob from side to side, when he disappeared from view among some cryptomeria trees. During the entire descent he had not given a single backward glance. Zen priests certainly are interesting people, I thought. They are always short, sharp and to the point. I trudged in through the temple gate and looked about. There was not a living soul in either the priests' quarters or in the main hall. The whole place looked desolate. On seeing this I felt elated. The thought that there were in the world people as straightforward as the priest I had just met who dealt with you frankly somehow reassured me. It was not that I was well versed in Zen Buddhism, for to tell the truth I did not know the first thing about it. No, it was just that I was taken with the attitude of the priest with the singularly shaped head.

The world is full of the most terrible people who are importunate, coarse, niggling and, to crown it all, brazen. Indeed, it is incomprehensible why some of them ever showed their faces on earth in the first place. They assume airs and graces, but in reality there is nothing great about them at all. Because of their expansive appearance, the fickle world frequently casts its spotlight on them, and they labour under the misapprehension that this is fame. They will set a detective on your tail for five or ten years to reckon up how many times you break wind, and they think this is Life. Moreover, they will, on occasion, leap out in front of you and impart such unsolicited information as, 'You farted x number of times'. When they tell you this face to face, you may listen and make a note of it for future reference. But the refrain, 'You farted x number of times', often comes from behind. If you say they are a nuisance,

they do it all the more. If you tell them to stop it, they redouble their efforts. Even if you say that you know, they will still repeat, 'You farted x number of times'. This is their idea of how to live with their fellow creatures. They are, of course, free to formulate their own principles for living, providing that these do not include telling people, 'You farted, you farted'. It is only common decency to desist from any course of action which is going to inconvenience others. If, however, they cannot find such a course of action, then I shall have no choice but to adopt farting as my policy; and if that should ever happen, it will be a sorry day for Japan.

My aimless wandering on that beautiful spring evening at the Kankaiji temple was a practical manifestation of refinement. If inspiration came to me, I would accept its coming as the reason for my walk; if it left me, then its departure would become my reason. If I should compose a poem, to compose would have been my object; if I should not, then my aim would have been not to compose. Moreover, I was not inflicting myself on anybody. Thus mine was an unimpeachable principle. Counting how many times others break wind is a policy of personal attack to which farting itself is a legitimate means of defence. I, however, in climbing the steps of the temple as I had just done, was pursuing a policy of 'live and let live, and follow wherever Fate may lead.'

Turn your face up—two, three,

And count—four, five,

The stars in the spring sky—six, seven, eight . . .

By the time I had made up these lines I was above the field of light shed by the stone lantern, and thus was able to discern through the dusk the softly shimmering surface of the vernal sea which lay unrolled beneath me like a broad patterned sash. I now passed through the gateway. I was no

longer in the mood for composing Chinese style quatrains, and so decided upon a policy of stopping immediately.

On the right of the stone-paved path which led to the priests' living quarters was a wild azalea hedge, beyond which, I imagined, would be the burial ground. To the left stood the main temple hall. It was a tall imposing building whose tiled roof had taken on a dull sheen in the moonlight. Looking up I became sensible of an air of great antiquity: of untold moons who had poured their light on innumerable tiles. Somewhere I could hear the repeated cooing of pigeons. They seemed to be living beneath the ridge of the roof. I did not know whether it was my imagination, but I fancied that the eaves were flecked with white. Pigeon droppings, perhaps.

Beneath the overhang of the eaves I could see a line of weird shadowy forms. They did not look like trees, and yet they were obviously too tall to be flowers or clumps of grass. The impression they gave was that the 'Praying Spirits' painted by Iwasa Matabei¹ had ceased praying and begun dancing. They danced in a well-ordered row which extended from one end of the main hall to the other, accompanied by the equally well-ordered line of their own shadows. They had probably found the beauty of the evening irresistible, and paused only long enough to persuade each other before abandoning their gongs, bell-hammers² and records of sacred offerings, and coming here to dance.

When I drew closer, the forms proved to be great cactus plants about seven or eight feet tall. Their green gourds, which were the size of sponge cucumbers, resembled in shape large flattened soup spoons with the handles pointing downwards. The plants were, in fact, composed of a series of these gourds each sprouting from the stem of the one

¹ Iwasa Matabei, Japanese artist (1578-1650)

² Used in Buddhist services.

beneath, and stretching up and up in a spatulate progression which would eventually end Heaven only knew where. It seemed likely that these cacti would, this very evening, break their way through the eaves and emerge on to the roof above. Undoubtedly, the 'spoons' suddenly materialized out of thin air fully grown, for I could not imagine the older ones giving birth to young which gradually grew to maturity in the fullness of time. This persistent sticking of one 'spoon' upon another was somehow eccentric. There can be few plants as comical as the cactus, and yet it affects an air of composed indifference. A certain Zen priest when asked by a pupil, 'What is Buddha?' is said to have replied, 'That oak tree in the garden.' If, however, I were asked the same question, I should answer without a moment's hesitation, 'That lord of all plants: a cactus in the moonlight.'

When I was a boy, I read an account by the classical Chinese writer Ch'ao Pu-chih of a journey he once made, and there is one passage which I can still quote from memory. I repeated the words over to myself.

It was the ninth month of the year. Not a cloud obscured the vault of heaven. The dew lay pure upon the ground and the mountains were deserted. The moon was bright, and the stars, which shone brilliantly, seemed to have been casually scattered across the sky. Cast on the shōji were the shadows of a thousand bamboo stems from which the passing wind drew a ceaseless rustling whisper. Between the bamboos could be seen a host of plum and palm trees like hobgoblins with hair in spiky disarray. My companions discussed this with each other, and it so disturbed them that they were unable to sleep. The next morning we departed.

Suddenly I burst out laughing. Given the right combination of time and place I too might have been disturbed by

these cactus plants, and gone scuttling down the mountain-side as soon as I had caught sight of them. I touched the spines and felt them prick my fingers.

Having followed the stone path to the end, I bore to the left and came to the misericord in front of which stood a large magnolia. I should say that this tree had a girth of almost an arm-span, and in height too it was considerable, being taller than the building. Above my head was tier upon tier of branches, and finally, perched on top of all, the moon. Usually when a tree has so many branches you can see very little of the sky from below, and if there are blossoms as well, then it is completely blotted out. The magnolia, however, is not cluttered with scores of useless twigs which throw the eyes of the person beneath into confusion. Thus, however many branches there may be, the patches of sky between them are always sharply defined. Even the blossoms themselves are distinct, and from far below one may still make out each individual bloom. It is impossible to judge the extent of this swarm of blossoms, yet nevertheless each one is a separate entity, and between them the pale blue of the sky is clearly visible. Magnolia blossoms are not of course pure white in colour, for stark unrelieved whiteness is too cold, and seems to be no more than a deliberately immodest device to attract men's eyes. No, they are different. They purposely avoid extreme whiteness, and their warm creamy tint is an expression of gentility and self-depreciation. Standing on the flagstones gazing upward, I was lost, for a while, in contemplation of how this pagoda of modest blossoms seemed to rise and spread endlessly into the vastness of space. My whole attention was held by the flowers. For me not a single leaf existed. The following lines formed in my mind.

Above, the sometime realm of star and moon
Is all magnolia to my enraptured gaze.

Somewhere the pigeons were still cooing softly to each other.

I entered the porch of the misericord. The verandah which ran along the side of the building was completely open, seemingly indicating that this was a world where thieves were unknown. There were of course no dogs to bark.

The only response to the call of 'Excuse me,' with which I announced my visit was a deathly hush. Once again I called out in the hope that someone would come and show me the way. 'Is anybody there?' All I heard was the 'coo, coo, coo' of the pigeons.

'Is anybody there?' This time I shouted the words. An answering bellow sounded far off within the building. In all the times I had visited people's houses I had never received such a reply as this. At length there came the sound of footsteps approaching the verandah, and the light from a taper fell on the other side of the shōji. Suddenly a young priest was standing before me. It was Ryonen.

'Is the abbot at home?'

'Yes, he is. May I ask what you want him for?'

'Will you tell him, please, that the artist who is staying at the hot spring is here?'

'Oh, you're the artist? Come on in.'

'Hadn't you better tell the abbot I'm here first?'

'No, that's all right.'

I slipped off my wooden clogs and stepped up on to the verandah.

'You're a rather ill-mannered artist, aren't you?'

'Why?'

'Put your clogs straight. Look here,' he said thrusting the taper almost under my nose. In the middle of one of the black posts of the porchway, no more than five feet from the ground was a small piece of paper on which I could just make out some writing.

'Read that. It says, "First, set thine own house in order."'

'I see,' I replied, carefully arranging my clogs.

We walked along the verandah, followed its right-angled turn and came to the abbot's room which was next to the main hall. Ryonen knelt respectfully and eased open the shōji.

'Er, I'm sorry to trouble you sir, but the artist from Shioda's is here.' His extremely apologetic attitude struck me as rather amusing.

'Is he? Show him in.'

Ryonen withdrew, and I went in. The room was very small. On the hearth which had been cut in the centre, an iron kettle was singing. The abbot, who was sitting across the room, had been reading.

'Come in, come in,' he said removing his spectacles and pushing his book to one side. 'Ryonen! Ryo—ne—n!'

'Ye—es?'

'Bring a cushion for our guest, will you?'

'Ye—es,' came Ryonen's protracted reply from some way off.

'It's nice to see you. I expect you got terribly bored.'

'There was such a beautiful moon that I thought I'd take a stroll.'

'It is beautiful,' he agreed opening the shōji.

Just across the level garden, whose only contents were two stepping stones and a pine tree, was the edge of the cliff, and there spread out immediately beneath me in the evening was the sea. Here and there on the water was the flicker of fishing-fires. Those in the farthest distance had forsaken the sea for the sky, presumably with the intention of becoming stars.

'What a wonderful view, Abbot. Don't you think it's a pity to keep the shōji shut?'

'It is, of course, but I see it every evening.'

'But you could never tire of scenery like this, however

many evenings you saw it. I'd go without sleep to look at it.'

'Ha, ha, ha, ha. Obviously, because you're an artist. But you and I are a little different.'

'But, Abbot, if you can appreciate the beauty of it, then you too are an artist.'

'Yes, I suppose that's true, though I've never got farther than drawing pictures of Dharma Buddha. Speaking of Dharma, there's a picture of him here. My predecessor painted it. I think it's very well done.'

Sure enough there was a scroll painting of Dharma Buddha hanging in a small alcove. As a picture it was, however, atrocious. All that could be said for it was that it was not vulgar or worldly, and the artist had made no attempt to cover up his lack of skill. It was an unsophisticated painting.

'It's an unsophisticated piece of work, isn't it?'

'That's quite sufficient for a priest. Providing that it expresses his mood . . .'

'Well, it's better than being skilfully executed but vulgar.'

'Ha, ha, ha, ha. I accept the compliment. By the way, have they instituted a Doctor of Painting degree recently?'

'No, there's no such thing as a Doctor of Painting.'

'Oh, isn't there? Anyway, I met one the other day.'

'You did?'

'I suppose to get a doctorate you have to be a remarkable person.'

'Yes, I suppose you do.'

'You know, it seems to me that there ought to be a doctorate for painting. I wonder why there isn't one.'

'If you take that view, there ought to be a doctorate for priests too, oughtn't there?'

'Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Perhaps that's so.—Now what was his name, that fellow I met recently? I ought to have his card here somewhere.'

'Where did you meet him, in Tokyo?'

'No, here. I haven't been up to Tokyo in twenty years. I hear that recently they've started running those tramcar things. I'd rather like to have a ride on one.'

'You wouldn't like it at all. They're too noisy.'

'Maybe you're right. They say that those of little learning disbelieve and ridicule the greatest achievements, and those of little experience fear all things. If that's the case, perhaps an old yokel like me, far from enjoying a tram ride, would be upset by it.'

'It wouldn't upset you. You just wouldn't find it interesting, that's all.'

'Perhaps you're right.'

Steam was now issuing steadily from the spout of the kettle. The abbot took out the tea things from a small chest of drawers, and poured me a cup of tea.

'Have some tea. It's very poor quality, I'm afraid. Not nearly as good as old Mr Shioda's.'

'I'm sure it's very nice.'

'You seem to do quite a lot of wandering about from place to place. This is so that you can paint, is it?'

'Yes. All I take with me is my colour-box, but whether I actually produce a picture or not doesn't worry me.'

'So these trips are half for pleasure, are they?'

'Yes, I suppose you could say that. The fact is, I don't like having people count how many times I break wind.'

Zen priest though he was, this was one metaphor that apparently the abbot could not understand.

'What do you mean by "counting how many times you break wind"?'

'If you live in Tokyo for any length of time, you have your farts reckoned up.'

'How do you mean?'

'If that were all it wouldn't be so bad, but they do such unwarranted things as examining your backside to see whether your anus is triangular or square.'

'Ah, you mean the sanitary inspectors, I suppose.'

'No, I do not mean the sanitary inspectors. I mean detectives.'

'Detectives? Oh, I see, the police. What in the world is the use of the police? Are they really necessary, I wonder?'

'Well, artists certainly don't need them.'

'Nor do I. I have never yet had occasion to ask for their assistance.'

'No, I don't suppose you have.'

'But I don't see that it should bother you, however much they may count the times you break wind. Why don't you just ignore them? For all that they are police, they can do nothing unless you have committed some crime.'

'Even their fart-counting is insufferable.'

'I remember that my predecessor often used to tell me when I was a young priest, that a man cannot be said to have completed his education until he can stand at Nihon-bashi in the centre of Tokyo, and lay bare his soul to the world without embarrassment. You too should strive towards that end, for if you attained it, you wouldn't have to take these trips to find peace of mind.'

'I could reach that state if I became a true artist.'

'Then you had better become one.'

'I can't all the time I'm having my farts counted.'

'Now look at O-Nami Shioda down where you're staying. She had so much weighing on her mind when she came back to her father's place after her divorce, that she could not bear it; and because she could not bear it she eventually came to me and asked for religious instruction. Recently she has improved tremendously. Look at her, she's now a highly rational woman.'

'Yes, I thought somehow that she was no ordinary woman.'

'She isn't. She has an extremely quick and lively mind.—Because of her, a young priest named Taian, who was here

to finish his training, came to realise that destiny had ordained that he must devote himself to studying things of magnitude and not waste his time on trifling matters.—I believe he will now become a very wise man.'

The shadow of the pine tree fell across the garden. Far below, the sea, as though torn with indecision, sent back dim intermittent flashes to answer those in the sky.

'Look at the shadow of that pine tree,' I said.

'It's pretty, isn't it?'

'Just "pretty"?''

'Yes.'

'Not only is it pretty, it has the advantage of having nothing to fear even if the wind should blow.'

I drank the last drops of coarse tea, and then placing the cup upside down on the saucer, I stood up.

'I'll see you as far as the gate. Ryo—ne—n! Our guest is leaving.'

Accompanied by the abbot and Ryonen, I left the misericord. The pigeons were still cooing.

'There is nothing more charming than a pigeon. When I clap my hands, they fly to me. Shall I call them?'

The moon had grown brighter. In perfect silence the magnolia offered up its innumerable clouds of blossoms to the sky. There in the lonely emptiness of a spring night, the abbot clapped his hands sharply. The sound, however, died in the wind, and not a single pigeon came.

'They aren't going to come down. I thought they would.'

Ryonen looked at my face and smiled slightly. The abbot seemed to think that the pigeons would be able to see in the dark. He was an optimist.

At the gateway, I parted from my two companions. Looking back I could see two round shadows, one large and one small, on the paving. They changed places and disappeared in the direction of the misericord.

◆ 12 ◆

As I remember, it was Oscar Wilde who said that Christ possessed a superlatively artistic temperament. I do not know about Christ, but the abbot of the Kankaiji temple certainly qualifies for such a description. This is not to say that he was a man of good taste, or that he was conversant with all that was going on in the world about him. The scroll painting of Dharma Buddha that he had hung on the wall was one to which you would scarcely deign to apply the word picture, yet he felt that it was well done. He was convinced that there was such a degree as Doctor of Painting, and thought that pigeons could see in the dark. In spite of this, I still say that he can be termed an artist. His mind may be compared to the stomach, which being open at both ends allows nothing to accumulate. Since everything within his mind was constantly on the move and passed through freely, there was no sign that any deposit had remained behind to putrefy. Given just an added dash of discrimination, he would have been a perfect artist, at one with his surroundings wherever he might find himself, even in the course of the trivial round of everyday life. I, on the other hand, am the sort of person who can never become a true artist as long as he is having his farts counted by detectives. I can stand before an easel, and I can hold a palette, but that does not make an artist. Only in a place like this mountain village, even the name of which I do not

know, with my five foot odd of slender body totally submerged in the darkening colours of spring, am I able to achieve a truly artistic frame of mind. Once I have entered this realm, all the beauty of the universe is mine, and without painting even one square inch of canvas, indeed without so much as lifting my brush, I become a great artist. I may not equal Michelangelo in technique, nor be able to match Raphael in skill, but in intrinsic artistic character I acknowledge not the slightest inferiority to any artist, however great, who has ever lived. Since I had come to the hot spring I had not yet painted a single picture. This gives the impression that I had only brought my colour-box with me to satisfy an idle whim, and there may be those who will laugh and wonder whether I thought I should become an artist merely by so doing. For all their laughter, however, the fact remains that here, I was a true artist, a fine artist. It does not follow that everyone who achieves this state of mind that I was now in will necessarily produce a masterpiece, but what can be said is that it is impossible to produce a masterpiece unless you do achieve this state of mind.

These, then, were my sentiments as I sat lingering over a cigarette after breakfast. The sun had risen high above the morning haze, and when I opened the shōji I could see green-clad trees on a hill away to the rear of the house. There was something remarkably diaphanous about them and they looked unusually bright and fresh.

I have always thought the relationship between air, objects and colours to be one of the most fascinating studies that this world has to offer. The problem is whether one should make the colours of prime importance and thus bring out the quality of the air, or whether to disregard the air in favour of stressing the objects themselves. There is a third alternative, namely to make the air the most important factor, and weave both colours and objects into it.

Every slight nuance in treatment produces a picture of a different mood, and this mood varies according to the individual tastes of the artist. This of course is an obvious point. Moreover, it is equally obvious that the mood is also automatically dictated by time and place. There is not a solitary bright landscape painted by an English artist. Perhaps the reason is that they dislike bright paintings, but with the air they have in England they could not paint one even if they wanted to. Goodall was an Englishman, but the quality of his colours is altogether different, as well it might be, for although English, he never once painted an English scene. He never chose a theme from his own country, but instead painted landscapes of Egypt and Persia where the air is infinitely clearer. His pictures are so vivid that everyone seeing them for the first time is astonished, and wonders how an Englishman was able to produce such clarity of colour.

Nothing can be done about the divergence of individual tastes, but we must at least bring out that quality of air and colour which is peculiar to Japan when we take a piece of Japanese scenery as our subject. You cannot say, 'This is a Japanese landscape,' of a picture in which the artist has slavishly copied colour tones as they appear in French paintings, however much you admire French art. You must meet Nature face to face, studying her every shape and form from dawn to dusk, until such time as you feel that you have found just the right colours. You must then grab your tripod and immediately rush out to record them on canvas, for a particular shade lasts but a moment, and once gone will not easily be discovered again. The crest of the hill at which I was now looking was full of wonderful colours the like of which were rarely to be seen in this region of Japan. Having taken the trouble to come here, I felt it a pity to waste this opportunity, and so decided to go and

try my hand at reproducing these colours in a picture.

Sliding back the fusuma, I stepped out on to the verandah, and found O-Nami leaning against the shōji of the first-floor room opposite. Her chin was buried in the neck band of her kimono, so that only one side of her face was visible. I was on the point of calling out to her, when her left hand dropped to her side, and in the same instant her right hand moved like the wind. A flash, which might almost have been lightening, shot two or three times across her chest. Then came a sharp click, the flash vanished and in her left hand she was holding a white-wood sheath about a foot long. The next moment she disappeared behind the shōji. I left the hotel feeling that I had been watching a very early morning performance of Kabuki.¹

I turned left out of the gate along a path which very soon began to slope gently upwards. Here and there I could hear the song of an uguisu. The ground to my right fell away into a peaceful valley which was one mass of mandarin orange trees, and to my left, two low hills stood side by side. Here too there seemed to be nothing but a profusion of orange trees. I had been to this area once some years before. I cannot be bothered to work out how many years ago that was, but anyway, it was in December, and it was cold. That was the first time I had ever witnessed the sight of a hillside completely covered with orange trees. I asked one of the pickers if she would sell me a few oranges, and she replied that I was welcome to as many as I wanted, free. Then, still perched at the top of a tree, she began to sing a strange melody. If this were Tokyo, I thought, I would even have to go and buy dried peel at a chemist's. In the evening, I heard guns being fired repeatedly, and when I asked what was happening, was told that it was the hunters out after wild duck. All this, of course, happened at a time

¹ Kabuki, like Noh, is a form of traditional Japanese drama.

when, as yet, I had been spared even so much as the sound of O-Nami's name.

O-Nami, I thought, would make a first class actress. When before the footlights, most actors and actresses have to assume a special manner for the occasion, but O-Nami was different: her home was her stage, and her life one continuous performance. She was, moreover, quite unaware that she was playing a part, for to act was second nature to her. Hers was what, I suppose, you might describe as an aesthetic life. Thanks to her, my study of art had been considerably advanced.

Her behaviour was such that, unless regarded as play-acting, it would seem weird, and rapidly become intolerable. Set against a background of stock concepts like duty and compassion, and viewed from the standpoint of the average novelist, it appears over-stimulated, and thus disagreeable. I could well imagine the probably unspeakable anguish which would result for me, an inhabitant of the world of reality, should any involved relationship develop between her and myself. Since the whole object of my present trip was to get away from everyday human ties, and do my utmost to become an artist, it was essential that I should regard everything I saw as a picture, and all the people I met as though they were merely performers in a Noh drama, or characters in a poem. Seen in the light of this resolution, O-Nami's behaviour and mode of life were more beautiful than those of any woman I had ever met. They were far more beautiful than those of an actress in a play, simply because she herself was not consciously trying to give a beautiful performance.

It would indeed be discourteous if people, misunderstanding these ideas, were to censure me as unfit to be a member of society. It is hard to follow the ways of virtue and righteousness, and the preservation of integrity is no easy task. Moreover, it requires courage to lay down one's life

for honour's sake. Since suffering awaits all those who dare these paths, there must be joy in the conquest of pain if we are to muster the necessary courage to do so. Painting, poetry and drama are but different names for this joy which is couched in misery. Only when we are able to appreciate the existence of such joy can our actions become heroic, our lives purged of impurity, and can we desire to gratify that supreme spark of poetry which lies within our hearts, by overcoming all hardship and privation. Only then are we able to disregard physical pain and material discomfort, and gladly suffer death at the stake in the cause of humanity. If it is possible to define art solely in the narrow terms of human emotion, then it is that uncompromising determination to forsake evil, and turn to virtue; to fight on the side of truth and justice in the war against iniquity; to help the weak and afflicted, and destroy the mighty, which has crystalized within the hearts of us men of culture, and which reflects the illuminating light of day.

A man whose behaviour is considered theatrical is laughed at. He is ridiculed if he should deviate so far from the human norm as to make an unnecessary sacrifice in order to convey the beauty of his feelings; and scoffed at for the absurdity of forcefully thrusting his views and ideas upon the world, instead of waiting for an opportunity to express his nobility of character by some natural means. It is permissible for those who really understand such things to laugh, but revilement by louts who have no capacity whatsoever for appreciating the finer feelings of others, and compare them with their own mean nature, is intolerable. There was once a young boy named Fujimura who committed suicide by plunging over a five hundred foot waterfall into the swirling rapids below. Before he died he wrote a poem called 'The Cliff-Top'.¹ As I see it, that youth gave

¹ Fujimura was one of Sōseki's pupils who in 1903 at the age of eighteen committed suicide by drowning himself.

his life—the life which should not be surrendered—for all that is implicit in the one word ‘poetry’. Death itself is truly heroic. It is the motive which prompts it that is difficult to comprehend. What right, however, have those who are not even able to see the heroism of death to ridicule Fujimura’s behaviour? It is my contention that they have no right at all, for being confined by their inability to sympathize with the concept of bringing life to a heroic conclusion, however much such a step may be justified by circumstances, they are inferior to him in character.

As an artist, my specialization in mood and sentiment raises me above my more prosaic neighbours, even though I am forced to share the same world with them. Furthermore, as a member of society, I occupy a position from which I may easily educate others, for I am more readily able to perform beautiful deeds than those who are strangers to poetry and painting, and have no artistic accomplishment. In our dealings with one another, a beautiful deed is virtue, justice and righteousness; and whoever manifests these in his daily life is a model to his fellow men.

I had, for a while, been able to stand aside and view the complexity of human emotions and relationships objectively, and there was no reason for me to become involved again, at least for the duration of this trip. In fact, it was imperative that I should not become involved, for if that should happen it would mean that all my efforts had been wasted. I had to take human nature, sift out the sand and grit, and then spend my time gazing at the beautiful gold which remained in the bottom of the sieve. I was not at present a member of society, but a pure artist who, having succeeded in severing the bonds of self-interest, was leading his life peacefully in a painted world. It goes without saying, of course, that it was essential for me to view the mountains, the sea and the people around me as no more

than pieces of scenery, and to accept O-Nami's behaviour just as it was without question.

I had been following the path upwards for nearly a quarter of a mile, when I caught sight of the white wall of a building. Ah, a house among the orange groves, I thought. The path divided at this point, and I took the left-hand fork. As I did so, I looked back over my shoulder and saw a girl in a red skirt coming up from the valley. The red of her skirt gave way to the brown of her legs, which in turn ended at a pair of straw sandals. These sandals were gradually moving towards me. Wild cherry blossom was falling upon the girl's hair, and on her back she carried the sparkling sea.

The steep path eventually led me up to a plateau on a projecting spur of the mountain. To the north was a peak clothed in the green of spring. This was probably what I had seen from the verandah earlier in the morning. To the south was a strip of what I suppose would be termed burnt heathland. This was about sixty yards wide and terminated at the crumbling brink of a precipice. At the foot of the precipice were the two hills covered with orange trees which I had just passed, and looking out beyond the village, I saw, of course, the blue sea.

The path now split into many threads which converged and separated, crossed and recrossed in such a complex fashion that it was impossible to say that any of them was the main one. The result of this entanglement was that instead of every thread being a path, none of them was. The dark red earth of the tracks showed in irregular patches among the clumps of grass, and I found the unpredictability of its progress entertaining.

I wandered here and there through the grass looking for a suitable place to sit. The scenery, which when seen from the verandah had seemed a good subject for a picture, now appeared to be disappointingly unsettled. The colours too

were slowly changing. Suddenly, while I was tramping back and forth across the plateau, the desire to paint deserted me. Since I was no longer seeking a vantage point, where I sat ceased to be of any importance; I could make myself comfortable anywhere. The spring sunshine penetrated to the very roots of the grass, and as I walked about wondering where to sit, I had the feeling that I was trampling unseen summer-colts underfoot.

Down there, the sparkling sea. The spring sunshine, unimpeded by so much as a flake of cloud, set the whole sheet of water aglitter, and its warmth was such that you could imagine it permeating right down to the sea-bed. The smooth surface of the sea was a study of torpid motion: one sweeping brush-stroke of dark blue, stippled with fine silver scales. The space beneath the heavens was filled with a limitless expanse of sparkling water on which the only discernible object was a white sail the size of a moth's wing. This, I thought, was how ships crossing with tributes from Korea must have looked in olden times. Apart from that sail, my whole world was sun and sea; the one giving light, and the other receiving it.

Flopping down on to the ground, I eased my hat up from my forehead so that it perched on the back of my head, and relaxed completely. Here and there the stunted forms of dwarf quince trees rose two or three feet out of the grass, and I now found myself face to face with one of them. The quince is an interesting tree. Its branches obstinately refuse to bend at all, and yet the overall effect is certainly not one of straightness. The whole lopsided framework of the tree is composed of short straight twigs and branches which collide with each other at an angle. The red or white blooms which appear in a rash over this framework look as though they do not know what they are doing there, and do not much care either. Even the soft leaves seem to have been stuck on at random. When you consider, the quince is

the most foolish yet philosophical of all plants. There are people who are absolutely unconcerned with their inability to make any headway in the world, and make no effort to improve themselves. I am sure that they, in some future life, will be reborn as quince trees. I would very much like to be a quince myself.

Once, when I was a boy, I took a branch of quince, complete with blossoms and leaves, and amused myself by pruning it into a suitable shape for a writing-brush rack. When I had set my penny brushes so that their white spear-heads peeped out from among the blossoms and leaves, I placed the branch on my desk. That night when I went to bed, I thought of nothing but the quince brush-rack, and next morning, no sooner were my eyes open, than I leaped out of bed and ran to the desk to have a look at it. The flowers had died, and the leaves had shrivelled. Only the white brush-heads stood out as brightly as before. To me, it was inconceivable how such a thing of beauty could wither like that in one short night. Looking back on the incident, I realise that I was more unworldly then than I am now.

Here, up on the plateau, I had thrown myself down on to the ground, and had been greeted immediately by the quince, my old friend of twenty years ago. Staring at the flowers, I gradually started to drift, and a pleasant feeling stole over me. Once again I felt the inspiration to write, and lying in the grass, I began to arrange my ideas. I wrote down every line in my sketchbook as it came to me, and eventually when I felt I had done all I could, I read them through from the beginning.

My head was crammed with thoughts when I left home,
With spring's sweet breath playing around my skirts.

The rutted path is overgrown with fragrance,
And passes neglected into hazed obscurity.

Leaning upon my staff, I view each detail
Of bright Nature in her shining mantle.

A crystal cascade of nightingale's notes falls on the ear,
While air is filled with sweetest floral rain.

Beyond a wide and desolate plain I reach
An ancient temple, on whose door a poem I inscribe.

In uncompanied loneliness I look towards the clouds
Where one wild goose, unskeined, wings homeward 'cross
the sky.

How deep, how recondite this seeming petty heart,
In whose recesses right and wrong lie dimmed by distance.

Although yet thirty, my thoughts are those of age,
But Spring retains her former glory.

Wandering here and there I am as one with everything in
turn,
And 'midst the perfumed blossoms, peace is mine.

'Done it! I've done it!' The words escaped from me with
a contented sigh. This is what I had been waiting to write.
These lines exactly expressed my oblivion to the world
while I had been lying gazing at the quince blossoms. It
did not matter that there was no mention of the blossoms
themselves, or of the sea; it was enough that the poem expressed
what I felt. I was happily mumbling and muttering
away to myself, when suddenly the sound of somebody
clearing their throat made me jump.

Rolling over on to my stomach, and looking towards
where the voice had sounded, I saw a man coming out from
among the trees which fringed the spur of the mountain. He
wore a battered brown Homburg, the brim of which was
angled low over his brow. I was unable to see his eyes,
but I felt certain that they were darting nervous glances
from side to side. His dark blue striped kimono tucked up
around his loins, his bare legs and wooden clogs told me

very little about him, but his fierce unkempt beard gave him the air of a soldier of fortune.

Instead of descending the steep path which I had come up, as I expected him to do, the man stopped where it met the track he was on, turned and retraced his steps. I thought that he was going to disappear among the trees from whence he had originally emerged. But no, once again he turned and came back. Surely, I thought, only someone out for a stroll would walk to and fro across the heath like that, yet his whole attitude belied the idea. Moreover, I just could not imagine that such a person lived in this neighbourhood. From time to time the man would cock his head on one side, and then look all around him. He seemed to be lost in thought. He might, of course, be waiting for somebody; it was impossible to tell.

I eventually found that I was unable to take my eyes off this fearsome-looking character. I was not particularly scared of him, nor did I have any desire to paint him. However, I just could not tear my eyes away. I was swivelling my head from right to left, left to right, following his progress up and down when he finally came to a halt. No sooner had he done so than another figure appeared on the edge of my field of vision, and, as though in mutual recognition, the two gradually moved towards one another. The borders of my field of vision slowly began to close in, until at last they included no more than a tiny area right in the centre of the heath. The two figures now stood facing each other, almost touching. Behind one, were the mountains of spring, and behind the other, the sea.

One of the pair was, of course, the 'soldier of fortune'. And who was his companion? It was a woman—O-Nami! At the sight of O-Nami, I immediately recalled the dagger I had seen her with earlier that morninig, and the thought that she probably had it concealed in her kimono sent a

shiver of fear through me, even though I was supposed to be watching objectively.

For a while, the man and the woman remained perfectly still, both maintaining the same posture as when they had first come together. There was not a movement to be seen anywhere. They may perhaps have been talking, but I could hear nothing at all. The man at length allowed his head to slump forward on to his chest, and O-Nami turned away towards the mountains, so that her face was hidden from me. She appeared to be listening to an uguisu which was singing somewhere over there. A few moments later, the man drew himself upright and half turned on his heel. There was definitely something wrong. O-Nami spread her arms and silently swung round to face the sea. Something which looked like the hilt of a dagger was poking out from the top of her obi. Holding himself proudly erect the man started to move away. With just two steps, which her straw sandals rendered quite noiseless, O-Nami came up behind him. He stopped. Had she called out to him? He turned his head, and in that instant O-Nami's right hand dropped to her obi. *Look out!*

What flashed into view, however, was not the foot long dagger, but some kind of purse, the long drawstring of which swung back and forth in the spring breeze, as it dangled from the white hand extended to the man.

O-Nami stood with one foot advanced, and her body from the waist up leaning slightly backwards. On the outstretched palm of her white hand sat the purple-coloured purse. This posture alone was worth a canvas to itself.

The picture was interrupted by the dash of purple, but continued again after a space of two or three inches where the line of the man's half-turned body both complemented and qualified that of the woman in a superb fashion. I think that balance is the word that best describes the mood of that moment. Although in reality there was no contact

between the two figures, for the purple purse sheered them off from one another, O-Nami seemed to be trying to pull the man to her, and he looked as though he were being drawn backwards. While they thus preserved the delicate harmony of their pose, it was born in upon me just how enormous was the contrast between their clothes, and between their faces. Having realised this, I regarded them as though they were part of a picture, and found them more fascinating than ever.

On one side a pair of thick bull-like shoulders surmounted by a black-bearded face; on the other the delicacy of an oval face with clear-cut features, above a swan neck and gracefully sloping shoulders. Here, the 'soldier of fortune' with his clumsily twisted body and wooden clogs; there, O-Nami managing to look elegant even in an everyday kimono, her dainty form curving gently backwards in a restrained arc. Added to this was the brown felt hat worn smooth with age, and the short, blue striped kimono of the man, set against the captivating femininity of O-Nami, whose well-combed hair so shone in the sunlight that the air about her head was set shimmering and dancing, and from whose black satin obi peeked the corner of a coloured under-sash. Viewed as a whole, the scene was a perfect subject for a picture.

The man put out his hand to accept the purse which was being offered to him, and as he did so the tableau, whose balance both had hitherto maintained by a skilful distribution of tension, crumbled. The woman was no longer pulling, and the man no longer being pulled. Although I am an artist, I had never realised that the state of mind of the models played so important a part in the construction of a picture. The couple separated, and moved off left and right. Now that they were devoid of any outward sign of feeling, it seemed incongruous to think of them as figures in a painting. The man paused and turned at the edge of the copse,

but the woman continued walking without a backward glance. She was coming towards the place where I was lying, and soon was standing immediately in front of me.

'Sensei. Sensei,'¹ she called.

Oh Lord, that's done it, I thought, and wondered when she first realised that I was there.

'Yes, what do you want?' I asked, raising my head above the quince and losing my hat in the process.

'What on earth are you doing there?'

'I was lying down composing poetry.'

'Don't tell fibs. You were watching what happened just now, weren't you?'

'Just now? Just now, over there, you mean? Well, yes. I did just have a peep.'

'Ha, ha, ha, ha. You should have had a long look.'

'Well, to tell you the truth—I did.'

'There you are, you see! Oh please come out from among all that quince.'

I obeyed meekly.

'Was there something else you wanted to do among the trees?'

'No, I've quite finished thank you. I was just thinking of going home.'

'Then shall we walk back together?'

'All right.'

Once again I demonstrated my docility by going back in among the quince, gathering up my hat and painting materials, and then setting off side by side with O-Nami.

'Did you do any painting?'

'No, I gave up the idea.'

'You haven't painted a single picture since you came here, have you?'

'No.'

¹ Sensei literally means teacher, but may be used as a term of respect to anybody.

'But it's a waste isn't it, if having come here for the sole purpose of painting, you don't do any at all?'

'On the contrary, I make a profit whatever happens.'

'Oh, really? Why is that?'

'Because, when you come to work it out, the rate of interest is the same whether you paint a picture or not.'

'You and your puns. Ha, ha, ha, ha. You're a very happy-go-lucky person, aren't you. You take everything just as it comes.'

'If I didn't, it would mean I had wasted my time in coming to a place like this.'

'You should be happy-go-lucky wherever you are. If you're not, life isn't worth living. Take me for instance: I'm not at all ashamed that you were watching me just now.'

'You have no reason to be, have you?'

'Perhaps not. What do you think of that man I was with?'

'Well now, let me see. I'd say that whoever he was, he wasn't very rich.'

'Ha, ha, ha. You've hit the nail right on the head. You must be psychic. He came to get some money from me, because he says that he's so poor he cannot remain in Japan any longer.'

'Really? Where had he come from?'

'From down in the castle-town.'

'That's quite a way. And where is he off to?'

'It seems that he is set on going to Manchuria.'

'What for?'

'Who knows. To get some money maybe, or perhaps to die.'

As she said this, I raised my eyes and glanced at her face. Her mouth was set in a thin line, and the faint smile which usually hovered there was, for some unknown reason, beginning to fade.

'He is my husband.'

This statement, coming so unexpectedly, caught me completely off my guard, and I felt as though the woman had suddenly struck me. Naturally I had had no intention of getting such information out of her; nor had I had the slightest idea that she would confide in me to this extent.

'Well? What do you think of that? That surprised you, didn't it?' she asked.

'Yes, it did a little.'

'He isn't my husband now; we're divorced.'

'Oh, really. And...'

'That's all.'

'I see.—There's a beautiful white-walled house down there on the hillside where all the orange trees are. It's nicely situated. Who does it belong to?'

'That's my elder brother's house. We'll drop in for a minute on the way home.'

'Is there something you want to do there?'

'Yes. I have to go there on an errand.'

'Very well then, let's go.'

We had arrived at the foot of the steep path, but instead of continuing down to the village, we turned sharply to the right and climbed upwards again for about a hundred and twenty yards until we came to a gateway. We went in, and waiving the formality of presenting ourselves at the front door, proceeded straight round to the entrance to the garden. O-Nami went in without the slightest hesitation, and so I followed suit. The garden which faced south, contained three or four hemp-palms, and was bordered by a mud wall. Sloping away beyond this was an orange orchard. Sitting down on the edge of the verandah, O-Nami said, 'It's a lovely view. Look.'

'You're right, it is lovely.'

The room bordering the verandah was shut off by a line of shōji. I listened, but nothing stirred within. O-Nami showed no signs of announcing our arrival, but seemed

quite content just to sit on the verandah and look at the orange orchard below. I thought this strange, and wondered what had brought her here in the first place. Finally all conversation lapsed, and we both sat looking down at the orange trees in silence. The sun, now nearing its zenith, shone full on the hillside, spreading its warm rays over the entire area, and penetrating to the depths of the foliage whose refurbished brilliance demanded attention. Presently there came the loud crowing of a cockerel from the direction of an outhouse.

‘Good heavens! It’s lunch time. I’d forgotten all about my errand.—Kyuichi, Kyuichi.’

O-Nami leaned backwards and slid open a shōji, revealing a room about fifteen feet by nine. This was empty save for two scroll paintings of the Kano school which hung, rather forlornly I thought, in a recess as an expression of the mood of spring.

‘Kyuichi.’

At length an answering call came from the outhouse, followed by the sound of footsteps which eventually stopped on the other side of the fusuma across the room. Just as the fusuma was slid back, a white-wood sheath went rolling towards it across the matted floor.

‘That’s a farewell present from your uncle.’

I had not the faintest idea when O-Nami’s hand had gone to her obi. All I saw was the dagger somersault two or three times in the air, then roll noiselessly across the matting to come to rest at Kyuichi’s feet. Apparently the sheath was a loose fit, for as it lay there, I caught the glint of an inch of cold steel.

◆ 13 ◆

We went down to Yoshida by river-boat to see Kyuichi off at the station. Sitting in the boat were Kyuichi, old Mr Shioda, O-Nami, her brother, Gembei, who was taking care of the luggage, and myself. I, of course, had virtually just been asked along for the ride.

The fact that I had only been invited to make up the company did not stop me accepting, neither was I deterred by the fact that I could see no reason for my presence. For the duration of my 'non-human' trip, discretion was a word that was not in my vocabulary. The boat was flat-bottomed, and seemed to have been constructed by sticking sides on to a raft. The old man was in the middle, O-Nami and I were at the stern, Kyuichi and O-Nami's brother were in the bows, and Gembei sat by himself with the luggage.

'Kyuichi, do you like war, or not?' O-Nami asked.

'I won't know until I've had a taste of it. It will probably be pretty rough going at times, but I expect I'll enjoy myself sometimes too,' replied Kyuichi, who knew nothing at all about war.

'However hard it is, you must remember that it is for your country,' put in the old man.

'Doesn't it make you want to get in and fight somehow, having been given a dagger like that?' was O-Nami's next strange question.

'Yes, sort of.'

At this light response, the old man tugged at his beard and laughed, but his son sat there as though he had heard nothing.

O-Nami refused to be put off, and pushing her lovely face close to her cousin's, she continued, 'How can you fight if you're so indifferent?' Kyuichi exchanged a brief glance with the brother, then the latter turned and spoke to O-Nami for the first time.

'I'm sure you'll make a great fighter, O-Nami, if you ever become a soldier.' Judging from his tone, this was not said entirely as a joke.

'I? I become a soldier? I'd have become one long ago if I could, and I'd be dead by now. Kyuichi, you'd better die too. It's a disgrace to come out of a war alive.'

'Now, now, now. That's enough of such wild talk. Kyuichi, you must come marching home again in triumph. There are other ways to serve your country besides dying. I'm good for another two or three years myself yet. We'll be seeing each other again.'

As the thread of the old man's words spun out, it became thinner and weaker, until at last, no thicker than gossamer, it parted to spill the crystal beads of sorrow. He choked back his tears, thinking it shameful for a man to give way to his emotions before others. Kyuichi turned away without a word and looked towards the bank where, moored beneath a large willow tree, was a boat in which an angler sat gazing intently at his line. As we drew level, the wash from our boat rippled gently across the water. Looking up suddenly, the man caught Kyuichi's eye. Each sat there regarding the other steadily, but no spark of affinity passed between them. The man was thinking only of fish, but in Kyuichi's head there was not room for even a single carp. In uninterrupted calm, we moved on beyond the angler.

If you stood on the approach to the Nihonbashi bridge

in Tokyo, which hundreds of people cross every minute, and were able to elicit from each individual that went past what turmoil and confusion lay buried in his heart, you would find yourself bemused by the knowledge of what this world can do to a man, and life would become unbearable. There would have been no applicants for the job of standing at Nihonbashi and waving a flag to direct the trams were it not for the fact that the people a man in such a position meets come as strangers, and as strangers they go on their way. Fortunately, the angler did not ask Kyuichi for an explanation as to why he looked as though at any moment he was going to cry. Looking back, I saw that he was staring at his float contentedly. I expect he would have liked to sit there staring at it until the Russo-Japanese war was over.

The river was neither very wide nor very deep, and it flowed along at an easy pace. Wondering how long this smooth passage across the water with me leaning on the gunwale would continue, I realised that there would be no stopping until I reached a place where spring was no more, and where people were prepared to push and jostle one another aside in their frantic excitement. The young man, Kyuichi, on whose forehead Death had already made his putrid bloody mark, was dragging us all relentlessly along with him. The rope of Destiny was pulling him towards a distant, dark and grim land to the north, and so we too, who were inextricably bound to him by the circumstances of a certain day, month or year, would be drawn on until such time as the sequence of events set in motion by these circumstances should arrive at its inevitable conclusion. When that time came, there would be a 'snip' between him and us, and he alone, with or without consent, would be reeled right up to Destiny's hand, while we would have no choice but to remain behind. No matter how much we might plead and struggle, we would be taken no farther.

I found the boat's smooth progress delightful. On either hand down by the water's edge were plants which I took to be horsetails, and along the top of the raised embankments were many willow trees, from among which at irregular intervals a low cottage showed its thatched roof and grimy windows. From time to time white ducks from the cottages would come quaking down the bank, and swim out into the river. The eye-catching points of brightness that stood out between the willows were presumably white peaches. I heard the repeated clatter of a loom at work, punctuated by the sound of a woman singing. The sporadic notes came echoing across the water, but it was impossible to tell what the song was.

'Sensei, will you do a portrait of me, please?' asked O-Nami. Kyuichi and O-Nami's brother were earnestly talking about the army, while the old man had dozed off at some time or other.

'Yes, all right,' I replied. Taking out my sketchbook, I wrote down the following lines.

Your obi has worked loose and flutters in the breeze,
But once again 'tis for pretence and not spring's passion
it unwinds.

The maker's name, though woven in the silk,
Is, like your heart, unreadable.

When I showed this to O-Nami, she laughed and said, 'A quick sketch like this is no good. I want you to do a carefully detailed picture that expresses my character more.'

'I'd love to, but your face as it is at the moment wouldn't make a good picture.'

'What a charming compliment. Well, what do I have to do to make it a fit subject for a picture?'

'Now, calm down. I could paint it now really. But it's just that there's something missing, and I think it would be a pity to paint you without that something.'

'What do you mean, "something missing"? Since this is the face I was born with, there is nothing I can do about it, is there?'

'Even the face you were born with can be varied in many ways.'

'At will, you mean.'

'Yes.'

'That's right, make a fool of me because I'm a woman.'

'It's because you are a woman that you say such foolish things.'

'Well then, show me how you can make *your* face look different.'

'You've seen quite enough of the different ways my face can look.'

O-Nami fell silent, and turned her back on me. The embankments had disappeared, and now the ground on either side of the river was almost level with the surface of the water. This enabled me to see right across the neighbouring lowlands which were completely covered with wild milk-vetch in full bloom. The whole area was a sea of half-dissolved blossoms, as though the rain had at sometime caused the brilliant drops of scarlet colour to run. This sea stretched on and on to disappear eventually into the distant haze. Looking up I could see one huge precipitous peak towering into the sky, its upper part but dimly visible through a film of spring cloud.

'You climbed up the other side of that when you came to Nakoi,' said O-Nami, stretching her white hand out over the side of the boat, and pointing to the mountain about which there was an unreal, dream-like quality.

'Is the Tengu rock over there?'

'You see that splash of purple beneath the deep green?'

'You mean the shadow?'

'Shadow? It's a bare patch, isn't it?'

'No, it's a dip in the ground. If it were a bare patch it would look browner.'

'Maybe. Anyway, the Tengu rock is supposed to be just beyond that.'

'That would make the stretch of road with all the bends in it a little to the left.'

'No, that's a good way off. It's on the mountain behind that one.'

'Yes, that's right, it would be. At a guess I'd say it was about where that thin layer of clouds is.'

'Yes, somewhere near there.'

The old man, who had been dozing up till now, suddenly awoke with a start as his elbow slipped off the side of the boat.

'Aren't we there yet?' Pushing out his chest, he drew his right elbow back behind him, and thrust his left arm straight forward in a mighty fit of stretching and yawning which made him look for all the world as though he were practising archery. O-Nami burst out laughing.

'Sorry, it's a habit of mine. . . .'

'You look as though you like archery,' I remarked, joining in the laughter.

'In my younger days, I could draw a longbow that was an inch thick at the hand-grip. I can still give a better than average push with the left hand even now,' replied the old man patting his shoulder. In the bows, the discussion about war was at its height.

The countryside eventually gave way to more urban scenery, and our boat began to pass between houses. At one point a sign on the panel of a shōji announced that inside, savouries were served with the wine, and still farther on, we came to an old-fashioned tavern and a wood yard. Occasionally, we could even hear the sound of rickshaws. Above, swallows wheeled and twisted slowly in flight, and

on the water ducks quacked. After a while, we left the boat and made our way to the station on foot.

I was being dragged back more and more into the world of reality. Anywhere that you can find a railway train must be classed as the world of reality, for there is nothing more typical of twentieth-century civilization. It is an unsympathetic and heartless contraption which rumbles along carrying hundreds of people crammed together in one box. It takes them all at a uniform speed to the same station, and then proceeds to lavish the benefits of steam upon every one of them without exception. People are said to board and travel by train, but I call it being loaded and transported. Nothing shows a greater contempt for individuality than the train. Modern civilization uses every possible means to develop individuality, and having done so, tries everything in its power to stamp it out. It allots a few square yards to each person, and tells him that he is free to lead his life as he pleases within that area. At the same time it erects railings around him, and threatens him with all sorts of dire consequences if he should dare to take but one step beyond their compass. It is only natural that the man who has freedom within the confines of his allocated plot, should desire to have freedom to do as he wishes outside it too. Civilization's pitiable subjects are forever snapping and snarling at imprisoning bars, for they have been made as fierce as tigers by the gift of liberty, but have been thrown into a cage to preserve universal peace. This, however, is not a true peace. It is the peace of the tiger in a menagerie who lies glowering at those who have come to look at him. If just one bar is ever taken out of the cage, the world will erupt into chaos, and a second French Revolution will ensue. Even now there are constant individual revolts. That great North-European writer, Ibsen, has cited in detail the circumstances which will lead to this outbreak. Whenever I see the violent way in which a train runs along,

indiscriminately regarding all human beings as so much freight, I look at the individuals cooped up in the carriages, and at the iron monster itself which cares nothing at all for individuality, and I think, 'Look out, look out, or you'll find yourselves in trouble.' The railway train which blunders ahead blindly into the pitch darkness is one example of the very obvious dangers which abound in modern civilization.

We went and sat down in a tea-shop in front of the station. I stared at the rice-cake before me and thought about railway trains. This did not make me want to draw one, and there was no reason for me to impart my views to the others, so I ate my cake and drank my tea in silence.

Seated at the other table across the room were two men. They both wore identical straw sandals, but one was wrapped in a red blanket, while the other had on a pair of closely fitting light-green trousers which were patched at the knees. His hands resting on the patches completed the interesting contrast of colours.

'So it's no good after all then?' one of them was saying.

'No good at all.'

'It'd be all right if men had two stomachs like a cow. Then if anything went wrong with one of them, you'd just have to cut it out, and that'd be the end of the matter.'

Apparently, one of these countrymen was suffering from stomach trouble. They knew nothing of the stench which the wind was carrying across the plains of Manchuria, neither did they realise the shortcomings of modern civilization. As for revolution, why, they had never heard of the word. In all probability they were not even sure whether they had one or two stomachs. I took out my sketchbook and drew them.

Presently there came the shrill ringing of a bell, announcing the train's arrival.

'Well, shall we go?' suggested O-Nami standing up.

'All right,' agreed the old man also rising. Since we had already bought our tickets, we went straight to the barrier and passed through on to the platform. The bell continued to ring insistently.

There was a rumbling sound, and belching black smoke from its mouth, a serpent born of civilization came slithering its way over the silver rails.

'We'll have to say good-bye now,' said Mr Shioda.

'Yes. Well good-bye and take care of yourselves,' replied Kyuichi with a slight bow.

'Go and get killed,' said O-Nami for the second time.

'How about your luggage? Has it come?' asked O-Nami's brother.

The serpent came to a halt in front of us, and as the many doors in its side opened, people began to stream in and out. Kyuichi climbed in, leaving the old man, O-Nami, her brother and myself standing on the platform.

One turn of the wheels, and Kyuichi would no longer belong to our world, but would already have gone to a world far, far away where men were moving midst the acrid fumes of burnt powder, and where they slipped and floundered wildly in a crimson quagmire, while overhead the sky was filled with the roar of unnatural thunder. Now he stood in the carriage about to depart for such a place, and stared at us mutely. This was where the rope of fate by which he had dragged us down from the mountains would be severed. The strands had, in fact, already begun to part. Although the carriage door and window stood open, although we could still see each other's face, and although there were no more than six feet between him who was to leave and us who were to remain behind, the rope was already fraying.

The guard ran along the platform towards us, slamming the doors as he came. With the closing of each door, the gulf widened between those that were leaving and those

who had come to see them off. At length, Kyuichi's door banged shut, and the world was cut in half. Unconsciously the old man moved closer to the window, and Kyuichi put his head out.

'Look out there! She's off!' Before the last echoes of this cry had died away, there came the rhythmic blasts of steam being expelled from the engine as it slowly worked into its stride, and the train started to move. One by one the carriage windows passed by, and Kyuichi's face gradually grew smaller. As the last third-class carriage went past, another face emerged. There was the shaggy beard and well-worn brown Homburg of the 'soldier of fortune' who, filled with the sadness of parting, was taking one last look out of the window. Just then, he and O-Nami happened to catch sight of each other, but the engine continued to chug on, and very soon his face disappeared from view.

O-Nami gazed after the train abstractedly, but strangely enough the look of abstraction was suffused with that 'compassion' which had hitherto been lacking.

'That's it! That's it! Now that you can express that feeling, you are worth painting,' I whispered, patting her on the shoulder. It was at that very moment that the picture in my mind received its final touch.

1st September 1906

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Natsume Soseki, one of Japan's most distinguished writers, was born in Tokyo in 1867. At an early age he studied the Chinese classics, and though later intending to become an architect, he changed his mind, and entered Tokyo Imperial University to take up literature. In 1896 he was sent to London by the Japanese Ministry of Education to study English literature for four years. On his return he was appointed lecturer in English at Tokyo University. He published his first novel **Wagahai wa Neko de aru (I am a Cat)** in 1905, and immediately rose to fame. Shortly after this he resigned his post at the University to become literary editor of the *Asahi* newspaper. Many more novels followed, and Soseki became the leading voice of the age, often ruthlessly criticising his contemporary society for its acceptance of westernization. He died in 1916 at the age of 49.

BOTCHAN

Natsume Sōseki

Translated by
Alan Turney

Like *Huckleberry Finn* in the West, *BOTCHAN*, the hilarious tale of a young man's rebellion against "the system" in a country school, is a classic in modern Japanese fiction. Among young and old alike, it enjoys a popularity that is timeless and that has made it, in the words of Donald Keene, "probably the most widely-read novel in modern Japan."

THE AUTHOR: Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916), whose real name was Natsume Kinnosuke, is considered by many to have been the greatest novelist of early twentieth-century Japan. He was famous for his poetry in Chinese, his *haiku*, and his literary criticism, as well as his novels. He was also respected as a scholar of English literature. Some of his other works are *Wagahai wa Neko de Aru* (“I am a Cat”), *Kūsamakura* (tr. by Alan Turney as “The Three-Cornered World”), and *Kokoro* (“The Heart of Things”).

BOTCHAN

BOTCHAN

Natsume Sōseki

Translated by
Alan Turney

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INTRODUCTION

Natsume Kinnosuke, who is generally referred to by his pen name Sōseki, was born in 1867, one year before the Meiji Restoration. The Meiji period was one of flux in all areas of culture, for it saw Japan's sluice gates opened to admit a flood of Western ideas. Nowhere was this state of flux more apparent than in the field of literature.

Sōseki's first contact with a literature other than Japanese seems to have been in 1881 when, at the age of fourteen, he studied Chinese literature for a year at school. His love of Chinese literature stayed with him throughout his life, and its influence can sometimes be seen in his works.

In 1882 Sōseki expressed a wish to make literature his career, although not specifying whether as a writer or a scholar. However, his eldest brother discouraged him. Nevertheless, Sōseki entered the Department of English Literature of Tokyo Imperial University in 1890.

During the Meiji period, Japan's intelligentsia considered it their duty to study things Western in order to help the development of their country. Sōseki was no exception, and it was a desire to gain a knowledge of one of the cultural aspects of Western civilization that lead him to undertake the study of English literature.

Sōseki had no intention of deserting Chinese litera-

ture in favor of its Western counterpart. Moreover, he did not regard what he was doing as "changing" at all. In his own estimation he was only extending his studies to another facet of that phenomenon which he had studied and loved for many years—literature. Differences, of course, he expected, but he believed that essentially Chinese and English literature were only two sides of the same coin. His realization that they were radically different only developed very slowly and did not reach fruition until he was in London about ten years later. With this realization came a disappointment in English literature.

In 1895 Sōseki graduated from the Imperial University and went as a teacher of English to the Matsuyama Middle School in Shikoku. This later became the setting for *Botchan*. After a year in Matsuyama, Sōseki moved to another post in Kyushu. He remained there for four years until 1900 when the Ministry of Education sent him to England for two years as a research scholar.

Up to and including his time in England, Sōseki may be considered more a scholar than a writer, although he did write many Chinese poems and *haiku* (the latter as a result of his friendship at the university with Masaoka Shiki, who was the greatest name in the revival of *haiku* poetry at that period). After Sōseki returned to Japan, however, he turned to the writing of novels, while continuing for a time his pursuit of scholarship, and went on to become one of the greatest writers in Japanese literature.

Sōseki's first novel was a social satire entitled *Waga-hai wa Neko de Aru* (I Am a Cat). This was published in 1905. Encouraged by the great success of this work,

Sōseki published his second novel, *Botchan*, in 1906. This book too was extremely popular, and has continued to be a great favorite with Japanese readers.

The word *botchan* is untranslatable because of the many nuances it contains. It is basically a form of polite address used to the sons, generally while they are children, of well-to-do families. It is akin to the rather archaic English phrase "the young master." Yet, being a diminutive, it carries a nuance of affection not contained in the English. On occasion, the word may also imply that the person so referred to is, because of his background, rather spoiled and self-willed. The main reason that Sōseki dubbed the protagonist of this novel *Botchan*, however, is that he was trying to convey the deep feelings of affection and loyalty which the old servant, Kiyo, had for him.

To the Western reader, the story line of this novel may appear rather thin, and he may find himself wondering wherein its attraction lies for the Japanese. Certainly the story has little point. It is also true that the humor is dated. But the book does retain a great appeal for Japanese people. Part of this attraction lies in the cavalier attitude with which *Botchan* breezes from one catastrophe to another. He is no respecter of person or convention, and this endears him as much to modern Japanese as it did to readers sixty-odd years ago, because even today a Japanese can feel himself hedged in by social niceties.

Perhaps the greatest appeal that *Botchan* has for readers nowadays is a nostalgic one. The feeling evoked in the Japanese reader is similar to that evoked in an Englishman or American reading a description of a Victorian Christmas by Charles Dickens.

Botchan has been dramatized, particularly for television, many times. It is most often shown during the summer, and there is something about the atmosphere which pervades this work that is as in tune with a Japanese summer as *Chūshingura* is with a Japanese winter.

One problem I faced in translating this book is that Tokyoites, of whom *Botchan* is one, have a propensity for making puns. The problem is not merely that it is difficult to find a comparable pun in English, but that puns in English are very rarely funny. Another problem is that some of the characters in this book speak in a very distinctive dialect—in one place a pun is made in dialect. I have done my best to deal with these problems, but I am aware that the result is far from ideal.

Botchan is said to have been Sōseki's favorite novel and occupies an important place in Japanese literature. I hope that my English rendition has captured the atmosphere of the original sufficiently to give to foreign readers, if not the sense of nostalgia experienced by their Japanese counterparts, at least some inkling of the Japanese taste in literature.

Alan Turney

Tokyo, October 1971

Ever since I was a child, my inherent recklessness has brought me nothing but trouble.

Once, when I was at primary school, I jumped out of a second-story window and couldn't walk for a week. Some of you may be wondering why I did such a rash thing. There was no particularly deep reason. It was just that, as I stuck my head out of a second-floor window of the new block, one of my classmates jeered at me and said, "You're always bragging, but I bet you couldn't jump from there. Yah! Sissy!"

When I arrived home on the caretaker's back, my father glared at me and said, "Whoever heard of anyone shaking at the knees after only jumping from the second floor?" To which I replied that I'd show him. Next time they wouldn't shake.

A relation of mine had given me a foreign-made pen-knife, and I was holding up the beautiful blade to show my friends how it caught the sunlight when one of them said, "It shines, all right, but I bet it won't cut."

"What do you mean, won't cut? It'll cut anything," I replied, accepting the challenge.

"All right then, let's see you cut your finger," he demanded.

"A finger? Huh! It'll cut a finger as easy as this." So saying, I cut diagonally into the back of my right thumb. Fortunately, it was a small knife, and the bone was hard, so I still have my thumb. But the scar will be with me for life.

If you walked the twenty paces to the eastern end of our

garden, you came to a small vegetable plot on a southern slope, right in the middle of which stood a chestnut tree. This tree meant more to me than life itself. When the nuts were ripe, I would go out the back door as soon as I got up, collect those that lay on the ground, and eat them at school. The west side of the vegetable plot adjoined the garden of the Yamashiroya pawnshop, where there lived a kid of thirteen or fourteen called Kantarō. Kantarō was, of course, a coward. But, in spite of this, he used to climb over the trellis fence and steal the chestnuts.

One evening I hid in the shadow of the gate and caught him at last. Having lost his way of escape, he flung himself at me with all his force. He was about two years older than me and, although he was a coward, he was strong. As he made a sudden lunge at my chest with his flat-crowned head, it skidded off into the sleeve of my kimono. Since this prevented me from using my hand, I swung my arm about blindly. Kantarō's head, trapped in my sleeve, whipped giddily to left and right. Finally, being in pain, he clamped his teeth onto my upper arm inside the sleeve. This hurt, so I pushed him up against the fence and threw him backwards with a leg trip. The ground on the pawnshop side was about six feet lower than the vegetable plot. Kantarō, smashing down half the trellis in the process, fell headfirst back into his own territory and landed with a groan. As he fell, one of the sleeves of my kimono was torn off and my hand suddenly came free. That evening my mother went across to apologize and, while she was there, retrieved my sleeve.

I got into many other kinds of mischief besides this. For instance, there was the time when I ruined Mosaku's carrot patch with good old Kane, who worked for the local carpenter, and Kaku, the fishmonger's boy. An area where the sprouts had not come out evenly had been covered with straw, so we spent half a day having wrestling matches on it, and trampled all the carrots.

As he made a sudden lunge at my chest with his flat-crowned head, it skidded off into the sleeve of my kimono.

Another time I caught it in the neck for blocking up the well in Furukawa's rice field. This was a device whereby water welled up and out onto the surrounding rice plants through a thick piece of bamboo which had been sunk deep into the ground, after first having had its joints pierced to make it into a hollow tube. At the time I didn't know what kind of device it was, and so stuffed sticks and stones down it. Having made sure that the flow of water had stopped, I went home, and was having a meal, when Furukawa came roaring in with a face as red as a beet. As I remember, money had to change hands before the matter was settled.

My father never showed me the slightest affection, and my mother always favored my elder brother. He was terribly white-skinned and liked to pretend he was an actor, taking the female parts. Every time my father looked at me, he used to say, "He'll never amount to anything." And my mother used to say, "He's so rough and unruly, I worry what'll become of him." In fact, I never *have* amounted to anything. You can see the result for yourself. It's no wonder they were worried what would become of me. The only thing that can be said to my credit is that I have gone through life—so far—without getting put into penal servitude.

My mother was ill, and two or three days before she died I was turning somersaults in the kitchen and banged my ribs very painfully on the corner of the cooking stove. My mother was very angry and said she never wanted to see my face again, so I went to stay with relatives. At last the news came that she had died. I didn't think she'd die so soon. I came home thinking that if I'd known she was that seriously ill, I'd have been a little quieter. Then my brother said that I was a bad son, and that it was because of me that our mother died when she did. I was terribly upset and slapped him across the face, for which I got into a great deal of trouble.

After my mother died, I lived with my father and brother. My father was the kind of man who did nothing, and who would only have to catch sight of your face to come out with, "You're useless! Useless!" It was like a habit with him, but I still don't know what he was referring to. There's no two ways about it, I had a strange father.

My brother said he was going into business, and spent all his time studying English. He had always had a womanish disposition and, since he was also a sneak, we weren't on good terms. We had a row, on average, about once a week. Once, when we were playing Japanese chess, he made a sneaky move and looked very pleased with himself as he made fun of the position I was in. I was so annoyed that I flung the rook I was holding at his head. It caught him between the eyes, broke the skin, and drew a little blood. He went and told my father, who said that he disowned me.

I knew that there was nothing I could do about it and so considered myself disowned as my father had said, but Kiyo, who had been our maid for ten years, went to him in tears and begged him to forgive me, until eventually his anger subsided. Nevertheless, I was not particularly frightened of my father. Strangely enough, it was Kiyo I felt sorry for.

I had heard that Kiyo came from a good family, but that when they were ruined, she had been reduced at last to going into service. That's why she was now an old woman and not an elderly lady. I don't know why, but this old woman was extremely kind to me. It was very strange. My mother, three days before she died, had given up all hope for me; my father found me unmanageable the whole year round; and the people in our area looked down on me as a rough urchin—yet Kiyo, blind to all this, thought I was wonderful. I had resigned myself to the fact that I was definitely not the kind of person that people liked, and so thought nothing of it when they treated me like dirt.

As a matter of fact, it was Kiyo's dancing attendance on me that made me suspicious.

Sometimes, in the kitchen, when no one else was about, Kiyo would say, "You're straightforward, and you have a nice nature." But I didn't know what she meant. If that were the case, why didn't other people besides Kiyo treat me well, too. When Kiyo said things like that, I usually answered that I hated flattery, whereupon she would say, "There, you see. You *do* have a nice nature," and would gaze at me happily. It was as though she took pride in me because she had created me herself. It was weird.

When my mother died, Kiyo began to show me even more affection. At times my child's mind would be suspicious and wonder why she was so kind. I didn't like it and wished she would stop. I felt sorry for her. Nevertheless, she continued to fuss over me. Sometimes she would buy me, out of her own money, Kintsuba cakes shaped like sword-guards, or Kōbaiyaki biscuits in the form of plum blossoms. She would quietly buy some flour and set it aside, and then, on cold nights, without saying anything she would bring me some noodle soup as I lay in bed. There were times when she would even buy me a bowl of noodles with vegetables.

Her presents didn't stop at food. She bought me socks, pencils, notebooks and once, though this was much later, even lent me three yen. I didn't ask for it. She brought the money to my room and said, "You can't get along without pocket-money. Here, take this." Of course I said I didn't want it, but, since she insisted, I took it. To tell the truth, I was very glad.

I put the three yen in my purse, and the purse into the breast of my kimono; but then when I went to the lavatory, it disappeared down the hole. There was nothing I could do about it, so I crept out and told Kiyo what had happened. She said straight away that she would go and look for a bamboo pole and get the money back for me.

After a while, I heard the sound of running water near the well, and when I went out to look, there was Kiyo washing the purse, which she had dangling by its string from the end of the bamboo. Afterwards she opened the purse and examined the one-yen notes. They had turned brown and the pattern was beginning to fade. Kiyo dried them by our charcoal brazier and held them out to me, saying that they were all right now. I sniffed at them a little and said that they smelled, so Kiyo said, "All right, give them here. I'll go and change them for you."

I don't know where she went or who she tricked to do it, but she came back with the three yen in silver coins. I've forgotten what I spent that three yen on. I told her that I'd pay her back soon, but I never did. And now I can't, even though I wish I could, ten times over.

Kiyo only gave me things when neither my father nor brother were there. I told her that there was nothing I disliked more than receiving things on the sly, by myself. Of course I didn't get on with my brother, but I didn't want cakes or crayons from Kiyo behind his back. When I asked Kiyo why she only gave things to me and not my brother, she answered, completely unperturbed, that it was all right because my father bought things for him. This was unfair, for although he was stubborn, he was not given to favoritism. But I suppose that's the way it looked to Kiyo, since she was obviously infatuated. This kind of attitude couldn't be helped, because, although she originally came from a good family, she was just an uneducated old woman. Her partiality, however, went farther than this. It was, in fact, frightening. She was convinced that someone like me would get on in life and become a great man, but that my brother, who was always studying, was good for nothing, in spite of his fair, patrician skin. She was beyond me. If she liked you, you would be a success; if she didn't, you were going to be a miserable failure. Although I couldn't see myself becoming anything, Kiyo

kept on saying, "You will! You will!", so I thought that perhaps I might after all. Looking back on it all now, it seems ridiculous. I once asked Kiyo what I was going to be, but even she had no special idea beyond the fact that I would undoubtedly ride in my own private rickshaw and build a house with a fine entrance.

Kiyo wanted to come with me when I had my own house and became independent, and repeatedly asked me if she could. Since I, too, somehow felt that I would have my own house, I said, "Yes, all right," and would have left it at that, but Kiyo had a strong imagination and freely made plans by herself.

"Where would you like to live in Tokyo—Kōjimachi or Azabu?" . . . "Do have a swing made in the garden." . . . "I think one Western-style room will be plenty." These were some of the things to which I had to listen. At the time I didn't have the slightest desire for a house, and I always answered Kiyo that I didn't want one, since neither a Western nor a Japanese house was of any use to me. To this she would reply, "You're unselfish, and you're a good boy." She praised me whatever I said.

This, then, was my life for the first five or six years after my mother died: getting into trouble with my father, quarreling with my brother, and having cakes bought for me, and sometimes being praised, by Kiyo. There was nothing I particularly wanted. I was content with things as they were and thought that that was how most other children lived too. Kiyo, however, kept on telling me that I was a poor boy, and that I was unfortunate, so I came to think that perhaps I was. Apart from that, however, I had nothing to worry me at all—though it did annoy me that my father didn't give me any pocket-money.

In January of the sixth year after my mother died, my father died too, of apoplexy. In April of the same year, I graduated from the private middle school I'd been attending and, in June, my brother graduated from business

school. He said he'd had an offer from the Kyushu branch office of some company or other, and that he had to go down there. I still had to study in Tokyo. My brother said he was going to sell the house, dispose of the property and leave. I told him he could do as he pleased. In any case, I had no desire to be under any obligation to him. Even if he looked after me, I knew we'd quarrel. And, if we did, he wouldn't hesitate to remind me how much he was doing for me. So rather than bow and scrape to him for his half-hearted charity, I resolved to look after myself, even if I had to deliver milk to do it.

This settled, my brother called in a second-hand dealer and sold the rubbish of our forefathers for next to nothing. The house itself and the land it stood on were made over to a rich man to whom somebody had kindly introduced us. This, apparently, realized a great deal of money, though I don't know any of the details because I had been in lodgings in Ogawamachi in Kanda for the month before this, waiting to see what was going to happen.

Kiyo was very sad to see the house she had lived in for ten years pass into a stranger's hands, but since it wasn't hers, there was nothing she could do about it. She kept trying to persuade me that if I had been a little older, I would have inherited the house. If that were the case, I ought to inherit it anyway. Kiyo knew nothing about the subject and thought the only thing preventing me from getting my brother's house was my age.

Thus my brother and I parted. But the problem of where Kiyo should go still remained. My brother, of course, was in no position to take her with him, and besides, Kiyo had no wish whatsoever to go traipsing all the way down to Kyushu after him. I was cooped up in a nine-by-nine room in a cheap lodging house, and might have to leave even that if things came to a pinch. Neither of us, then, could help her.

I spoke to Kiyo about the situation and asked her if she

wanted to go into service with some other family. She eventually made up her mind and replied that, since she couldn't come with me until I had a house of my own and was married, she would go and live with her nephew temporarily. This nephew was a clerk in the court and, having always been comfortably off, had two or three times urged Kiyo to come and live with him if she felt so inclined. She had always refused, saying that she preferred living in the house she had grown accustomed to over the years, even if it meant being a maid. But in the present circumstances, I suppose, she had decided it would be better to live with her nephew than to change her job and again go unnecessarily through that period of feeling ill at ease which a new position would mean. She told me, however, to get myself a wife and buy a house quickly, and that she would then come and look after me. It seemed that she liked me, an outsider, better than her own relations.

Two days before he left for Kyushu, my brother came to my lodgings and, handing me six hundred yen, told me that I could use it as capital and go into business, for school expenses if I wanted to study, or in any way I wished, but that I was to expect nothing further from him. This, for my brother, was admirable. It wouldn't have worried me not to have had a lousy six hundred yen, but I was so taken with the unprecedented generosity of this act that I thanked him and accepted the money. My brother handed me another fifty yen and told me to give it to Kiyo, which I readily agreed to do. We parted two days later at Shimbashi station and have never seen each other since.

I lay in bed thinking how I should use the six hundred yen. Running a business was a lot of bother and I wouldn't make a success of it. Besides, it seemed unlikely that you could start up a business worthy of the name on a mere six hundred yen. Even if it were possible, I couldn't, as things stood at the moment, boast to people that I had had an education, which would mean that it would end in

failure. Since, therefore, I didn't need capital, I thought I would use the money for school expenses and carry on studying. By using two hundred yen a year, I would be able to study for three years. And, if I worked really hard for those three years, I would be able to achieve something.

I next tried to decide which school I should go to, but I had always disliked one subject as much as another. I particularly wanted no part of languages or literature. I have never been able to understand even one in twenty lines of those modern poems which imitate Western forms and thought. Since I disliked everything, it didn't seem to matter where I studied. Fortunately, however, as I happened to be passing the Tokyo School of Physics one day, I saw a notice announcing vacancies for students and, since this seemed providential, I immediately asked for their prospectus and completed the formalities for entrance. In retrospect, this too seems a blunder caused by my inherent recklessness.

For three years I did an average amount of work, but having no particular aptitude, it was always more convenient to reckon my place in class from the bottom. Strangely enough, however, I was able to graduate. I thought this was curious myself, but since I had no cause for complaint, I held my peace and graduated.

Eight days after graduation, the principal of the school came and asked me to his office, and, thinking that he might have something important to tell me, I went with him. He said that a middle school down in Shikoku needed a mathematics teacher. The salary was forty yen a month, and how about my going there? To tell the truth, although I had studied for three years, I had no wish to become a teacher, nor had I any idea of going to the country. But since I had no idea of becoming anything other than a teacher, I accepted the offer on the spot. Once again that impetuosity with which I was cursed.

Having accepted the offer, I had to leave for my new

post. For the past three years I had confined myself to my nine-by-nine room and had not had to listen to anybody nagging even once. I had also got by without any arguments. This had been a comparatively relaxed period in my life, but now I would have to leave my room. The only time I had ever set foot outside Tokyo was when I had gone on a class outing to Kamakura, only a stone's throw away. This time I had to go a lot farther than Kamakura. On the map, my destination looked no bigger than a pinprick on the coast. It couldn't be much of a place. I didn't know what kind of a town it was, or what kind of people lived there, but that didn't matter. I would just go. I must confess, however, that I found it a bit of a nuisance.

After we had disposed of the house, I had visited Kiyo from time to time. Her nephew turned out to be an unexpectedly fine person. Whenever I went to the house and he was there, he always made me very welcome in every way. Kiyo used to make a lot of me and would tell her nephew the various things about me of which she was proud. She announced that I was soon to graduate and would then buy a large house in the Kōjimachi area, from which I would commute to the government office where I was going to work. Since Kiyo had decided and announced this of her own accord, it put me in a difficult position and I blushed. It wasn't only once or twice that this happened either.

Sometimes she used to embarrass me by bringing up how I used to wet the bed when I was young. I don't know what her nephew must have thought when he listened to her boasting. But Kiyo, being of the old school, regarded our relationship as that of master and retainer during the feudal period. It seemed that, as far as she was concerned, *her* master was, without doubt, the master of her nephew also. What a position for her nephew to be in!

The deal was finally made and, three days before I was due to leave, I went to see Kiyo. She had a cold and was

in bed in her six-by-nine room that faced north, but as soon as she saw me she sat up and asked, "Botchan, when are you going to get your house?" She was under the impression that all you had to do was graduate for your pockets to be suddenly filled with money. It really was ridiculous that she should still call someone as eminent as she thought me to be "Botchan." When I told her that buying a house was no easy matter, and wouldn't be for some time yet, and that I was going down into the country, she looked very dejected and smoothed back the disarray of gray-flecked hair along both sides of her head. I felt so sorry for her that, to cheer her up, I said, "I have to go now, but I'll be back soon. I'll definitely come back during the summer holidays next year."

She still looked at me strangely, however, so I said, "I'll buy you a present. What would you like?" She replied that she would like "some of those sweets wrapped in bamboo grass that they have in Echigo." I'd never heard of them and, anyway, Echigo was in the other direction. When I told her that I didn't think they'd have any in the area I was going to, she asked, "Oh? Which direction are you going in?"

"West," I said.

"This side of Hakone or beyond it?" she asked.

Hakone! That's not much farther than Kamakura. What could you do with a woman like that?

On the day of my departure, Kiyō came to see me in the morning and helped me get ready. She had stopped in at the haberdasher's on the way and bought toothpaste, a toothbrush and a towel, which she had put into a canvas bag. I told her that I didn't need anything like that, but she wouldn't listen.

We went to the station side by side in rickshaws, and when we had gone up onto the platform and I had boarded the train, she gazed at my face intently.

"This may be the last time we'll see each other. Take

great care of yourself," she said in a small voice. Her eyes were filled with tears. I didn't cry, but I was on the verge of it. After the train had moved a fairly good distance, I thought it would be all right now and, putting my head out of the window, looked back. She was still standing there. Somehow she looked terribly small.

2

As the boat came to a stop with a deep blast of its siren, a barge pulled away from the shore and made towards us. The lighterman was completely naked, except for a red loincloth. What a barbaric place! Though, of course, nobody could have worn a kimono in that heat. The sun was so strong that its glare on the water dazzled you and made your head swim. I found out from the purser that this was where I got off. The place was a fishing village and looked about the size of the Ōmori area in Tokyo. What a fool they'd taken me for to bring me here! No one could stand a place like this. Still, it was too late now. I was over the side ahead of everybody else and jumped briskly down into the barge, followed by five or six other people. Redpants loaded four large boxes on board and then rowed back for the land.

When we arrived, I was also the first to jump ashore and, grabbing a snotty-nosed kid who was standing there, I asked him where the middle school was. He looked blank and said he didn't know. Dim-witted clod! How could anybody not know where the school was in a pint-sized place like this?

A man wearing a strange kimono with tight-fitting sleeves came up to me and said, "Come this way." I followed him, and he led me to an inn called the Minatoya, or something. Here I was greeted by a group of horrible women chorusing a coy welcome, which rather put me off going in, so I stood at the gate and asked them if they could tell me where the middle school was. They told me that I had to go another two miles by train. This made me even

less inclined to go in. I snatched my two bags from the man in the tight-sleeved kimono and crept out, followed by some funny looks from the inn staff.

I soon found the station and bought a ticket without any difficulty. I boarded the train and found that the carriage was about the size of a matchbox. We had only been clattering along for what I judged was about five minutes when I had to get off. No wonder the ticket was so cheap. It only cost three *sen*. I took a rickshaw to the school, but by the time I arrived, classes had already finished and no one was there. The caretaker informed me that the teacher on night duty had just popped out on an errand, which struck me as rather an easy-going attitude for somebody on night duty.

I thought I might call on the headmaster, but since I was tired, I climbed back into the rickshaw and told the coolie to take me to a hotel. He went at a good pace and soon drew up in front of an inn called the Yamashiroya. I was a little amused by the name, because it was the same as that of the pawnshop where Kantarō had lived.

The maid led me to a dark room under the staircase on the second floor. It was intolerably hot. I complained, but she said that unfortunately all the other rooms were taken and, with that, walked off, leaving my bags where she had dumped them. There was nothing for it but to go in and sweat in silence. After a while, they called me and told me that the bath was ready. I went down to the bathroom and had just a quick dip. On the way back to my room, I snooped around and found that there were many rooms empty, all of which looked cool. Ill-mannered lot! Liars!

A little later the maid brought my meal. Although the room was hot, the food was a lot better than it had been in my old lodgings. While the maid was serving, she asked me where I was from, and when I told her "Tokyo," she said, "Tokyo's a nice place, isn't it?"

"Of course it is," I answered.

After she had cleared the dishes away and gone, I heard the sound of loud laughter coming from the direction of the kitchen. I was disgusted by this and went straight to bed, but I just couldn't sleep. Not only was it hot, it was noisy too: about five times as bad as my lodgings.

When at last I did doze off, I dreamed of Kiyo. She was munching Echigo sweets wrapped in bamboo grass, wrapping and all. I told her that she'd better stop, because bamboo grass was poisonous, but she said, no, this was medicine, and really looked as though she were enjoying it. This so took me aback that I opened my mouth and let out a peal of laughter. I woke up with this, to find the maid opening the shutters. It was another brilliant day, without a cloud in the sky.

I had heard that you were expected to tip when you were on a trip, and that, if you didn't, you received bad service. I supposed that it was because I hadn't tipped that they'd shoved me into this small, dark room, and also because I was shabbily dressed, had a canvas bag, and carried an umbrella that was more utilitarian than decorative. What a cheek, looking down on people when they were only peasants themselves! All right, I'd give them something they wouldn't forget in a hurry. In spite of my dress, I had left Tokyo with thirty yen remaining from the money for my school fees, and after train and boat fares and other incidental expenses had been paid, I still had fourteen yen left. I could use all that as a tip, because I would soon be getting my salary. I knew that all country people were tight-fisted, and was sure they'd roll their eyes in surprise at even a five-yen tip. I'll show you, I thought, and went with quiet dignity to wash my face, then returned to my room and waited.

The same maid as on the previous evening brought my breakfast. While she was holding the tray and serving me, she kept grinning in an unpleasant way. Anyone would think I was a freak in a sideshow. Peasant! My face may

not be much to look at, but it was a lot better than hers. I had intended to give her the tip when the meal was over, but I was so stung by her behaviour that I handed her a five-yen note while I was still eating and told her to take it down to the front office. She took it with an odd look. When I had finished breakfast, I left for school. They hadn't cleaned my shoes.

Having been to the school in a rickshaw the previous day, I had a good idea where it was. I turned two or three corners and soon came out in front of the gate. The area between the gate and the entrance of the building was paved with granite, and I remembered how the unduly loud rattling as we drove over it the day before had disconcerted me a little. On the way, I met many schoolboys wearing uniforms of the local duck-cloth, who all passed in at this gate. Some of them were taller than me, and looked stronger. The thought that I had to teach them gave me a funny feeling.

I handed over my visiting card, and was shown into the headmaster's room. The headmaster reminded me of a badger, with his sparse side-whiskers, dark skin and big eyes. He was horribly pompous and told me to be diligent and work hard. He then reverently handed me a certificate of appointment, affixed with a large seal. (On my way back to Tokyo, I crumpled this certificate up into a ball and threw it into the sea.) The headmaster said that he would introduce me to the other members of the staff later, and that I was to show the certificate to each of them in turn. What a waste of effort! It would have been better to pin it up in the staff room for three days.

The other teachers wouldn't assemble in the staff room until the bugle sounded for the first period, so I had quite some time to wait. The headmaster pulled out his watch, glanced at it and, saying that he would have a long talk with me later but that first he just wanted me to understand some salient points, proceeded to deliver a lengthy

lecture on the spirit of education. I, of course, made a show of listening but, halfway through, decided that I'd made a bad mistake in coming here. I just couldn't behave in the way the headmaster was telling me to. He was asking somebody as wild as I was to set an example for the students, and telling me that I had to be looked up to by the whole school, and that I would never be an educator unless, as an individual, I exerted a good moral influence on the pupils outside school too. This was unreasonable. As if anybody with all those virtues would come all the way out into the country to teach for forty yen a month! I had always thought that all human beings were the same and that they argued if they lost their temper. But if this was the way things were to be, I would scarcely be able to open my mouth, or even go for a stroll. It seemed to me that if the job were as difficult as all that, the facts should have been explained to me before I was taken on.

I hate lies, so I decided to be philosophical about having been tricked into coming here, to speak out and refuse the job, and go back to Tokyo. I had only nine yen in my purse, having given five yen as a tip at the inn, and that wouldn't get me back to Tokyo. I begrudged having given the tip now and wished I hadn't. But even nine yen would be of some use. Even if I didn't have enough money for the fare back, it was better to refuse the job than to tell lies, so I told the headmaster that I couldn't behave in the way he had described, and would give him back the certificate of appointment.

The headmaster blinked his badger-like eyes and looked at my face. Then, eventually, he smiled and replied that he had been speaking ideally, and that since he knew very well that I wouldn't be able to live up to this, I wasn't to worry. It struck me that, if he knew as well as all that, there was no need to try and scare me in the first place.

While we were talking, the bugle sounded and pandemonium suddenly broke out in the direction of the class-

rooms. The headmaster said the teachers would now probably be gathered in the staff room and led the way there.

The room was a wide rectangle, and the teachers sat at desks lined up around the perimeter. When I entered, they all, as if by a prearranged signal, turned to look at me as one man. It was on the tip of my tongue to ask them who they thought they were looking at, but I went round to each and every one of them as I had been told to do and, introducing myself, presented my certificate of appointment. Most of them just rose from their seats and gave me a perfunctory bow, but the more scrupulous among them took the certificate, looked at it and passed it back again reverently. The whole thing was unreal, like one of those plays they perform at shrines. By the time I'd gone round to fifteen people and come to the sports master, I was becoming rather annoyed at going through the same performance again and again. It was all right for the others; they only had to do it once, whereas I had to keep repeating the same action. It was a pity they had no thought for other people's feelings.

One of the men I met during these preliminaries was the second master, whose name escapes me for the moment. He was apparently a Bachelor of Arts, which meant that he had graduated from a university and was, therefore, a distinguished man. He had, however, an oddly feminine voice and, what really surprised me, wore a red flannel shirt in spite of the heat. He must have been terribly hot, however thin the material was. He was as fastidious in his dress as you would expect a Bachelor of Arts to be, but his red shirt was insulting. I learned later that he wore this red shirt the whole year round because of some rare illness. He himself explained to me that he always ordered red shirts because red was good for the health. It seemed to me that his concern was needless. If what he said was true, I couldn't understand why he didn't have his coat and trousers made in red too, while he was at it.

Next I met the English master, whose name was something like Koga. He had a dreadful complexion. Most people who have sallow complexions are thin, but this fellow was sallow and fat. Years ago, when I was at primary school, there was a boy in my class, Tami Asai, whose father had the same kind of complexion. The Asais were farmers, and I asked Kiyō if all farmers had faces like that, but she said, no, Mr. Asai was sallow and fat because he was always eating unripe pumpkins. Ever since then, I have always thought that anybody with a sallow, fat face got it as a result of eating green pumpkins. There was no doubt that this English master had eaten a great many. I still haven't the faintest idea what eating unripe pumpkins has to do with being sallow and fat. I asked Kiyō once, I remember, but she just laughed and didn't answer. She probably didn't know herself.

The next man I met was the other mathematics teacher, by the name of Hotta. He was a strapping fellow, with closely cropped hair that stood up like the spines on a chestnut burr, and a face like one of those soldier-monks of the Eizan temple who were always starting revolts at the end of the Heian period. I proffered him the certificate politely, but without even looking at it he said, "So you're the new teacher. Come over to my place some time. Ha, ha, ha!"

And "ha, ha, ha" to you, I thought. You wouldn't catch me going to visit someone as ill-mannered and ignorant as him. I nicknamed him "the Porcupine" on the spot.

The teacher of Chinese classics was, as you would expect, formal, and greeted me with, "You arrived yesterday? You must be exhausted. And you start teaching tomorrow—how diligent!" He was a charming old gentleman.

The art master looked the part. The coat he wore over his kimono was of the flimsiest, transparent silk, and he flapped at himself with a fan.

"May one ask where you're from? I beg your pardon? Oh, Tokyo? Splendid! How nice to have a friend. You

wouldn't think so, but I'm from Tokyo too," he simpered.

"Well, if you're from Tokyo, I wish I wasn't," I thought to myself.

It would take me forever to write about everyone I met, so I'd better stop here.

After the introductions had been more or less completed, the headmaster told me I could go now, but should discuss my classes with the senior mathematics master and start work in two days' time. I asked who that was and found it was none other than the Porcupine. Damn! I thought, and my heart sank. How on earth could I work under a man like him?

"Where are you staying?" he asked. "Yamashiroya? Hm. I'll be over soon to have a talk with you." With this, he picked up some chalk and walked off to the classroom. Since he was the senior teacher, his coming to my place to discuss things showed a singular lack of dignity. Still, I admired this more than making me go to see him.

I walked out of the school gate with the intention of going straight back to the inn, but since I had nothing to do there, I decided to walk around the town for a while and strolled aimlessly through the streets. I saw the prefectural government office, an old building from the last century, and the army barracks. These were no better than those of the regiment at Azabu in Tokyo. I also saw the main street, which was about half the size of Tokyo's Kagurazaka, and whose shops were poorer. This was just a small castle town which in feudal times probably only yielded its lord a paltry million and a quarter bushels of grain. I was walking along, pitying those who brag about living in a "castle town," when I suddenly found myself in front of the Yamashiroya. The town wasn't as big as it looked. I had probably already seen most of it. I went in through the gate, thinking I might as well have something to eat.

As soon as she saw me, the owner came running out

from the front office where she had been sitting. She knelt down and gave me a deep, formal bow, with her forehead touching the floor. When I had taken my shoes off and stepped up into the entrance hall, she told me that a room had just become vacant, and I was taken up to it by a maid.

The room was about fifteen feet by eighteen and was at the front of the building on the second floor. It had a large *tokonoma* recess for hanging pictures and setting flower arrangements, and was the finest room I had ever been in in all my life. Not knowing when I would get to stay in such a room again, I took off my Western clothes, put on a light summer kimono and sprawled out right in the middle of the floor to see what it felt like. It felt marvelous.

Immediately after lunch I wrote a letter to Kiyo. I hate writing letters, because my composition is poor and I have only a limited vocabulary. I had never had anyone to write to, anyway. However, I didn't want Kiyo worrying and thinking that the ship had gone down and I'd been drowned, so I made an effort and wrote her a long letter. This is what I wrote.

Dear Kiyo,

I arrived yesterday. It's a useless place. I'm sleeping in a room fifteen feet by eighteen. I gave a five-yen tip to the landlady. She got down on her knees and bowed so deeply that her forehead touched the floor. I didn't sleep well last night. I dreamed you were eating Echigo sweets, bamboo-grass wrapping and all. I'll be home next summer. I went to school today and gave all the teachers nicknames. The headmaster is the Badger, the second master is Redshirt, the English master is the Green Pumpkin, the mathematics master is the Porcupine and the art master is the Clown. I'll write and tell you more news soon.

Goodbye.

Having written the letter, I felt pleasantly drowsy, so I sprawled out in the middle of the floor again and went to sleep. This time I slept soundly, undisturbed by any dreams.

I was woken up by a loud voice saying, "This the room?"

The headmaster is the Badger, the second master is Redshirt, the English master is the Green Pumpkin, the mathematics master is the Porcupine and the art master is the Clown.

and in walked the Porcupine. To have someone start straight in with, "Sorry about this morning. Your timetable is . . ." when you have just opened your eyes is disconcerting, and it threw me completely. The classes allotted to me, however, didn't appear to present any problem, so I didn't complain. Indeed, I seemed to have got off so lightly that I wouldn't have been surprised if he'd told me I had to start first thing the next morning, instead of the day after.

When we had finished discussing classes, Hotta took in the situation and said, "You can't possibly intend to stay on here. I know a good place where you can stay. Mind you, they wouldn't normally take in anybody, but I'll put in a good word for you. You'd better move in there as soon as possible. You can see the place today, move in tomorrow, and start teaching the day after. That's the way to do it, settle everything in order."

Of course he was right. I couldn't stay in a room this size indefinitely, because even my entire salary probably wouldn't cover the cost of it. It went against the grain a little to move so soon after having laid out a five-yen tip, but if I was going to move, it would be better to do it quickly and settle somewhere. I asked Hotta to go ahead and arrange it for me. He told me to at least go and see the place with him, which I did.

The house was situated in a very quiet spot, halfway up a hillside just outside the town. The owner was a curio dealer who, judging by his nickname of Ikagin, was a charlatan. His wife was a woman about four years older than him. When I was at middle school, I learned the English word "witch," and the wife's appearance fitted exactly with my image of a witch. Still, it didn't matter to me if she was a witch; she wasn't my wife.

We eventually settled that I should move in the following day. On the way back, Hotta treated me to a dish of fruit-flavored crushed ice in a part of the town called Tōrichō.

When we had met at the school, I had thought him overbearing and ill-mannered, but in the light of all this friendliness, he didn't seem such a bad sort after all—although, of course, he was impetuous and quick-tempered, like me. I heard later that he was the pupils' favorite teacher.

3

The day for me to start teaching came at last. The first time I entered the classroom and mounted the dais, it gave me a strange feeling. I kept thinking to myself throughout the lesson, "Am I really a teacher?"

The pupils were noisy. From time to time, one or other of them would call out, "Sir!" in an exceptionally loud voice. This began to grate on me. I'd grown used to calling teachers "sir" while I was at the School of Physics, but there is a world of difference between calling someone "sir," and being called "sir" yourself. It gave me a kind of tingling sensation down my spine.

I am neither sneaky nor a coward, but I must confess to a sad lack of audacity; and having someone call me "sir" in a loud voice gave me the same hollow feeling as hearing the midday cannon fired in the Palace grounds, on an empty stomach. I muddled through the first hour as best I could and managed to get by without being stumped by any questions. When I got back to the staff room, Hotta asked me how things had gone. I made some kind of noncommittal reply, which seemed to reassure him.

I took some chalk and left the staff room for the second class, feeling as though I were marching into enemy territory. When I reached the room, I found that the boys in this class were all bigger than those in the previous one. Since I have the typically light, compact build of a Tokyoite, I didn't feel that I exuded any sense of authority, even standing on the dais. I'd fight a professional wrestler if it came to it, but seeing those forty louts arrayed in front of me, I knew that I didn't have the necessary ability to domi-

nate them with my tongue alone. But I thought that if I once showed any weakness to these oafs, I would never be able to regain control, so I began the lesson in a good loud voice and rolled my r's a bit as we do in Tokyo, to give some body to what I was saying.

At first the pupils just sat there and gaped at me in a befuddled way.

"Aha!" I thought. "Got you!" And I started using the rough, punchy language of downtown Tokyo, which is my speciality. At this, the boy right in the middle of the front row, who looked the strongest in the class, suddenly jumped to his feet and said, "Sir!"

"Here we go," I thought, but aloud I said, "Yes, what is it?"

"You're speaking too fast. I can't understand what you say. If it's all the same to you, could you speak just a bit more slower, like?"

"'If it's all the same to you'? 'Like'? What kind of spineless language is that? If I'm speaking too quickly, I'll slow down. But I'm from Tokyo and I can't speak your dialect, so if you don't understand my accent, you'll just have to wait till you get used to it."

I carried on in this vein, and the second period went better than I had expected. Then, just as I was leaving the room, one of the boys came up to me and, showing me some impossible-looking problems, asked me, again in that dreadful dialect, to explain them. I broke out in a cold sweat. All that I could do was to tell him that I didn't understand them, but that I'd tell him next time, and beat a hasty retreat. This was the signal for general jeering, and above the overall din I could distinctly hear shouts of, "He can't do it! He can't do it!"

I went back to the staff room fuming. Damned fools! As if even a teacher could do problems like that! What was so funny about admitting it when you couldn't do something? If I'd been that good at mathematics, I wouldn't have come

down here to the back of beyond for forty yen a month.

Again Hotta asked me how things had gone, and again I gave him the same noncommittal answer, but this time it didn't satisfy him, so I told him I thought all the kids in the school were blithering idiots. He gave me an odd look.

The third period, the fourth period and the hour after lunch, too, all passed in much the same fashion. I made some blunder or other in every class I took that first day. Being a teacher wasn't as easy as it looked, I realized.

All my classes for the day had finished, but I couldn't go home yet. I had to wait there by myself until three o'clock, when, apparently, the pupils had to clean up their rooms. Then I had to go and inspect those of the classes that were in my charge when they reported to me that they had finished. After that I had to check the attendance register and then, at last, I would be free. They might have bought my body with their forty-yen salary, but there was no law that said I had to be tied to the school in my free time, staring at a desk. I put up with it, however, because I thought that since everybody else was abiding by the rules without complaining it wouldn't do for me, the new boy, to make a fuss by myself.

On the way home I complained to Hotta that it was stupid to make us stay at school until after three in the afternoon, to which he replied with his usual laugh. After a while, however, he became serious and warned me not to criticize the school too much, or at least to confine my remarks to him, because there were some very strange people about. We parted at the next corner, so I didn't have a chance to hear any details.

When I arrived home, my landlord told me that he would make me a "nice cup of tea." I thought this was very kind of him, until I found out it was my tea he was going to use, and that he intended to join me in a cup. Seeing this, I thought that he was probably helping himself to a "nice cup of tea" while I was out.

He informed me that he had always been very fond of old paintings and curios, and that this had led him at last to go into business for himself. He then went on to tell me in an obsequious way that I appeared to be "a gentleman of some refinement," and wouldn't I like to begin collecting antiques as a hobby? What a ridiculous suggestion! It's true that two years before, when I had been on an errand for someone to the Imperial Hotel, they had thought I'd come to mend a lock; and that once, even, when I went to Kamakura to see the great statue of Buddha, wearing a blanket draped over my head, all the rickshaw-boys in the area had taken me for the chief coolie. In fact, I've been mistaken for something I'm not on several occasions, but *nobody* has ever suggested that I'm "a gentleman of some refinement." Generally a man's clothes and behavior speak for themselves. You only have to look at pictures to see that a man of refinement either wears a fancy hood or carries slips of paper for writing down the odes he composes. So only a rogue would call me one to my face.

I told the landlord that, not being an old man living in easy retirement, I had no use for collecting antiques as a hobby. He gave a cackling laugh at this and said that nobody liked it at first, but that once you started you just couldn't give it up. He helped himself to another cup of tea, which he drank holding the cup in a most peculiar fashion. I had, in fact, asked him to buy me some tea the previous evening, but this tasted horrible. It was too bitter and strong. One cup and you felt as though your stomach would seize up. I asked him to buy some tea that wasn't so bitter next time.

"Yes, of course, sir," he said, squeezing out the last cup in the pot for himself. It wasn't costing him anything, so he was determined to get as many cups of tea as he could. When he had gone, I prepared the next day's classes and went to bed.

Thereafter, I went to school every day, did my work, and

obeyed all the rules; and every day when I arrived home my landlord would come and offer to make me a "nice cup of tea." After about a week, I had more or less grasped the set-up at school and I understood fairly well what kind of people my landlord and his wife were. The other teachers told me that for a week to a month after receiving their certificate of appointment most people were concerned about what the boys thought of them, but this didn't worry me in the slightest. It's true that whenever I made a fool of myself in the classroom I felt bad about it at the time, but the feeling passed in half an hour or so. I'm constitutionally incapable of worrying about anything for any length of time, even if I wanted to. I was completely indifferent as to what effect my mistakes would have on the pupils, or as to how either the headmaster or second master would react to that effect. As I mentioned before, I'm not one of those people with nerves of steel, but, on the other hand, I'm very decisive. I had made up my mind that if things didn't work out for me at this school, I would go somewhere else, so I wasn't the least bit scared of either the Badger or Redshirt. Moreover, I certainly couldn't bring myself to try and charm or flatter the kids in class.

Things were all right, then, at school, but not in my lodgings. I was prepared to put up with the landlord coming and drinking my tea, providing it stopped there, but he used to bring all kinds of things with him. The first things he brought were about ten ornamental seals, which he laid out in front of me and asked me to buy. I told him that I wasn't a poor itinerant artist and didn't need them.

Following this he brought a scroll painting in which flowers and birds figured prominently and said it was by someone called Kazan, or some such name. He held it up in the *tokonoma* himself and asked me if I didn't think it was well executed. I tried not to commit myself and said that it wasn't bad, whereupon he gave me a stupid lecture, telling me that there had been two artists named Kazan—Some-

body Kazan and Somebody-else Kazan—and that this picture had been painted by Somebody Kazan. Having finished his lecture he urged me to buy the picture, saying that, as it was me, I could have it for fifteen yen. I told him that I didn't have any money, but he said that I could pay anytime. He just wouldn't take no for an answer, so I told him that I wouldn't buy it even if I had the money and finally got rid of him.

Next he came in carrying a dreadful ink-stone, about the size of a ridge tile, on his shoulder. "This is 'Tankei stone,'" he said. "Tankei. From China." In fact he "Tankei-ed" me so much that I asked, half-jokingly, what Tankei was. This started him straight off on another lecture.

There are, it seems, three strata of Tankei stone, and the lower the stratum, the higher the value. All the ink-stones one saw about at that time, he said, were made from the upper stratum, but this one was definitely from the middle. "Look at the 'eyes,' sir," he continued, pointing to the natural markings on the stone. "It's unusual to find an ink-stone with three 'eyes' on it. It's wonderful for making ink on too. Just try your ink-stick on it." With this, he thrust the large stone in front of me. I asked him how much it was, and he told me that since the owner had brought it back from China and was really keen to sell it, I could have it cheap, for thirty yen. I was obviously dealing with a fool. I thought that I might be able to get by at school pretty well, but I couldn't stand this torture by antiques very much longer.

It wasn't long before the school got on my nerves too.

One evening as I was strolling through a part of the town called Ōmachi, I saw a sign next to the post office which said: *Noodles*, with the footnote, *Tokyo-style*. I've always been very fond of noodles, and when I was in Tokyo could never pass a noodle shop and smell that spicy aroma without going in. Since I had come to this town I had—what with school and antiques—forgotten about noodles; but

now, seeing that sign, I just could not walk past. I thought that I would have a bowl while I was there, and went in.

The interior didn't live up to the sign outside. They had announced that this was "Tokyo-style," so the place should have been clean, but either from ignorance of Tokyo, or lack of money, it was filthy. The *tatami* matting was discolored and, for good measure, it was gritty underfoot. The walls were grimy with soot, and the ceiling, which was also black from the smoke of an oil-lamp, was so low that you involuntarily ducked your head as you walked about. The only thing that was plainly new was the sign on the wall which gave the names and prices of the various dishes. The owner had obviously bought an old building and opened it as a restaurant two or three days before. The first thing on the menu was noodles with fried prawns.

"Hey! Noodles with fried prawns," I called in a loud voice. At this, three people sitting in a corner, who had been eating noodles with a hissing, sucking sound, all looked across at me together. The inside of the shop was dark and I hadn't noticed them before, but I now recognized them as pupils at the school. We said good evening to each other and I got on with my meal. I hadn't had noodles for a long time and they tasted good, so I polished off four bowls.

The next day I walked blithely into the classroom, only to be confronted with the words A FRIED PRAWN FOR THE TEACHER, written in enormous letters, covering the blackboard. When they saw the look on my face, everyone burst out laughing. This struck me as absurd, and I asked them what was so funny about fried prawns, to which one of the pupils replied, "But four bowls! That's a bit much, like." I told them that it was my money and that it had nothing to do with them whether I ate four bowls or five. I then went through the lesson as quickly as I could and returned to the staff room.

Ten minutes later I walked into the next class and

there on the board was 4 (FOUR) BOWLS OF FRIED PRAWNS! LAUGHING STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

When I'd read what they'd written on the blackboard in the last class I hadn't been particularly worried, but this time I was really annoyed. A joke's a joke, but when you take it too far it becomes mischief.

Proportion is the rule in all things. If a joke goes to malicious bounds, or if, for example, admiration turns to jealousy, nobody can stomach them. These things are like rice-cake, which is delicious toasted but horrible if it's burned black. Country people don't have the ability to make this kind of fine distinction and have no idea where to draw the line.

These kids had been brought up in a castle town that was so small that you could see all its sights in an hour, and having no other accomplishments to pride themselves on, were as excited about this fried-prawn incident as if it had been the Russo-Japanese war. Poor devils! Their whole education had been such that they were as warped and stunted as a maple tree grown in a flowerpot. I wouldn't have minded if their humor had been innocent. I would have laughed with them. But, for young boys, they were strangely spiteful.

I cleaned the blackboard without a word, then turned to them and said, "Do you think it's funny to play tricks like that? It's a lily-livered kind of joke! Do you know what lily-livered means?" One of them answered, "Yeah, it means getting angry when you're laughed at for something you've done, like." Oafs! I could have wept to think that I'd come all the way from Tokyo to teach this crowd. I told them that they weren't going to have the last word with me, so they'd better shut up and get on with their work. Then I began the lesson.

In the next class I was greeted by the following words on the blackboard: IF YOU EAT FRIED PRAWNS YOU HAVE TO HAVE THE LAST WORD. It was all beyond

Ten minutes later I walked into the next class and there on the board was 4 (FOUR) BOWLS OF FRIED PRAWNS! LAUGHING STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

me. I just didn't know what to do with them. Telling them that I had no intention of teaching such impertinent brats, I walked straight out of the room. If this was how things were going to be I preferred antiques to school.

I found, however, that I'd cooled down considerably after going home and sleeping on the fried-prawn affair. I went to school the following day and everybody was present. I couldn't make out what it all meant.

The next three days passed without incident, but on the evening of the fourth day I went to a place called Sumida, and while I was there had some rice dumplings. Sumida was a hot-spring resort about ten minutes by train, or thirty minutes on foot, from the town, and besides restaurants, hotels and a park, it boasted a brothel quarter. I had heard that the food there was very good, so I dropped in to try it on my way back from the hot-spring bath. This time I met none of the boys from school and thought that nobody would know.

I went to school the next day and once again walked blithely into the classroom for the first period. There on the board was TWO PLATES OF DUMPLINGS—7 SEN. It was quite true: I had eaten two plates of dumplings, and I had paid seven sen. What a confounded nuisance those kids were!

I went into the second period, convinced that there would be something written on the blackboard, and sure enough there was: THE DUMPLINGS IN THE BROTHEL QUARTER ARE SIMPLY DELICIOUS. I was dumbfounded.

No sooner had the incident of the dumplings passed than a red towel became the topic of conversation. I didn't understand what they were on about until I found out that it was connected with a habit of mine. Ever since I had arrived in the town I had made it a practice to go to Sumida each day for a hot-spring bath. Nothing else in the area was a patch on Tokyo, but the hot springs were marvelous.

Thinking that since I was there I might as well take advantage of them and take a bath every day, I used to go over there in the evening for the exercise. Unfortunately, I always had a large Western bath-towel dangling from my hand. Not only had the spring water discolored this towel, but the red stripes in it had run, so that when you caught just a glimpse of it, it looked scarlet. I had that towel dangling from my hand every single day, both going and coming, whether on the train or walking. That's how the pupils came to call me Red-towel. What a harassing thing it was to live in a small town!

There's more.

The hot-spring bath was housed in a new three-story building. If you went first class, for only eight sen they lent you a bathrobe, an attendant washed you, and a girl served you tea in one of those elegant, shallow cups that they use in the tea ceremony. I always went first class, and the boys at school began to say that it was extravagant to go first class on forty yen a month.

There's still more.

The bath itself was about fifteen feet by eighteen and was lined with granite. You generally found about thirteen or fourteen people soaking in it, but sometimes it was empty. The water was about breast-high and I used to swim in the bath for exercise. When I was sure nobody was about, I would amuse myself by swimming around the perimeter of the tank. However, one day I came down from the third floor in high spirits, wondering whether I would be able to have a swim, and glancing at the partition running along the front of the bath I found a large notice in bold, black letters which warned, *No Swimming in the Bath*. There could scarcely have been many people who swam in the bath, so the notice had probably been especially written for me. I gave up swimming after that, but I was taken aback to find written on the blackboard when I went to school: NO SWIMMING IN THE BATH.

The thought that the whole school was ganging up to spy on me was depressing. The pupils didn't say anything to me directly, but I began to wonder why I had ever come to this poky little town. Not only did I have to put up with this kind of thing at school, I also had to continue enduring torture by antiques when I got home.

4

Everybody on the staff had to take it in turns to do night duty; everybody, that is, except the Badger and Redshirt. When I asked how they managed to get out of this I was told that the positions of headmaster and second master at middle schools were by Imperial approval and carried the rank of *sōnin*, and that they were, therefore, exempted. What a load of rubbish! Why should they draw fat salaries, work short hours, and then be excused from night duty? It was unfair. They made up rules to suit their own purposes and had the gall to behave as if this were the most natural thing in the world. I grumbled a lot about it, but Hotta said that one person on his own couldn't achieve anything, however much reason for complaint he had. I couldn't see what numbers had to do with it; one person or two, if a complaint was justified, it was justified. When I said this to Hotta, he quoted the English words, "Might is right." I was unable to grasp the meaning of this, so he explained that it meant that the strong got the privileges. That much I'd known for a long time and I didn't need it spelled out for me now; but that was one thing and night duty was another. Besides which, nobody could possibly agree that the Badger and Redshirt came into the category of "the strong." Anyway, arguments notwithstanding, it eventually came round to my turn for night duty.

My restless and nervous disposition has always made it impossible for me to get a sound sleep unless I'm in my own bed, with my own bedding. Because of this I scarcely ever went to spend the night at a friend's house when I was a boy. It stands to reason, then, that if I didn't even like

sleeping at a friend's, I was going to hate sleeping in a school dormitory. But if this was included in the forty yen, I would just have to put up with it.

The teachers and day-boys had all gone home and it was very dull being left there by myself with nothing to do. The room that the teacher on night duty used was at the west end of the dormitories, which were at the rear of the classrooms. I went to take a look, but the room was catching the full force of the afternoon sun and was too hot to stay in. Like everything else in the country, the heat too was slow and deliberate. It would still be hot in autumn.

I had the food for the boarders and myself brought in and got the evening meal over quickly, but I was staggered how horrible it was. I didn't see how the boys had the energy to behave in the rowdy way they did on this food. The way they put that food away in no time at half past four in the afternoon was nothing short of heroic.

The meal was over, but I could hardly go to bed yet because it was still broad daylight. I fancied going to the hot spring, but I wasn't sure whether it was right or not to go out when you were on night duty. I couldn't bear, however, to just sit there gazing miserably into space like a convict doing a term of penal servitude. When I had first come to the school and asked the caretaker for the teacher on night duty, he'd told me that he was out. I had thought it peculiar at the time, but now that it was my turn I began to understand why and decided that I would be right to go out. When I told the caretaker I would be back shortly, he asked me if I had some business to attend to. I told him no, it wasn't business, I was just going to the hot spring for a bath, and left. It was a pity I hadn't brought my red towel with me from my lodgings, but I could borrow one at the bathhouse.

I had a leisurely bath at the hot spring, getting in and out of the tank several times. When, at last, evening came, I took the train back to Komachi station. This was only

about a quarter of a mile from the school, so I decided to walk. I hadn't gone more than a few yards, when I saw the Badger coming from the other direction. He was probably planning to go to the hot spring himself. Although he was hurrying along, he caught sight of my face as he passed, so I nodded a greeting. He stopped and said in a serious tone, "Correct me if I'm wrong, but aren't you supposed to be on night duty?" I found this "correct me if I'm wrong" irritating, because it had only been two hours ago that he'd said, "Ah yes, you're on duty tonight, aren't you?" and thanked me in advance. Headmasters always have to make a tortuous detour to say what they mean. I was angry, so, as a parting shot, I said, "Yes, I'm on night duty. Which is exactly why I'm going back to spend the night at school now." With that, I walked off with an unconcerned look on my face.

I had gone as far as the crossroads at Tatemachi, when this time I ran into Hotta. This was such a small town that you couldn't put one foot outside the door without meeting somebody you knew.

"Hey! Aren't you on night duty?" he asked.

"Yes, that's right."

"You can't just go walking off like this, you know. It's outrageous."

I told him in a rather haughty fashion that I didn't find it outrageous in the slightest, and that, on the contrary, it would have been outrageous to have stayed in. He then—and this sounded very unlike Hotta—complained about my negligence and said that I'd be in trouble if I ran into the headmaster or Redshirt. I retorted that, as a matter of fact, I'd just met the headmaster, and he'd said that I was quite right to come out for a walk when it was as hot as this, because it was the only way to make night duty bearable. By now I was tired of the whole thing, so I left Hotta standing there and went back to school.

Darkness fell soon afterwards and I called the caretaker

to my room for a chat. After about two hours, however, I grew tired of this and decided to go to bed, even though I didn't expect to sleep yet. I changed into a thin night kimono, lifted the side of the mosquito net, pulled back the red blanket and, flinging my backside down onto the mattress with a thump, lay on my back. It's been a habit of mine to flop down onto the mattress when I go to bed ever since I was a child.

I remember once when I was in lodgings in Ogawamachi a law student who lived downstairs came and complained to me about this bad habit of mine. All law students are feeble, but they have the gift of the gab. This one was no exception. He went on and on talking a lot of tedious nonsense, but I shut him up. I told him that if the building shook when I went to bed it wasn't my backside's fault, it was the building's; so if he had anything to say he should not come to me, but go and tell the landlord.

Since the room I was in now wasn't upstairs, it didn't matter how much noise I made when I fell onto the mattress. I have to throw myself down onto the bed with as much force as I can, because I just don't feel rested otherwise.

I was lying there, stretching my legs right out and thinking how pleasant it was, when I felt something hop onto each leg. Whatever they were felt rough, which meant they weren't fleas. I jumped and kicked my legs about two or three times under the blanket, whereupon the number of scratchy things increased. I could feel them in five or six places on my shins, two or three were on my thighs, one got squashed under my backside, and one even hopped to my navel. This really gave me a fright and I leaped up and flung off the blanket. About fifty or sixty grasshoppers jumped out of the bed. It had given me an eerie sensation to feel them on me when I hadn't known what they were, but now that they had emerged in their true colors and I could see that they were only grasshoppers, my feeling

changed to anger. "All right, you scurvy little pests," I thought. "Frighten me, will you? I'll show you!" I snatched up the pillow and hit out at them two or three times, but they were so small that the more force I hit them with, the less effect it had. I was doing no good at all this way, so I sat down on the bed again and, using the pillow as women do a rolled-up mat to beat the *tatami* when they're cleaning, I laid about me. Not only were the grasshoppers thrown into a panic, they were also thrown up into the air by the force of the pillow. They landed on my shoulders, head and face, and bumped against me. Since I could scarcely hit those that were on my face with the pillow, I grabbed them in my hand and hurled them away from me as hard as I could. This had no effect, however, for no matter how hard I flung them, they hit the mosquito net and just stayed there where they had been thrown, gripping the net and wafting gently backwards and forwards. They didn't die, they didn't do anything. At the end of about half an hour I had at last managed to exterminate them. I then took a broom and swept out the corpses.

The caretaker came and asked me what was the matter.

"What do you mean, 'what's the matter'?" I shouted. "Have you ever heard of anyone keeping grasshoppers in his bed? Idiot!" He said he didn't know anything about it, but I thought this was a poor excuse, so I threw the broom out onto the verandah. The caretaker picked it up timidly and slunk off.

I lost no time in calling for three of the boarders to represent the dormitories. Six, in fact, arrived. Six or ten, it was all the same to me. I stood there in my night kimono, with the sleeves pulled back to the shoulders ready for action, and began the parley.

"What did you put grasshoppers in my bed for?"

"Er, what's a grasshopper?" asked the boy nearest me. His self-possession bordered on insolence. It looked as though it wasn't only the headmaster at this school who

"All right, you scurvy little pests," I thought. "Frighten me, will you? I'll show you!"

could juggle with words: the pupils were going to do it too.

"You don't know what a grasshopper is? All right. I'll show you," I said. But I'd swept every last one of them out, so I couldn't. I called the caretaker again and told him to bring the grasshoppers back. He replied that he'd already thrown them on the rubbish heap and should he go and get them again? I told him yes, he should, and he scuttled off. He reappeared at last with about ten of the dead grasshoppers on a piece of notepaper and said that he was terribly sorry, but it was so dark that unfortunately these were all he could find, and he would find some more for me tomorrow. Even the caretaker was a fool.

I showed one of the insects to the boys and said, "*This* is a grasshopper. Look at the size of you and you still don't know what a grasshopper is."

The boy on the far left of the group had the cheek to try and score off me by saying, "That's not a grasshopper. It's a locust, like."

"You damned idiot! A grasshopper and a locust are the same thing. And while we're about it, stop finishing every confounded sentence with 'like.' It sounds like 'tyke,' and if that's what you're trying to call me come straight out with it and don't mumble." I thought that would shut him up, but no.

"Like and tyke are different, like," he said.

Like, like, like! That's all you ever heard out of them.

"Anyway," I went on, "grasshoppers or locusts, why did you put them in my bed? Did I ask you to?"

"Nobody put them there."

"How else could they have got into my bed if nobody put them there?"

"Locusts like warm places. They probably crawled in by themselves."

"Don't talk rubbish! Grasshoppers don't just waltz their way into beds by themselves. And if you think I'm going

to put up with people waltzing them in, you're mistaken. Now, come on. Speak out."

"It's all very well to say 'speak out,' but we can't explain something we didn't do."

What a miserable lot they were! If they hadn't the nerve to own up to what they'd done, they shouldn't have done it. As long as I couldn't offer any proof, they intended to put on a wooden face and deny all knowledge of the affair.

I got up to a few pranks myself when I was at middle school, but when a teacher asked who was responsible I owned up like a man every single time. If you've done something, you've done it; and if you haven't, you haven't. It's as simple as that. I may have played tricks when I was at school, but at least I was always honest about it. If I'd intended to lie in order to escape the consequences of what I'd done, I wouldn't have done it in the first place. Mischief and punishment are inseparable. It's the thought of punishment that adds spice to getting into mischief. I know of no society that tolerates people so despicable that they expect to have their fun without paying for it. It was obvious that these kids, when they left school, were going to turn into the kind of people who borrow money and refuse to pay it back. They come to school, tell lies, cheat and skulk about in the shadows, play malicious tricks on people, and then when they graduate they strut about, laboring under the misapprehension that they have received an education. They were the scum of the earth!

It made me sick to talk to people with such putrid ideas, so I excused the six of them, telling them that if they didn't want to own up they didn't have to, but that I felt sorry for anyone going to middle school who didn't have the ability to distinguish between what was decent and what wasn't. My appearance and behavior may not be very refined and I may not speak elegantly, but I was convinced that, at heart, I was a lot better person than they were.

They all strolled away calmly, looking far superior to me

because I was a teacher in name only, without any of the qualities usually associated with that profession. Nevertheless, their very composure was an indication of what kind of people they were. I would never have had the nerve to behave like that under such circumstances.

I got back into bed again and lay down, but the inside of the net was filled with the buzzing of mosquitoes. They must have got in during the fracas a little while ago. It was too much trouble to burn every one of them individually with a candle, so I took down the net, laid it out in several long folds, and began to give it a good shaking inside the room. I shook it lengthwise and breadthwise and put so much energy into it that one of the cords with a metal ring attached to it, used for hanging up the net, came flying over and cracked me on the back of my hand hard enough to make a saint swear.

I was a little calmer when I got into bed for the third time, but I just couldn't sleep. I looked at my watch and found it was half past ten. When you came to think about it, I'd really picked a great place to live in. I felt very sorry for middle-school teachers if these were the kind of kids they had to teach all the time. It was a wonder they didn't run out of teachers. You had to be extremely patient and even a bit dense, perhaps, to take on a job like this. It was definitely not for me.

This train of thought led me to Kiyo. What an admirable person she was. She was only an old woman, without education or social position, but she had a noble character. I had never before felt particularly grateful for all she had done for me, but now, miles away from home and all by myself, I appreciated her kindness for the first time. If she wanted to eat sweets from Echigo, then I ought to go there and get some for her. She was worth it. Kiyo had always praised me and said that I was unselfish and straightforward, but she was a far finer person than me. How I wished I could have been with her then.

I was stretching myself and thinking about Kiyo when suddenly overhead I heard what must have been thirty or forty boys all stamping on the floor in time. The drumming was so great that I was afraid the ceiling was going to cave in on me. Not only were they stamping, they were letting out loud war whoops of proportionate volume. I was afraid something serious had happened and shot out of bed. But no sooner was I up than it dawned on me that it was the pupils getting their own back for what I'd said to them earlier.

"You know what you did was wrong," I thought. "And what you did stands until you apologize. If you had any sense of what's right you'd go to bed, feel sorry for what you've done, and come and apologize in the morning. The least you can do is be ashamed of yourselves and go to sleep quietly."

"This dormitory wasn't put up as a pig-pen. Stop behaving like raving lunatics! Right! I'll show you!"

All these thoughts raced through my head as, still dressed for bed, I cleared the stairs up to the second floor in three and a half bounds. But, oddly enough, the racket I had heard going on upstairs had stopped. Everything was quiet. There wasn't even the sound of voices, much less footsteps. Strange.

The lamps had already been turned out, so I wouldn't have been able to see anybody clearly, but I would have been able to sense if they were anywhere. There wasn't so much as a mouse hiding in the corridor which ran the length of the building from east to west. The moon shone in at the far end of the corridor, making an area as bright as day. It was all very peculiar.

I've always dreamed a lot ever since I was a child. I was often laughed at for suddenly sitting up in bed and babbling something in my sleep. Once, I remember, when I was about sixteen or seventeen, I dreamed I found a diamond. Then, sitting bolt upright, I started vehemently

asking my brother, who was sleeping beside me, what he'd done with it. I was the laughing-stock of the family for three days and felt very embarrassed about the whole thing. In view of all this, it was possible that I'd dreamed everything up till now. I was positive, however, that the pupils had been making a noise.

I was standing in the middle of the corridor, mulling these things over in my mind, when suddenly from the end which was bathed in moonlight there came, "One, two, three . . ." And then, "Yahooooo!" from about thirty or forty throats. This was immediately followed by the same drumming sound as before, as they all stamped in time on the floorboards. So I *had* been right. It hadn't been a dream.

"Be quiet!" I shouted in a voice as loud as any of theirs. "It's the middle of the night!" And I started to dash down the corridor.

The part I was running along was dark and the only thing I had to guide me was the moonlit patch at the far end. I can only have run about five or six yards when, right in the middle of the corridor, something large and hard hit me across the shin. I let out a yell of pain, which was still ringing in my ears as I went sprawling headlong onto my face. I cursed and got to my feet, but I couldn't run. However impatient I was to go on, I just couldn't control my leg. This irritated me so much that I hopped the rest of the way on my good leg. But when I came to the place where the noise had been there wasn't a footstep or a voice to be heard. Everything was as quiet as the grave. I knew all men had an element of cowardice in them, but theirs went to ridiculous lengths. These weren't human beings, they were pigs.

I was now determined that I wasn't going to leave until I had dragged them out of their hiding places and made them apologize. With this in mind, I tried to open one of the dormitory doors to look inside, but I couldn't. I don't know whether it was locked or whether they'd set a desk

or something up against it, but, however much I pushed, it wouldn't budge. I tried the dormitory opposite, on the north side of the corridor, but with the same result. While I was fuming and trying to get the door open to haul the kids out, another war whoop and more stamping of feet started up at the eastern end of the passage. "Oh, so it's a conspiracy, is it?" I thought. "The kids at the eastern end and the western end have got together to make a fool of me." This much I realized, but I didn't know what to do about it. To tell the truth, I have more courage than wisdom. I never know what to do at times like that.

I had, however, no intention of being beaten. If I left things as they were I would lose a great deal of face. I couldn't have it said that a Tokyoite lacked spirit. I would never live it down if it were known that I'd been made fun of by a bunch of snotty-nosed kids and cried myself to sleep because I didn't know what to do about it. My ancestors were bodyguards to the Shōgun, the military ruler of Japan in feudal times. The Shōgun's personal retainers all belonged to the ancient Minamoto family, who came down in direct line from the Emperor Seiwa. That is to say, one of my ancestors was that great knight, Tada Mitsunaka. I was, therefore, of much higher birth than that crowd of peasants. I must admit, however, that I regretted not having a better head on my shoulders. I was in a spot, not knowing what to do, but even so I was not going to be beaten. The reason I didn't know what to do was that I am so honest. But think about it. If an honest man can't win in this world, who can?

I was determined that if I didn't win tonight, I would tomorrow; and if I didn't win tomorrow, I would the day after; and if not then, I would have food sent in to me and wait there until I did win. Having decided this, I squatted cross-legged in the middle of the corridor and waited for the dawn. The mosquitoes kept buzzing around me, but I didn't care. I ran my hand along the shin I had hurt earlier

and found it was slippery. It was probably bleeding. Let it bleed! It wasn't long before the weariness from my recent exertion made itself felt and, without meaning to, I dropped off to sleep.

I was woken up by some kind of excitement nearby. "Damn!" I thought, and sat up quickly. The door to the right of where I was sitting was partly open and two of the pupils stood in front of me. As soon as I had gathered my wits I grabbed the leg of the boy who was standing right in front of me and yanked it for all I was worth. The boy crashed down onto his back. Take that! The other boy looked a little confused, so I took advantage of this and, springing at him, caught him by the shoulders and gave him a good shaking. He was stupified and could only blink at me. "Right! Come down to my room," I said. They both followed as meekly as lambs. It had been light for quite a while.

Back in my room, I demanded an explanation from the boys, but pigs are pigs, whether you beat them, thrash them or whatever you do, so to all my questions they just said they didn't know anything. They had no intention of confessing. "I don't know" seemed to be all they were prepared to say on the subject. Gradually one, then another of the pupils came down from upstairs, until finally they were all gathered in my room. They looked sleepy and their eyelids were puffy. Weak-kneed brats! A man ought to look in better condition than that after only missing one night's sleep. I told them to go and wash their faces and then come back and argue, but nobody made a move.

I had been wrangling with over fifty of them for about an hour, when the Badger unexpectedly appeared. I heard later that the caretaker had gone to get him, saying that there was a big disturbance at the school. It was precisely because he was the kind of man who had no more pride than to go and call the headmaster for such a paltry reason that he was a caretaker in a middle school.

The headmaster listened both to my account of the affair and also to a few of the boys' excuses. He told them that he would deal with them later, but in the meantime to attend school as usual. He added that if they didn't hurry up and wash and have their breakfast they'd be late for school. And, with that, he dismissed them all. What laxity! If it had been me I'd have expelled all the boarders on the spot. It was because of this lethargic attitude of his that the pupils made a fool of the teacher on night duty.

The headmaster then turned to me and said, "You must be tired out after all that worry. Why don't you take the day off today?"

"No, thank you," I replied. "I wasn't in the least worried. As long as there's breath in my body I wouldn't worry if that kind of thing happened every night. Furthermore, if I were too tired to teach because I'd missed a night's sleep I'd return one day's money out of my salary."

I don't know what the headmaster thought of this, but, after staring at my face for a while, he said, "But your face is all swollen, you know."

My face did, in fact, feel rather heavy and it itched all over. I must have been badly bitten by mosquitoes. Scratching my face violently, I replied that however swollen my face was, my mouth was still in working order, so it wouldn't stop me from giving lessons. At this the headmaster complimented me on my energy. Actually, I don't think it was a compliment. I think he was making fun of me.

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“Would you like to come fishing?” asked Redshirt. He was so soft-spoken that it made me feel quite uneasy to hear him. You couldn’t have told from his voice whether he was a man or a woman. A man ought to speak like one, especially if he’s a university graduate. If I, who had only been to the School of Physics, could speak as I did, it was positively indecent for a Bachelor of Arts to have such an effeminate voice.

I made some reply that wasn’t calculated to sound enthusiastic, at which Redshirt had the cheek to ask me if I’d ever been fishing. As a matter of fact, I hadn’t very often. But once when I was a boy I caught three silver carp in the fishing-pond at Koume in Tokyo. On another occasion—it was at a fair held in front of the Bishamon shrine in the Zenkokuji temple in Kagurazaka—I managed to hook a carp about eight inches long, but just when I thought I had it, it fell back into the water with a splash. I still have a sense of disappointment when I think about it, even now. I told Redshirt about this, but he just thrust his chin forward and gave his simpering laugh. I wished he wouldn’t laugh in that affected way.

“Well then,” he continued, “you don’t really know about the joys of fishing yet, do you? I’ll teach you, if you like.” He seemed highly delighted, but I had no desire whatsoever to be taught. People who fish or hunt are all cruel. If they weren’t, they couldn’t enjoy taking life. It stands to reason that even fish and birds prefer being alive to being dead. It’s different if you have to fish or hunt in order to live, but it seems like gross overindulgence to me

that a man living a perfectly comfortable life has to kill living things to get a good night's sleep. This was what I thought, but I saw no hope of winning an argument with a Bachelor of Arts—they're all glib—and I kept quiet about it. Seeing this, Redshirt thought I'd given in and, pressing the point, said, "I'll teach you immediately. Are you free today? Why don't you come with us? I was going with Yoshikawa, but it will be more company with three of us. Do come."

Yoshikawa was the art master, the one I'd nicknamed the Clown. I don't know what his idea was, but he was in and out of Redshirt's house every morning and evening and danced attendance on him everywhere he went. They were supposed to be colleagues—equals—but looking at them you'd have thought they were master and man. It didn't surprise me that the Clown was going fishing with Redshirt, because he always went everywhere with him. What I did wonder, however, was why they'd invited someone as unsociable as me to join them when they could have gone by themselves. Probably so they could lord it over me and show off what fine anglers they were. Well, I'm not one to be impressed by that sort of thing; nor do I stand and gape just because someone manages to catch two or three tunnies. I may not have been very good, but, not being subhuman, I thought I would probably hook something. Anyway, if I refused, Redshirt, being the kind of man he was, would undoubtedly jump to the wrong conclusion and think I'd refused because I was no good at fishing, and not because I disliked it. So I agreed.

After school I called in at my lodgings, got ready, and went to meet the other two at the station. Then we all went down to the beach together. There was only one boatman, and the boat itself was long and narrow, like nothing I had ever seen when I lived in Tokyo.

I'd been looking over the boat, but could see no sign of any fishing rods. I wondered how you could fish without

a rod and asked the Clown what he intended to do. He stroked his chin and replied in a professional manner that when you fished out to sea you didn't use a rod, and that, "actually," you only needed a line. I felt very humiliated and wished I'd kept my mouth shut.

The boatman rowed out to sea with slow, leisurely strokes, but experience will tell, and when I looked back, I found that we were already so far out that the beach looked very small in the distance. The pagoda of the Kōhakuji temple tapered needlelike above the trees and, a way off, Aojima Island floated on the water. Nobody lived on this island, and looking closely I could see why. It was just a conglomeration of rocks and pine trees. Redshirt remarked how exquisite the scenery was, and Yoshikawa, the Clown, lisped his agreement. I didn't know whether it was exquisite or not, but it certainly gave me a pleasant feeling to look at it. It felt good to be there on that vast expanse of water, being fanned by a sea breeze. I was starving.

"Look at that pine tree," Redshirt said to Yoshikawa. "The trunk is perfectly straight and the top of the tree spreads out like an umbrella. It might have been painted by Turner."

The Clown replied that it was "straight out of a Turner," and that the curve was perfect. I didn't have any idea what "Turner" meant, but thinking that I could get along very well without the knowledge, I kept quiet.

The boat skirted around to the right of the island. There were no waves at all. It was so calm, in fact, that it was difficult to realize you were on the sea. I was having a very pleasant time, thanks to Redshirt. If possible, I would have liked to land on the island and see what it was like, so pointing out a rock, I asked if the boat couldn't pull in there. I was told by Redshirt that it could be done, but that the fishing wasn't any good too close to land. Yoshikawa then, addressing himself to Redshirt, came up with the un-

called-for suggestion that we call the place Turner Island. Redshirt thought this was a good idea and said that that was what we would always call it from then on. I hoped that I hadn't been included in that "we." Aojima Island was fine as far as I was concerned.

"Imagine Raphael's Madonna standing on that rock," said Yoshikawa. "It would make a superb picture. Don't you agree?"

"Let's not talk about Madonnas," replied Redshirt, and gave his disconcertingly effeminate laugh. Yoshikawa, with a glance at me, said it was all right, because there was nobody to hear. He then deliberately turned away with a smirk. This made me feel uncomfortable. Madonna or belladonna, it was all the same to me. He could put what he liked up on the rock. But saying things that other people don't understand and, moreover, not caring whether they hear *because* they don't understand, is boorish. In spite of his behavior, Yoshikawa still had the gall to say that he was a Tokyoite. Madonna was probably the nickname of Redshirt's favorite geisha. Well, if he wanted to stand a geisha under a pine tree on an uninhabited island, let him. And the Clown could paint her in oils and show the picture in an exhibition.

The boatman dropped anchor, saying that this was probably a good place to fish. In reply to Redshirt's question as to how deep the water was, the boatman said that it was six fathoms. Redshirt cast his line and remarked that there wasn't much likelihood of finding bream at that depth. So our intrepid second master thought he was going to catch himself a lordly bream, did he? He didn't have a hope! But Yoshikawa, always the flatterer, said that with Redshirt's skill and the sea being so calm, he was bound to get a bite. Then he too threw his line over the side and paid it out.

The lines had a lead weight at the end, but no float. It seemed to me that fishing without a float was like trying to

"Let's not talk about Madonnas," replied Redshirt, and gave his disconcertingly effeminate laugh. Yoshikawa, with a glance at me, said it was all right, because there was nobody to hear.

take one's temperature without a thermometer. I was thinking that I couldn't possibly do it, when Redshirt turned to me and said, "Come on. You try, too. Do you have any line?" When I told him that I had more than enough line but no float, he answered that only amateurs needed a float. "When the line touches the bottom like this," he said, "you use your index finger to take its pulse, as it were, where it passes over the side of the boat. Then, when you get a bite, you can feel it. —There! I've got one." He suddenly started to pull in his line. But when it was in, there was nothing on the hook. All that had happened was that the bait had gone. Good!

"Oh, what a pity!" said Yoshikawa. "I'm sure it was a big one. If it got away from you, my dear sir, with all your skill, we'll have to be exceptionally careful today. Still, even if it did get away, it's better to fish your way than to sit staring at a float all day long. Not being able to fish without a float is like not being able to ride a bicycle without brakes."

The way the Clown was prattling on made me want to give him a good hiding more than ever. Since I also belong to the human race, and Redshirt hadn't rented the entire ocean, I felt that at least one bonito would feel duty-bound to come and give me a bite. I threw the weight over the side with a splash and manipulated the line with the tips of my fingers as the mood took me.

Not long after, I felt something jerking at the line. I thought about it. It had to be a fish. The line wouldn't be twitching if what I'd caught hadn't been alive. "Done it!" I thought. "I've caught a fish." I yanked the line in hand over hand.

"I say, you've caught one," said Yoshikawa. "Ah, the power of youth is a frightening thing."

While he was being sarcastic I had almost pulled the line in, and only about five feet of it remained submerged in the water. I looked over the side and saw that there was a

striped fish, like a goldfish in shape, on the end of the line. It was drifting to and fro in the water, and as I pulled in the line it came floating to the top. Hurray! As the fish broke water it started to wriggle and splash and I got a faceful of salt water. I managed to grab it at last, but I couldn't get the hook out of its mouth. The hand I was holding the fish with became horribly slimy. I found the whole thing too much trouble, so I swung the line and threw the fish into the small fish well in the middle of the boat. It soon died.

Redshirt and the Clown looked on in surprise. I swished my hands about in the sea to wash them, but when I held them up to my nose they still smelled fishy. I'd had enough. I didn't want to take hold of a fish, whatever I caught, and I don't suppose the fish wanted to be taken hold of either. I quickly rolled up my line.

"Well, first blood to you. Congratulations," Yoshikawa said. And then he added with his customary cheek, "But only a *goruki* . . ."

"Yes," Redshirt broke in, trying to be funny, "it sounds like that Russian writer Gorki."

"You're absolutely right," agreed Yoshikawa immediately. "It's exactly like the Russian author."

So what? Gorki's a Russian writer, Maruki's¹ a photographer at Shiba, and if people were honest you wouldn't need *any* kind of "key." Dropping foreigners' names one after the other in a conversation was a bad habit of Redshirt's. It made it sound as though he were speaking in italics. Everyone has his own speciality, and being a teacher of mathematics, I hadn't the faintest idea what the difference between Gorki and Turkey was. He should have made allowances for that. If he had to use foreign words, why didn't he talk about Benjamin Franklin's autobiography? Or mention "pushing to the front" —the phrase they used to use to explain the art of capitalistic living? These were things even I knew about, things that

were often mentioned in middle-school textbooks. Redshirt used sometimes to bring a bright red magazine called *Imperial Literature* to school and read it avidly. Hotta once told me that all the foreign names came from this magazine. *Imperial Literature* had a lot to answer for.

Redshirt and Yoshikawa continued to fish for all they were worth and after an hour had caught about fifteen or sixteen fish between them. Strangely enough, every time they pulled a fish in it turned out to be a *goruki*. They couldn't catch a bream for love or money. Redshirt remarked to the Clown that there seemed to be a predominance of Russian literature that day. To which Yoshikawa replied that if Redshirt could only catch *goruki*, he couldn't expect anything better. I asked the boatman if these small *goruki* were any good to eat, but he said no, they were full of bones and tasted awful. The only thing they were good for, apparently, was fertilizer. Redshirt and the Clown were frantically trying to catch fertilizer. I felt very sorry for them. One fish had been enough for me, so I had lain down in the middle of the boat and looked up at the broad expanse of the sky. It was a far more elegant way of spending the time than fishing.

While I was lying there I heard the other two begin to whisper together. I couldn't make out what they were saying very well, and I didn't want to. As I looked up at the sky I was thinking of Kiyo. I knew how much pleasure it would have given her if I'd had the money and could have brought her down to a beautiful place like this for a holiday. Being with Yoshikawa even spoiled scenery as beautiful as this. Kiyo was just a wrinkled old woman, but I wouldn't have been ashamed to take her anywhere. A person like Yoshikawa, on the other hand, was someone you'd want to stay clear of whether he was in a carriage, on a boat, or at the top of the Ryōunkaku tower in Asakusa. I was sure that if I'd been the second master and Redshirt had been me, the Clown would have been fickle enough

and impudent enough to flatter me and jeer at Redshirt. They say people from Tokyo are insincere, and I could see why. With a person like Yoshikawa going around the countryside telling everyone that he was from Tokyo, it was no wonder that country people thought the word Tokyoite synonymous with insincerity.

As these thoughts were going through my mind, I became aware that the two of them were tittering. They were saying something between giggles, but it only came in snatches and I couldn't get the gist of it.

"What? Not really! . . ."

"... No, it's perfectly true . . . doesn't know, so . . . It's a shame."

"Never! . . ."

"Put grasshoppers . . . I mean it."

I hadn't really been listening up till then, but when I heard Yoshikawa say "grasshoppers," I suddenly pricked up my ears. For some reason he'd emphasized that word so that I heard it clearly and had deliberately slurred what came after. I continued to listen without moving.

"That Hotta again? . . ."

"Yes, possibly . . ."

"Fried prawns . . . Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Stirred up . . ."

"Dumplings too?"

I had only caught fragments of the conversation, but it was obvious from such words as "grasshoppers," "fried prawns" and "dumplings" that I was the subject of their private talk. If they wanted to talk why didn't they speak up? If what they were saying was confidential they shouldn't have invited me. The pair of them made me sick. Grasshoppers or clodhoppers, I wasn't the one to blame. The headmaster had asked me to leave things to him for the time being, and out of deference to his position I was holding my peace at the moment. Yoshikawa, who was no better than a court jester, had a nerve, giving criticism

where it wasn't wanted. He should have sat in the corner and sucked his paintbrush. I wasn't worried about the grasshopper business because I would get around to settling it by myself all in good time, but I must confess I was disconcerted by the words "that Hotta again" and "stirred up." I didn't know how to take them. Did they mean that Hotta had stirred me up to make the disturbance bigger? Or that he had stirred up the boys in order to torment me?

As I was looking up at the blue sky, the sun gradually grew weaker and a chilly breeze sprang up. A film of cloud, like the smoke from a stick of incense, quietly spread across the surface of the limpid abyss and then was swept far, far back to become a faint mist in the depths.

"Shall we turn back?" Redshirt asked, as though it had suddenly occurred to him. Yoshikawa said that it was exactly the right time and went on to ask Redshirt if he was going to meet the Madonna that evening. Redshirt, who had been leaning over the side of the boat, straightened up a little and told him not to talk silly, because it might lead to a misunderstanding. Yoshikawa looked round at me, gave a girlish giggle and said, "It's all right. Even if he did hear . . ." I glared straight at him, my eyes flashing. He was disconcerted and looked as though he were being blinded by a bright light. Suddenly he drew in his neck, scratched his head and muttered something about surrendering. Dim-witted fool!

The boat moved across the smooth water back to the shore.

"You don't appear to like fishing very much," Redshirt remarked.

"No. I prefer lying on my back, looking up at the sky." I threw the cigarette I had been smoking into the sea. It gave a hiss and bobbed up and down on the waves that were churned up by the blade of the oar.

"All the pupils are glad to have you at the school. I hope

you'll do your best and work hard," said Redshirt, moving right away from the subject of fishing.

"I don't think they are glad."

"Oh, they are! I mean it. Very glad indeed. Isn't that right, Yoshikawa?"

"Glad isn't the word for it. They're delirious." And the Clown grinned. It was funny how every single thing he said annoyed me.

"But you'll have to be careful, you know," Redshirt went on, "or you'll be in trouble."

"Well, if there's trouble I'm ready for it," I replied. To tell the truth, I'd made up my mind that either I'd be fired or I'd make every last one of the boarders apologize. One or the other.

"Now, we'll never get anywhere if you talk like that. Don't get me wrong. I'm talking to you now as the second master; and it's for your own good."

Yoshikawa broke in to assure me that Redshirt had a high regard for me, and that he himself hoped that I would stay at the school as long as possible. He added that since we were both from Tokyo, we should help each other, and that although he didn't have much influence at the school, he was doing his best to help me. It was a rare show of human kindness on his part, but I would rather have hanged myself than be beholden to him.

"The boys really welcome your coming to the school," continued Redshirt. "But there are many factors involved. I'm sure that some things make you angry, but you should try to resign yourself to putting up with them. Believe me, I wouldn't tell you to do anything that wasn't in your best interests."

"What do you mean by 'many factors'?"

"It's rather complicated, but . . . well, you'll understand in time. You'll find out for yourself, without my explaining things to you now. Right, Yoshikawa?"

"Yes, it's all very complicated. It's not something you

can understand in a day or two, but you'll find out for yourself gradually, even if I don't tell you," said Yoshikawa, almost repeating what Redshirt had told me.

"Well, if things are as difficult to explain as all that, I don't want to know. I only asked because you brought the subject up."

"Yes, you're absolutely right," said Redshirt. "It's not fair to start on a subject and leave it unfinished. Well then, I'll say this much. I don't mean to be rude, but you've only just graduated and you have no experience as a teacher. There are all sorts of personal circumstances and motives to be taken into account when you're working in a school, and you can't afford to be as frank and open as when you were a student.

"Well, if I can't be frank, what can I be?"

"There you are, you see. When you're outspoken like that it shows you lack experience."

"Of course I lack experience—because I'm only twenty-three years and four months old, as I wrote on my record."

"That's my point. That's why people you would never suspect can take advantage of you."

"Providing I'm honest, I'm not afraid of anyone trying to take advantage of me."

"Of course you're not afraid. Of course not. But you *will* be taken advantage of. As a matter of fact, it happened to your predecessor. So I'm telling you, you must be careful."

It struck me that Yoshikawa had been quiet throughout all this, and when I looked round I saw that he'd slipped away to the stern and was discussing fishing with the boatman. The conversation had been far better without the Clown there.

"Who took advantage of my predecessor?"

"I can't tell you who, because that would give him a bad name. Besides, it would be wrong for me to say anything without any definite proof. Anyway, please be careful,

because we wouldn't want to have gone to all the trouble of getting you here for nothing."

"It's all very well to say 'be careful,' but I can't be any more careful than I am. As long as I don't do anything wrong it'll be all right, won't it?"

Redshirt laughed at this remark. I wasn't aware that I'd said anything funny. I'd only said what I'd firmly believed up to that moment. When you come to think of it, the vast majority of people encourage you to be bad. They seem to believe that, unless you are, you won't succeed in life. On the rare occasions when they see a person who is straightforward and honest, they look down on him as being green, or no better than a kid. When they teach you ethics at primary and middle school they tell you not to lie but to be honest. It would be better for the world at large but the individual himself if, instead of this, they had the courage to instruct you in methods of lying, the art of disbelieving people, and schemes for imposing on others. Redshirt had laughed at me for being innocent. What can you do in a world where innocence and frankness are laughed at? Kiyo would never have laughed at me at a time like this. She would have admired me for speaking the way I did. Kiyo was far and away a better person than Redshirt.

"Of course it's a good thing for you not to do anything wrong; but unless you realize that even if you don't do anything wrong yourself, you can't rely on other people to do the same, you'll come to grief. Even though some people appear easygoing, some appear openhearted, and others take you into their homes and give you board and lodging, you can rarely, if ever, let your guard down, so . . .

"It's got a lot colder. Autumn's on us. Look at the shore. There's a sepia mist over it. What a lovely view! Hey!" he shouted to Yoshikawa. "Look at the shore. What do you think of that?"

"You don't often see a sight like that," agreed Yoshikawa, anxious as always to please. "I wish I had the time.

I'd like to paint it. What a pity to let a scene like that go unrecorded!"

A light came on in a second-floor room of the Minatoya; and as a train-whistle sounded, the prow of our boat ground up onto the sand. The owner of the Minatoya said, "Good evening" to Redshirt. I jumped over the side of the boat and touched the beach at last, giving a loud yell as I did so.

6

I hated the Clown. He would have been doing Japan a service if he'd tied a millstone round his neck and jumped into the sea. I didn't like Redshirt's voice. His speaking in what he considered dulcet tones was just a pose. His real voice wasn't like that at all. It didn't matter how sweet he tried to make his voice sound, with a face like his, the only woman who would fall for him was the Madonna. But, being the second master, his conversation was far more profound than the Clown's. When I got home from the fishing trip and thought over what he'd told me, there seemed to be a lot in it. Since he hadn't been specific, I couldn't really judge who he was referring to, but it did seem as though he was warning me to be on my guard against Hotta. If that was the case, why hadn't he come straight out with it? A man shouldn't insinuate. Besides, if Hotta was a bad teacher, why didn't they get rid of him straight away? Redshirt may have been a Bachelor of Arts, but he was a weakling. He had to be, because even when he was talking about someone behind his back, he didn't have the nerve to be at least honest enough to mention his name. Weaklings are always kind, which probably accounted for Redshirt's womanly gentleness. Kindness is one thing and voice another, and you can't just ignore a man's kindness because you don't like his voice. Still, it's a funny world. It's a mockery when people who disgust you are kind, and friends that you get on well with turn out to be rogues. I supposed that it was because I was in the country that everything was upside down compared to Tokyo. It was a dangerous and unsettling place. It wouldn't

be long, I thought, before fire froze and rocks turned into bean-curd. But Hotta didn't seem to be the kind of malicious person who would stir up the boys. It was true that he was the most popular teacher in the school and could probably have done it if he'd wanted to, but—well, first, if he'd wanted to pick a quarrel with me there was no need to choose such a roundabout way to do it. It would have been much easier to do it openly. If I were in his way he could have come to me and told me why and asked me to resign. That would have saved him a lot of time and trouble. You can work out any problem if you only discuss it. If he'd come and spoken to me and I'd thought he was right, I'd have resigned the next day. I mean, this wasn't the only place they grew rice in Japan, and wherever I went I was sure that I wouldn't die in a ditch like a beggar. I'd have thought that Hotta would have had more sense, but apparently not.

It was Hotta who had treated me to a dish of fruit-flavored ice when I first came to the school. Well, if he was as two-faced as that, I felt ashamed of accepting even that much from him. I'd only had one dish, so it had only cost him one and a half *sen*; but I'd feel bad for the rest of my life if I thought I owed one or even half a *sen* to an impostor. I decided that I'd give him back the money when I went to school the next day.

It's true that, five years before, Kiyo had lent me three yen that I'd never paid back. It wasn't that I couldn't pay, but that I wouldn't. She hadn't thought of it as a temporary loan, nor had she ever been after my money, and I had no intention of returning it and making her feel as though I looked on her as a stranger. The more I worried about such a thing, the more it would hurt Kiyo, because it would mean that I doubted her motives. It would be tantamount to accusing a wonderful person of usury.

The reason I had never repaid the money was not that I felt contempt for Kiyo but that I looked on her as my own

flesh and blood. There was no comparison between Kiyo and Hotta, but, whether it be a dish of crushed ice or sweet tea, if you accept something from a stranger it means that you are recognizing that person as someone of consequence and it is therefore a gesture of good will towards him or her. If you pay your share, you can of course wipe out the obligation, but the feeling of gratitude you have towards the person in whose debt you are is a far greater repayment than money can buy. I am only an ordinary man without rank or title, but I am an independent, full-fledged human being, and when an independent man takes his hat off to you, you have a gift that is worth more than a million yen. I thought I'd given Hotta that gift for the outlay of a paltry one and a half *sen*, and that he ought to be grateful. Yet he'd had the impudence to play a dirty trick on me behind my back. Right, then. The next day I'd pay him back his money, and the slate would be clean between us. Then I could pick a fight with him. Having thought things out thus far, I felt tired and fell sound asleep.

With my plan in mind, I went to school earlier than usual the next day and waited for Hotta. I waited and waited but he still didn't come. The teacher I'd nicknamed the Green Pumpkin arrived. The teacher of Chinese classics arrived. The Clown arrived. Finally even Redshirt arrived. But no Hotta. His desk was deserted except for one solitary stick of chalk lying there. I'd intended to give him the money as soon as I went into the staff room and had been clutching the one and a half *sen* in my hand all the way to school from my lodgings, just as though I were going to the bathhouse. My hands soon get sticky, and when I looked at the money I could see it was wet with sweat. I worried what Hotta would say if I gave him sweaty money, so I put the coins down on the desk, blew on them and then picked them up again.

Redshirt came up and apologized for dragging me off fishing the previous day and said that I must have found it

a lot of bother. I replied that, on the contrary, I was very grateful to him for having given me such an appetite. Leaning his elbows on Hotta's desk, Redshirt brought his flat, broad, ugly face alongside my nose. Just as I was wondering what he was going to do, he asked me not to say anything to anybody about what he had told me on the way back in the boat the previous day. "You haven't mentioned it to anyone yet, have you?" he asked. His womanish voice made him sound unduly nervous. It was true that I hadn't told anybody yet, but since I intended to soon and had the money ready in my hand, I couldn't have Redshirt swearing me to secrecy now. Redshirt was Redshirt. Admittedly he hadn't mentioned Hotta by name, but I thought it irresponsible for a man in his position to pose a riddle that even I could solve and then complain when I did so. By rights, if Hotta and I were at loggerheads, he should have stepped into the thick of the fight, declared himself on my side and stuck by me till the end. If he did that it would justify his being second master and his wearing a red shirt.

When I told Redshirt that I hadn't said anything as yet but that I intended to talk to Hotta about it, he looked terribly uncomfortable and said, "You mustn't do that. It would be wrong. I don't remember saying anything specific to you about Hotta. If you do anything rash you'll put me in an extremely difficult position. You didn't come here to stir up trouble, did you?"

This seemed a strangely senseless question, so I said that naturally I had no intention of causing trouble for the school that was paying my salary.

"In that case," said Redshirt, "please keep what I told you yesterday to yourself. Don't divulge it to anyone." He was perspiring, and since he'd gone as far as to almost beg me, I said, "All right. You're putting *me* in a difficult position now, but if it means that much to you I won't say anything."

"Do you really mean it? Are you sure?" asked Redshirt, looking for reassurance. I wondered just how deep his effeminacy went and thought that it was a pretty miserable thing if all BA's were like him. He makes an unreasonable, illogical request as calmly as you please and, on top of that, when I agree he doubts my word. I'm a straightforward, honest man. If I agree to something I wouldn't dream of going back on my promise.

By now the teachers who occupied the desks on either side had arrived, and Redshirt quickly made his way back to his own place. Even his walk was affected. Whenever he walked in or out of a room he placed each foot carefully on the ground so as to make no noise. I never knew before that a noiseless walk was something to be proud of. He wasn't practicing to be a burglar, so why didn't he just walk naturally?

The bugle for the beginning of classes sounded at last. Hotta still hadn't come. There was nothing for it but to leave the money on his desk and go to the classroom.

The first class ran a little over time and I was late getting back to the teachers' room. All the other teachers were sitting at their desks, chatting. Hotta had also arrived. I'd thought he wasn't coming that day, but he'd arrived late. As soon as he saw me he said, "I ought to fine you. You made me late today." I pushed the one and a half *sen* on his desk towards him and said, "Here you are. Take this. It's for the crushed ice you bought me the other day in Tōri-chō."

"Don't be silly," he said, and began to laugh; but when he saw that I looked unexpectedly serious he told me to stop making stupid jokes and threw the money back onto my desk. Since when had porcupines started buying things for people?

"I'm not joking. I mean it. There's no reason why you should treat me to an ice, so here's the money. Is there any law that says you can't take it?"

"If one and a half *sen* worries you that much, I'll take it. But why didn't you return it to me before? Why now?"

"Now or any other time, it doesn't make any difference. I'm giving it to you. I don't want to be treated by you, so I'm giving you the money."

Hotta looked at me coldly and grunted. If it hadn't been for Redshirt asking me that favor I'd have told Hotta about the dirty trick he'd played, but I'd agreed to keep quiet about it. I was bright red in the face, and all Hotta could do was grunt. It wasn't reasonable.

"All right, I'll take the money for the ice, but I want you to leave your lodgings."

"All you have to do is take the money. I'll decide whether to leave my lodgings or not."

"You have no choice. The landlord came and told me yesterday that he wanted you to leave. When I heard why, I agreed with him. But to make sure, I called in there this morning to find out the details."

I didn't know what Hotta was talking about.

"How do I know what the landlord told you? You can't just decide things by yourself like that. If there's a reason, it's about time you told me. And stop being so damned rude and deciding the landlord's right straight off."

"All right then, I'll tell you. You've been so rude that they can't put up with you in the place any more. The landlady's not a maid, and it's going too far to tell her to wipe your feet for you."

"When did I make the landlady wipe my feet?"

"I don't know whether you made her or not. All I know is that they don't want you there. They said they could make the ten- or fifteen-yen rent by just selling one scroll-painting."

"Bloody cheeky pair! If that's the case, why did they take me in the first place?"

"I don't know. They just did. But they want you to leave now. Will you leave?"

"You bet I'll leave. I wouldn't stay now if they begged me. Why the blazes did you introduce me to a place that would use a pretext like that? It's inexcusable!"

"I wonder. Is this my fault, or because you can't behave yourself?"

Hotta had as quick a temper as I have and we were trying to shout each other down. The other people in the staff room wondered what was happening and they were all looking at us open-mouthed. I didn't consider that I'd done anything to be ashamed of. And, standing there, I swept my eyes over the whole room. Everyone except Yoshikawa looked surprised, but he just sat there smiling as though he was amused. When, however, eyes dilated, I shot a look at his long, thin face which obviously meant, "All right, you want a fight too?" he suddenly assumed a serious air and became very respectful. He looked a little scared.

A few minutes later the bugle blew. Hotta and I stopped arguing and went to our respective classrooms.

In the afternoon there was a meeting to decide how to deal with the boarders who had insulted me the night before. I'd never been to a meeting before and didn't know what it would be like. I imagined, however, that all the staff would gather together and each put his own opinions and theories forward. After this, the headmaster would sum up and then make some decision as he saw fit. This was all very well where the issues involved were not clearly black or white, but in this case, when nobody could help seeing that misconduct had been committed, I thought that a meeting was a waste of time. However you viewed the affair, it was impossible to say otherwise. In my opinion the headmaster had been very indecisive in not punishing the boys on the spot, when the facts were so cut and dried. If this was how "headmasters" behaved, then the name was nothing more nor less than another way of calling somebody weak-minded.

The meeting was held in the long, narrow room next to

the headmaster's office. Normally it served as a dining-room. About twenty chairs upholstered in black leather were arranged around the long table. The room reminded me of those rather vulgar Western-style restaurants that cater to students in Kanda in downtown Tokyo.

The headmaster sat at the head of the table and Redshirt sat next to him. The rest of us, it seemed, could sit where we wished, except that I heard the sports master always took the foot of the table out of deference. Since I didn't know the form, I squeezed myself in between the natural history master and the teacher of Chinese classics. Looking across the table, I could see Hotta and Yoshikawa seated side by side. No matter how you looked at it, Yoshikawa had an inferior face. Although we were at loggerheads, I had to admit that Hotta's was much finer. It reminded me of the face I'd seen on a scroll-painting in a room of the Yōgenji temple in Kobinata at my father's funeral. The priest told me it was Idaten, the monstrous guardian god of Buddhism. Today, because he was angry, Hotta was rolling his eyes and looking at me from time to time. If he thought he could scare me like that he was wrong. Not to be outdone, I rolled my eyes too and glared back at him. I don't have very attractive eyes, but there can be few people with eyes as big as mine. They are in fact so large that Kiyo often used to say that I ought to become an actor.

"Are we all here?" asked the headmaster. The secretary, Kawamura, began to count heads. One missing. He told this to the headmaster and tried to think who it could be. It didn't need any thinking about. Koga, the Green Pumpkin, wasn't there yet. I don't know what link of fate existed between the Pumpkin and myself, but ever since I'd first set eyes on him I couldn't get him out of my head. Whenever I walked into the staff room my eye would light on him. In fact, even on the way there he would come into my mind. When I went to the hot spring I would some-

times see his pale face bulging before me in the bath tank. If ever I said hello, he would answer in a whisper and bow with great deference. This made me feel sorry for him. Koga was the quietest person in the school. He rarely smiled, but on the other hand he didn't babble. In fact he never spoke more than was necessary. I knew the word "gentleman" from reading books, but until I met Koga I'd always thought it was just a word—something you found in a dictionary but not in real life. Now for the first time I realized that it did have a true meaning and I was filled with admiration.

Having such a deep interest in Koga, I'd noticed immediately I entered the conference room that he wasn't there. To tell the truth, I'd made him my private landmark and had thought I might sit next to him. The headmaster said that Koga would probably arrive soon and, untying a purple silk wrapper that lay in front of him, took out some mimeographed documents and began to read. Redshirt started to polish his amber pipe with a silk handkerchief. It was an obsession of his and it suited him. Some of the others were whispering to their neighbours, while those who didn't know what to do with their hands were engrossed in writing something on the table with the rubber erasers on the ends of their pencils. From time to time Yoshikawa would turn to Hotta and say something, but Hotta's only reply was an "Oh?" or an "Mm." Occasionally he shot a black look at me and, not to be outdone, I shot it straight back.

At length Koga, the man we'd all been waiting for, came in looking wretched. He apologized to the Badger very humbly and said he was sorry to be late, but that he'd had some business to attend to.

"Well then, let's start," said the Badger, and asked Kawamura, the secretary, to pass out the mimeographed sheets. Glancing at my sheet, I saw that it contained the items on the agenda. The first item was Punishment of

Offenders; the second, School Discipline; and this was followed by two or three other items. The Badger, putting on an air as always, gave the following speech as though he were the spirit of education incarnate.

“Whenever a misdemeanor is perpetrated by a teacher or pupil of this school, I take it as a reflection on my own lack of character. And whenever a regrettable incident occurs, I have a deep sense of shame that I, as headmaster, have failed to fulfill my duties. Sad to say, gentlemen, such an event has occurred—I refer to the recent disturbance—and for this I tender my most profound apologies to you all. However, what is done cannot be undone. The problem is what course of action to take. You are all conversant with the facts, and I would like you all, for my reference, to state your opinions candidly as to what remedial measures we should adopt.”

In Japanese legends, badgers are supposed to be clever with their tongues. Listening to the headmaster's speech, I thought with admiration how much headmasters and badgers had in common. The headmaster had just accepted the entire responsibility, saying that it was his fault and that he was lacking in character. This seemed to indicate to me that the best course of action would be to forget about punishing the boys and for the headmaster to resign immediately. If he'd done that in the first place we wouldn't have had to go to the trouble of attending the meeting. The whole thing was just a question of common sense. I'd done my night duty quietly, and the boys had been rowdy, so it wasn't the headmaster who was at fault, nor me. The fault obviously lay with the boys and the boys alone. If Hotta had put the boys up to it then all you had to do was punish him and the boys together. One arse is a big enough burden for most people. Whoever heard of anybody saddling himself with someone else's and then going round shouting out to everyone, “This is mine. This is mine”? They say in fairy stories that badgers can change their shape. Well,

you'd have to be a badger to perform a contortion like that.

Having made his illogical argument, the Badger looked around the table with an air of triumph, but nobody said a word. The natural history teacher was staring at a crow perched on the roof of the school building. The teacher of Chinese classics was folding and unfolding his mimeographed sheet. Hotta was still glaring at me. If meetings were as stupid as this I'd have done better to stay away and take a nap.

I was getting annoyed, and thinking that I'd give them a good long harangue first, I was halfway out of my seat when I realized that Redshirt had begun to speak, so I subsided. Redshirt had put his pipe away and was mopping his face with a striped silk handkerchief as he spoke. He'd probably wheedled the handkerchief out of the Madonna. A man ought to use a white linen handkerchief.

"I, too, when I heard of the pupils' rowdiness felt, as second master, deeply ashamed that I had been incapable of exercising a better moral influence on these young lads. Incidents like this occur because there is a shortcoming somewhere. Now it may be that, considering the incident itself, you feel that only the pupils are at fault. It is, however, possible that, when the actual state of affairs is viewed, the responsibility may, on the contrary, lie with the school. Therefore, it is also possible that to mete out punishment, as the superficial facts seem to indicate we should, may not, in fact, be in the best future interests of the school.

"These were lusty young lads, whose natural animal spirits overflowed. Might it not be that, without thinking of right and wrong, they, half-unconsciously, committed this mischief? It is not impossible. While the course of action is, of course, entirely in the hands of the headmaster, and I have no wish to interfere, I would ask you to take these things into consideration and, using your discretion, to be as clement as possible."

It was clear that if the Badger was a badger, Redshirt was

no less so. He had just declared that it wasn't the boys' fault that they had misbehaved, but ours. So, apparently, if a lunatic hits somebody over the head, it's that person's fault and not the lunatic's. Thanks very much! If the kids were as full of high spirits as all that they should have gone out in the playground and wrestled with each other. If Redshirt thought that I was going to stand for having grasshoppers put "half-unconsciously" in my bed, he was wrong. The boys could half-unconsciously murder you in your sleep and Redshirt would let them off because they'd done it "half-unconsciously."

That was my opinion and I thought of saying something, but I decided that it wasn't worthwhile unless I was eloquent enough to make everyone sit up and take notice. I knew that, as always when I am angry and try to talk, I would come to a full stop after only one or two words. As people, both the Badger and Redshirt were inferior to me, but they both spoke well, and I was sure that if I made a slip while I was talking, they'd pick me up on it. I decided to form a plan, and was just composing what to say in my mind when I was surprised by Yoshikawa, sitting across the table from me, suddenly standing up. The impertinence of a clown daring to air his views! Yoshikawa spoke in his usual insincere way.

"The grasshopper incident and the whooping incident are indeed disasters which have caused all of us who wish the school well to entertain extreme misgivings about its future prosperity. We teachers must now bestir ourselves. We must reflect upon our own conduct and make the discipline for the whole school more stringent. I feel that the hypothesis which the headmaster and the second master have just propounded has gone right to the heart of the matter and is pertinent. I am therefore entirely and absolutely, and without reservation, in favor of what has been said. I would ask you to take as generous a course of action as possible."

What Yoshikawa had said was all words and no meaning. All he'd done was string a lot of long words together that made no sense. All that I'd understood was that he was entirely and absolutely, and without reservation, in favor of what had been said.

I hadn't understood what the Clown had said, but for some reason I felt very angry, so I stood up before I'd really planned what to say.

"I am entirely and absolutely, and without reservation, opposed to what has been said . . ." After that I suddenly dried up. ". . . I thoroughly dislike nonsensical, irrelevant measures." At this, the whole room burst out laughing. "The boys are solely and utterly to blame. We've simply got to make them apologize. If we don't, this kind of thing will become a habit. We must do it, even if we expel them . . . Impudence . . . They thought because I was a new teacher . . ." I sat down.

The natural history teacher, on my right, said that although undoubtedly the boys were in the wrong, if we punished them too severely we might cause a reaction and that that would never do. He added that he was in favor of being lenient, as Redshirt had suggested. Weakness! The teacher of Chinese classics, on my left, said he was in favor of settling the matter amicably. The history teacher agreed with Redshirt too. Damn! Most of them seemed to agree with Redshirt. Well, if this crowd wanted to get together and run a school, it was nothing to do with me. I washed my hands of them. But I'd decided that there were only two possible courses: either the boys apologized, or I left. And if Redshirt won I was determined to go straight back to my lodgings and pack. I knew I didn't have the ability to beat this lot in an argument anyway, and even if I did I had no desire to continue the association. I didn't care what happened to the school as long as I wasn't there. If I said anything else, they were sure to laugh at me again, so I'd be damned before I spoke.

At this point Hotta, who had listened in silence up till then, got resolutely to his feet. I had just decided that he was bound to side with the Clown and Redshirt and that, since we were on bad terms anyway, he could do what he liked, when, in a voice that made the windows rattle, he said:

"I am completely against what the second master and the other gentlemen have said. That is to say, however you view this incident, there is no getting away from the fact that fifty boarders showed contempt for a teacher who had just come to the school and that their action was designed to make a fool of him.

"Our second master seems to attribute the cause of the disturbance to the character of the teacher himself. I'm sorry if I sound rude, but I think that what he said is out of order. The teacher concerned was given night duty only twenty days after he arrived. That was too soon, because twenty days was not long enough for him to get to know the pupils. Neither, in the short space of twenty days, did the pupils have time to evaluate his character and learning. If the boys had had any just reason for feeling contempt for him, it might not be out of place to make allowances for them, but to show leniency to boys who showed such levity that, for no reason, they ridiculed a teacher who was a newcomer would, I think, undermine the school's authority and reflect on its good name.

"The word education does not merely imply the receipt of scholarship. It means the imparting of a noble, honest, chivalrous spirit, and the eradication of sneaky, flippant and insolent habits. The day we temporize because we are afraid of reaction or fear that a disturbance will grow is the day we will not be able to remedy those bad habits. The reason we are here in this school is to put a stop to bad habits, and it is my opinion that if we are going to overlook an incident such as this, we should not have become teachers in the first place. I think, then, that the right

course would be to punish all the boarders severely and to make them apologize publicly to the teacher concerned." With that, Hotta let himself drop onto his chair with a bang.

Everyone remained absolutely quiet. Redshirt began to polish his pipe again. I was very happy. It was just as though Hotta had said everything for me that I wanted to say. I'm a simple person, and with an expression on my face that showed I'd forgotten our quarrel and was grateful, I looked across at Hotta as he sat there. He completely ignored me.

After a few moments Hotta stood up again. "I'd like to add something that I forgot to say just now. It appears that on the night in question the teacher on night duty left the school and went to a hot spring. I think that was inexcusable. Even if he didn't like the duty, it was his responsibility to look after the school while everyone else was away. It is disgraceful that, because there was no one to stop him, he should have gone to a hot spring, or anywhere else for that matter. Leaving aside the question of the boys, I sincerely hope that the headmaster will reprimand the person responsible for his neglect of duty."

Hotta was a funny person. No sooner had he praised you than he was revealing your mistakes. I knew the person on duty before me had gone out, and I went to the hot spring because I thought that that was the custom. Now I realized by what Hotta said that I'd been wrong and I thought that it was only natural that I be attacked for it. I got to my feet again and said, "It's quite true that I went to the hot spring while I was on night duty. That was very wrong of me. I apologize."

As I sat down everyone began to laugh. "Useless lot! If *you* were wrong could you stand up and admit it in public? Of course you couldn't. That's why you're laughing," I thought.

The headmaster then stood up and said that as it seemed

there were no further opinions, he would decide what to do after careful consideration.

The result, by the way, was that the boarders were confined to the school for a week and had to come to me and apologize. If they hadn't apologized I'd intended to hand in my certificate of appointment and go home, but since they more or less did what I wanted, I stayed—a fact which led to a great deal of trouble, but I'll tell you about that later.

The headmaster, still as part of the meeting, then said, "We teachers must correct the behavior of the pupils by example. As a first step towards that end I would appreciate it if teachers would please refrain as far as possible from frequenting bars and restaurants. I except, of course, occasions such as farewell parties, but I would like you to stop going alone to low places—for example, noodle shops and dumpling shops."

This was again the signal for general laughter. The Clown winked at Hotta and said, "Fried prawns," but Hotta took no notice. Served the Clown right!

Not being very bright, I didn't fully grasp what the Badger was on about, but I thought that if a middle-school teacher couldn't go to a noodle or a dumpling shop then the job was no good for someone with my appetite. That was fine. But if that was the case why hadn't the school advertised for a person who didn't like noodles or dumplings from the very beginning? The Badger had given me my certificate of appointment without a word about any of this, and it came as a terrible blow to a man like me, with no other interests, to have someone suddenly issue the unfair proclamation that you mustn't eat noodles and you mustn't eat dumplings. Redshirt spoke again. "Middle-school teachers belong to the upper echelons of society and should therefore not merely seek after material pleasures, for, if indulged in, they will eventually have a bad effect on one's character. However, being human, we could not

possibly live in a small country place such as this without some form of amusement. We should, therefore, seek some elevated spiritual recreation such as fishing, reading works of literature, or composing modern poetry or classical *haiku* poems . . .” Redshirt took advantage of the fact that everyone was listening in silence to give his tongue free play.

If going out to sea and fishing for fertilizer, a *goruki* becoming a Russian writer, your favourite geisha standing under a pine tree, and poems about old ponds and frogs² were spiritual and mental recreation, then so was eating fried prawns and dumplings. Instead of bestowing recreation like that on people, Redshirt would have done better to stay at home and do his washing.

I was so angry that I asked, “Is meeting the Madonna spiritual recreation?”

This time nobody laughed. They just looked at one another with odd expressions on their faces. Redshirt himself had his head bent and looked as though he was in pain. Take that! That one went home! The only thing I felt sorry about was that when I mentioned the Madonna, Koga’s pale pumpkin face grew paler than ever.

7

I'd gone home and was packing my things when the landlady came and asked me if anything was wrong. She said that if something had happened to make me angry she would put it right if I would tell her what it was. This took me by surprise. Why, I wondered, was the world full of such inconsistent people? I didn't know whether she wanted me to leave or to stay. She was out of her mind. Thinking that it was beneath the dignity of a Tokyoite to argue with a woman like her, I went and called a rickshaw and was out of the place in no time.

I'd left my lodgings, but I had no idea where to go.

"Where to, sir?" the rickshaw-man asked.

"Just shut up and follow me. You'll soon find out," I answered, and set off at a brisk pace. To save a lot of trouble I thought of going back to the Yamashiroya, until I realized that I would, in fact, be causing myself more bother if I did so, because my money wouldn't allow me to stay there long and I'd have to move again. I thought that, walking along as I was, I might see a notice for room and board or something. If I did I'd take it as a providential sign and move in.

I was strolling round a quiet neighborhood that looked as though it would be nice to live in, when I came out at a place called Kajiyachō. This was an area of large residences belonging to samurai families and wasn't a place where you'd be likely to find lodgings. I was about to retrace my steps and head for a busier, more lively part of town, when the thought quite suddenly struck me that this was where Koga, the teacher I had such a high regard for,

lived. He had been born and bred in the place and his family had owned a large house here for generations. He must be well acquainted with the district. Perhaps if I went and asked him he would be able to tell me of a suitable place where I could stay. Fortunately, I'd dropped in to say hello once before and knew where he lived, so I was spared the trouble of having to traipse around hunting for his house.

I walked up to what I'd decided looked like the place and called out, "Excuse me." I had to call twice before an elderly woman of about fifty came out from inside the house, carrying a small, old-fashioned night-light with a paper shade. Not that I'm averse to young women, but whenever I see an elderly woman it always makes me feel nostalgic. It's probably because of my fondness for Kiyō. I expect my feelings for her transfer themselves to every other old lady I see.

The woman carrying the night-light was, I presumed, Koga's mother. She was a dignified woman and wore her hair, as widows do, down, and neatly trimmed. There was a strong resemblance between her and Koga. She invited me in, but when I told her that I only wanted to see her son for a moment, she called him to the door. I explained the circumstances and asked him whether he had any suggestions.

"Oh, my! You are in a fix, aren't you?" he said. Then, after thinking for a while: "There's an old couple called Hagino who live by themselves in one of the poorer, back-street areas behind here. They told me the other day that they have a room empty, just going to waste. They said they'd let it if they could find a gentleman to take it and asked me if I could recommend anyone. I don't know if they're still of the same mind, but anyway let's go and ask." He then very kindly took me to their house.

From that evening I became a boarder in the Hagino house. What surprised me, though, was that the day after I left Ikagin's place Yoshikawa moved in and occupied my

old room as if it had been the most natural thing in the world. Even I was taken aback by this. It seemed as though the world was composed entirely of crooks, all waiting for a chance to take advantage of one another. I was disgusted.

If that's the way the world is, I thought, the only way to get by is to behave the same as everybody else. But if I couldn't get three meals a day without stooping to the level of the scum who take a rake-off from pickpockets, I'd have to seriously think about suicide, though for me to have hanged myself while I was in sound health would have been an insult to my ancestors and wouldn't have looked good. On reflection, it seemed to me that I would have been better off if I'd used my six hundred yen as capital and started up as a milkman or something, instead of having gone to the School of Physics and studying an absolutely useless subject like mathematics. If I had, Kiyo would have been able to stay with me and I wouldn't have had to worry how the old lady was getting on miles away. I hadn't thought so when we were together, but now that I'd come away to the country I realized what a wonderful person Kiyo was. You could search the length and breadth of Japan and you'd seldom find such a good-natured woman. When I'd left Tokyo she'd had a slight cold, and I wondered how she was now. I imagined that she'd been very happy to receive the letter I'd written to her a while ago. I should be hearing from her soon. For two or three days I thought of nothing else.

It was beginning to prey on my mind, and from time to time I would ask my landlady if there was a letter for me from Tokyo. But, every time, she would give me a pitying look and reply that there wasn't.

My present landlord and his wife were very different from the Ikagins. They both came from samurai families and were very refined. Admittedly I was annoyed in the evenings by the old man chanting Japanese lyrical dramas in a peculiar voice, but that was a lot better than having

Ikagin constantly offering to brew me up a nice cup of tea.

Sometimes the old lady would come to my room and chat about all manner of things and ask me questions: why, for instance, I hadn't brought my wife along with me? I asked her if I looked old enough to have a wife and told her that, though I might not look it, I was—Lord help me!—only twenty-four.

She began by telling me that it was only right and proper for a man to have a wife at twenty-four and then went on to give me half a dozen examples of people who were married at twenty and the father of two children at twenty-two. I didn't know how to contradict her, so, copying her dialect, I said that, being twenty-four, I'd like to get married and would she please find a wife for me?

"Are you really serious?" the old lady asked.

"Serious? Of course I'm serious. I'm just dying to get married."

"Yes, you would be, like. Everyone is when they're young." This sally caught me off guard and I didn't know what to say.

"But you know, sir, I'm sure you've got a wife. I can tell by the look of you."

"Ah, you're very perceptive. How did you know?"

"How did I know? Why, because you come to me in a fever every day and ask if there's a letter from Tokyo."

"Well I never! Such perception!"

"I'm right, aren't I?"

"Well, you may be."

"But young girls nowadays aren't like they used to be. You have to watch 'em. You'd better be careful."

"What? You mean my wife's having an affair with someone in Tokyo?"

"Oh no! *Your* wife's all right, but . . ."

"Thank goodness for that. But, if that's the case, what is there to be careful about?"

"Your wife's all right—yes, *she's* all right, but . . ."

"Well, is there someone who isn't?"

"There's a lot hereabouts. Do you know Tōyama's daughter, sir?"

"No, I'm afraid not."

"You don't know her yet? Why, bless you, she's the prettiest girl in these parts. She's so beautiful all the teachers at the school call her the Madonna. You haven't heard of her yet?"

"Oh, the Madonna? I thought that was the name of a geisha."

"Good gracious, no! Madonna is what foreigners call a beautiful woman, I think."

"Yes, that's possible. Well, well, well!"

"I expect the art master gave her that name."

"Who? The Clown?"

"No. That Yoshikawa. He gave it to her."

"And is the Madonna unreliable?"

"That Madonna's not a madonna to be trusted."

"Well, there's a fine state of affairs. But you could be right about the Madonna. There's never been a decent woman with a nickname yet."

"That's true. Think of those characters in Kabuki plays. There's O-matsu, that they called the devil, and Dakki no O-hyaku—they were both dreadful women."

"Is the Madonna like them?"

"Ah, that Madonna. Well, she and Mr. Koga—the gentleman that so kindly brought you here—were engaged."

"Really? Well I'll be . . . Who'd have thought that the Pumpkin was as lucky in love as all that? You can't go by appearances, can you? I must be a bit more careful in the future."

"Anyway, last year Mr. Koga's father died—the family had had money before that, and shares in a bank. Everything had gone very nicely up till then, but when he died things started going badly for them for some reason."

What I mean is, Mr. Koga's such an easy person and he's being imposed on. The Madonna's family kept postponing the wedding for one reason and another, and then the second master at the school said that he wanted the Madonna to be his wife."

"You mean Redshirt? He's a real so-and-so. I thought that shirt of his wasn't an ordinary one. Well, what happened then?"

"He asked someone he knew to make the proposal to the Tōyamas, but they felt a sense of obligation to Mr. Koga and said they couldn't give him an answer immediately—they said they'd give the matter careful thought, or something like that. After that, Redshirt was in and out of their place trying to persuade them, until he eventually managed to win the young lady over. Redshirt was in the wrong of course, but so was the Madonna. Nobody has a good word for her. She accepted Mr. Koga's proposal and then, as soon as this scholar came along, she switched to him. It's outrageous. It's an insult to the god who watches over us today."

"You're quite right. It's an insult to the god of today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, or any other day for that matter."

"Mr. Hotta, who's a friend of Mr. Koga's and felt sorry for him, went to the second master and told him what he thought of his behavior. Redshirt said that he had no intention of trying to steal somebody who was already engaged, but if the engagement should be broken he might marry the Madonna, and that his calls were just friendly, social ones on the whole Tōyama family. He said that he didn't see what harm social calls on the Tōyamas did to Mr. Koga. Mr. Hotta had no choice but to accept what he said. They say there's been bad blood between Redshirt and Mr. Hotta ever since."

"You seem to know about everything. How did you find out all the details? I'm impressed."

"This place is too small to keep a secret in."

She knew too much for my liking. It was possible she'd even heard about the business of the fried prawns and the dumplings. This was a troublesome place, but it had its compensations. I'd found out the meaning of Madonna, and the information about the relationship between Hotta and Redshirt was very enlightening. The only thing that bothered me now was that it wasn't clear which of them was in the wrong. I'm such a simple person that unless things are clearly labeled black and white, I don't know whose side to take.

"Who do you think is the better person, Redshirt or the Porcupine?"

"What do you mean by 'porcupine'?"

"Porcupine? Oh, that's Hotta."

"Well Mr. Hotta's certainly the stronger of the two, but Redshirt's a scholar and is the more able. And then, when it comes to being kind, Redshirt's kinder; but they say Mr. Hotta is more popular with the pupils."

"So which one is the better?"

"I suppose the one that earns more money is the greater person."

I was obviously getting nowhere with this line of inquiry, so I stopped.

Two or three days later, when I arrived home from school, the old lady gave me a broad grin and said the letter I'd been waiting for had come at last. She put the letter down and, telling me to read it carefully, left the room. When she'd gone I picked it up and saw that it was from Kiyo. The envelope had two or three slips of paper stuck on it and a closer examination revealed that the letter had been sent from the Yamashiroya to Ikagin's house and from there to the Haginos'. Moreover, it seemed that the letter had been at the Yamashiroya for about a week. They apparently took their duties as an inn seriously: it wasn't only people that lodged there but letters too.

I opened the letter and found that it was very long. This is what it said:

My Dear Botchan,

I was going to answer your letter right away but I unfortunately had a cold which kept me in bed for a week so I couldn't. I'm sorry it's so late. On top of that I'm afraid I can't read and write as well as the young ladies nowadays and it took me a lot of time and trouble to write this even though I know the writing is still bad. I thought of asking my nephew to write the letter for me but I thought that if I was going to send you a letter it would be rude not to write it myself so I wrote it out roughly first then copied it properly. I finished the copy in two days but it took me four days to write it out roughly. You may find it difficult to read but I took a lot of trouble over it so please read it to the end.

After this introduction, the letter went on for about four feet, talking of this and that. She was right, it was difficult to read. It wasn't only that the writing was bad. She'd used very few Chinese characters and had written for the most part in the *hiragana* syllabary, so it was a terrible job to work out where one word ended and another began.

I'm very impatient by nature and normally I wouldn't read a long, badly-written letter like that even if somebody offered me five yen to do it, but just this once I forced myself to be patient and read it through from beginning to end. I should add, however, that although I read it, I had such a lot of trouble making out the words that I didn't get any of the meaning and had to read it through from the beginning all over again.

It had grown rather dark inside the room and for some time it had been difficult to read, so at length I went out and sat on the edge of the verandah and read the letter through carefully. An early-autumn wind shook the banana plants in the garden, passed over the exposed parts of my body and returned to make the letter I had started to re-read flutter like a pennant in my hands and stream out at

... I went out and sat on the edge of the verandah and read the letter through carefully.

the garden. The four or more feet of paper finally began to flap so much that I thought if I released it it might fly across to the hedge opposite. But I was too busy reading to indulge in such fancies for long.

Kiyo's letter continued:

You have always been a frank and honest person but I'm worried about your being too quick-tempered. You mustn't go around giving people nicknames left and right, it will make them dislike you. If you must give people nicknames then only use them in your letters to me. —They say that country people are bad so be careful that nothing happens to you. —I'm sure the weather there is a lot less reliable than in Tokyo so wrap up well when you go to bed and don't catch a chill. Your letter was too short for me to know much about what things are like there so next time please write a letter at least half as long as this one. —It was all right to give the people at the inn a five-yen tip but won't you find yourself short later? Money is the only thing you can rely on when you're in the country so you must look after your money and put aside as much as you can for a rainy day. —I thought you might be short of pocket-money so I'm sending you a ten-yen money order. I put the fifty yen you gave me the other day in postal savings. I thought that it would be a help when you come back to Tokyo and get a house of your own. Even without this ten yen there's forty left so don't worry.

Thrift, thy name is woman!

I was sitting on the edge of the verandah, deep in thought, allowing Kiyo's letter to flutter in the breeze, when old Mrs. Hagino slid back the partition and came into the room carrying my supper.

"Are you still reading your letter? It must really be a long one."

"Yes. It's a very important letter, so I let it blow in the wind, then read it, then let it blow in the wind again, then read it again," I replied, not understanding what I meant myself. I then sat down to supper. Boiled sweet potatoes

again! The Haginos were politer, kinder and more refined than the Ikagins, but, unfortunately, the food there was bad. We'd had potatoes the night before and the night before that, and now we had them again this evening. Admittedly I had said I loved potatoes, but I couldn't survive on potatoes alone, day in and day out. Instead of me laughing at Koga and calling him the Green Pumpkin, people would soon be laughing at me and calling me the Pale Potato. If Kiyo had been there, she'd have prepared some of the slices of raw tunny that I love, or some hashed fish broiled in soy, but there was no hope of any such thing from a poor, tightfisted samurai family like the Haginos.

However you looked at it, I couldn't get along without Kiyo. If it seemed as though I was going to stay at the school for any length of time, I'd bring her down from Tokyo. It's a hard thing when an educator of boys has to become sallow because he mustn't eat fried prawns with noodles, he mustn't eat rice dumplings, and then, when he returns to his lodgings, all he gets is potatoes. I imagined that even the ascetic priests of the Zen sect had more delicacies to eat than that. I polished off the plateful of potatoes and then, taking two raw eggs from a drawer in the desk, I cracked them on the rim of my rice bowl and swallowed them—thus, at least, managing to stave off death by starvation for the time being. Without the nourishment from raw eggs, I would never have had the strength to teach for twenty-one hours a week.

Kiyo's letter had made me late going to the hot spring for a bath. Having been every day, however, it had become a habit with me and I wouldn't have felt right if I'd missed even one day. Thinking that I'd take the train, I set off for the station with, as always, my red towel hanging from my hand. I arrived at the station two or three minutes after a train had gone, and there was a little while to wait before the next one. I had sat down on a bench and begun to smoke a *Shikishima* when who should come along but

Koga. I felt even more sorry for him, now that I'd heard the story from Mrs. Hagino. He always looked the picture of misery, trying as he did to make himself appear small, as though he considered himself a parasite crawling between heaven and earth. But this evening was no time to simply pity him. If it had been possible, I'd have liked to double his salary, see him married to the Tōyama girl the next day, and send them off for a month's holiday to Tokyo.

Being in this frame of mind I said, "Hello there! Off to the bath? Here, sit down," and promptly moved over to make room for him. He looked very humble and said, "No, thank you. Please don't bother," and out of modesty, or some such scruple, continued to stand.

"There's still a while to wait. You'll get tired. Come on, sit down," I said, repeating the invitation. I felt so painfully sorry for him that I wanted to have him sit next to me.

"Well then, perhaps I will. Excuse me." With this he at last gave in and sat down.

There are in this world insolent people like the Clown who'll thrust themselves in where they're not wanted. Others, like Hotta, go around with a look on their face which plainly shows that they think the country would collapse without them. On the other hand, there are the Redshirts of the world who, in their vanity, set themselves up as the monopolizers of cosmetics and dandyism, and people like the Badger who think they are education incarnate, in a frock coat. Everyone feels superior in his own way. I'd never met a person as self-effacing as Koga. It was almost as though he wasn't there. He had the air of a pawned doll. His face was bloated, it's true, but I couldn't understand anyone giving up a fine person like him for someone like Redshirt. If that's what the Madonna intended to do she must be a shameless coquette. As a husband, Koga would be worth more than a gross of Redshirts.

"Are you ill? You look very tired."

"No, there's nothing specially wrong with me."

"Oh, good. A man's nothing without his health, is he?"

"You seem to be very fit."

"Yes. I'm thin, but I'm never ill. I hate illness, you see."

Koga grinned at this.

At that moment the sound of a young woman's laughter came from the direction of the entrance. When I glanced round, there stood a fantastic woman. She was tall and lovely, with beautiful white skin and her hair dressed in the height of fashion. She was standing in front of the ticket-window with a woman of about forty-five or -six. It's beyond my power to describe beautiful women, but there's no doubt that she was lovely. When I saw her I felt as though I were holding in my hand a smooth piece of crystal, steeped in warm perfume. The older woman was shorter than the young one, but there was a close facial resemblance and I guessed that they were mother and daughter.

No sooner had I become aware of the woman's presence than I forgot all about Koga and kept my eyes on her. Suddenly Koga stood up beside me and walked timidly across towards the two women. This surprised me a little. The young girl must be the Madonna, I thought. The three of them stood in front of the booking office, exchanging a few words of greeting, but I was too far away to hear what was said.

Looking up at the station clock, I saw that the next train was due to leave the station in another five minutes. I wished it would hurry up and come. I had no one to talk to now and was beginning to get impatient. Just then another figure came dashing into the station. It was Red-shirt. He was wearing a thin, unlined kimono, tied slovenly around the waist with a crepe sash. As always, he was wearing his gold watch chain. Actually it wasn't really gold. Redshirt thought that nobody knew and was always showing it off. But I knew.

As Redshirt rushed into the station, he cast an inquiring

It's beyond my power to describe beautiful women, but there's no doubt that she was lovely.

glance around, as though he was looking for somebody or something, then went up and bowed politely to the three talking at the booking office. Having said one or two words to them, he suddenly turned in my direction and, catfooted as ever, padded over to me.

"Hello. You going for a bath too? I was worried that I'd miss the train. I hurried all the way. We still have three minutes. I wonder if that clock's right?" He pulled out his own gold watch and, remarking that the clock was two minutes off, sat down beside me. He never once looked across at the women but stared straight in front of him, with his chin resting on the head of his walking stick. From time to time the older woman glanced in Redshirt's direction, but the young one remained turned away.

Eventually, with a whistle from its engine, the train drew up to the platform. Everyone who had been waiting streamed on, and it was every man for himself. Redshirt leaped into the first-class carriage ahead of anyone else. There was nothing to be proud of in traveling first class. There were only two classes: first and second. The first-class fare was five *sen* and the second-class fare was three *sen*, so a mere two *sen* stood between an first-class man and a second. When I tell you that even I could afford to pay out the money for a white first-class ticket, you'll understand what I mean. All country people, however, are tightfisted—even two *sen* more or less is a matter of great concern to them—and most of them went second class.

The Madonna and her mother followed Redshirt into the first-class carriage. Koga always went second class. It was as though it were second nature to him. He stood hesitating in front of the second-class coach, then, catching sight of me, he seemed to make up his mind and jumped aboard. I felt so sorry for him that I immediately got into the same carriage after him. I presumed that no one would mind me going second class with a first-class ticket.

At the hot spring, I came down to the bath tank from

the third floor in my bathrobe and met Koga once again. When I try to speak at committee meetings or on other formal occasions, my throat seizes up at the last minute and nothing comes out, but usually I'm a great talker and I tried to strike up a conversation with Koga in the bath tank. He looked unbearably pathetic. I thought that as a Tokyoite it was my duty to offer a word of cheer and comfort at times like this. Unfortunately, however, Koga wouldn't follow my lead. He just couldn't get into the spirit of the thing. No matter what I said, he just answered yes or no, and as even that much seemed an effort, I finally shut up and excused myself.

I didn't meet Redshirt in the bath. But there were many bathhouses, and just because we'd come on the same train was no reason to think that we'd necessarily meet in the same bath tank. I didn't think it in the least strange.

When I left the hot-spring hotel I was greeted by a beautiful moon. The branches of the willows growing on either side of the street cast round shadows onto the roadway. I decided to go for a stroll and walked uphill to the north until I came to the outskirts of the town. There, on the left, was a large gate and at the end of the street which led away from the gate stood a Buddhist temple. The street was lined with brothels. I thought that having a red-light quarter inside a temple gate must be a hitherto unheard-of phenomenon. I would have liked to go and have a look, but the thought that I might get into trouble with the Badger again, as I had at the meeting, stopped me and I walked straight past.

On the same side of the road as the temple gate, and a little farther on, was a one-story building with a black half-curtain across the doorway, and a small lattice window. This was the shop where I'd made the mistake of eating dumplings. The round lantern hanging outside announced that they served *shiruko*—red-bean soup with rice-cake in it—and *o-zōni*—vegetables and rice-cake boiled in soy. The

light from the lantern fell on the trunk of a willow tree that stood near the eaves. I wanted to go in for something to eat, but I restrained myself and walked on.

It's hard not to be able to eat dumplings when you want to, but I suppose it's harder still to have your fiancée leave you for someone else. When I considered what Koga was suffering, I thought that going without dumplings for three days, or even any food at all for that matter, wouldn't be much to complain about.

There's nothing so unreliable as people. You'd never have thought, looking at the Madonna's face, that she'd have been capable of being so heartless, but, nevertheless, there she was, a beautiful woman, being cruel. And there was Koga, with a face like a white pumpkin distended with water, a good, kind man and a gentleman. It never pays to take anyone at face value.

I'd thought that Hotta was straight, with no nonsense about him, and then they'd said he'd incited the pupils. But just when I'd accepted that he had done so, he'd pressed the headmaster to punish the boys.

Redshirt, who was the embodiment of offensiveness, had been unexpectedly kind and warned me to be on my guard, although I was nothing to him. Then he'd hoodwinked the Madonna—or I'd thought he had. But then I'd heard that he only wanted to marry her in the event of her engagement to Koga being broken off.

Ikagin had found fault with me and thrown me out, but moved the Clown in in my place. No matter how you look at it, there's nothing so unreliable as people. If I'd written to Kiyo and told her of all these goings-on I'm sure she would have been astounded. She, as a Tokyoite, would probably have said that the place was a den of thieves because it lay beyond Hakone.

It isn't in my nature to worry about the future and I've never let anything that's happened bother me; I've just gone on getting by from day to day. I must confess, however,

that in the month, or maybe less, that I had been in that place, I had come to look on the world as a dangerous place. Although nothing spectacular had happened to me in that time, I felt as though I'd been there for five or six years. It seemed that the best thing I could do was to leave as soon as possible and go back to Tokyo.

Thought after thought ran through my mind, one leading to the other, until at last I crossed a stone bridge and found myself on the far bank of the river Nozeri. I say river, but that's too good a word for it. It was in fact a little rippling brook about six feet wide. If you followed the bank for about three-quarters of a mile downstream, you came to the village of Aioi. There is a statue of Kannon, the goddess of mercy, in this village.

Looking back at the hot-spring town, I could see red lights shining in the moonlight. I could also hear the sound of drums coming, I was sure, from the brothel quarter. Though shallow, the stream flowed along swiftly and sparkled and glittered nervously as it caught the light. I had been strolling along the top of the bank for what, I judged, must have been a quarter of a mile, when I saw what looked like someone walking ahead of me. With the aid of the moonlight, I was able to make out two shadowy figures. Possibly two young lads on their way back to the village from the hot spring. If they were though, it was strange that they weren't singing. They were unusually quiet.

As I continued on, it seemed that I was walking quicker than they were and the two shadows gradually grew larger. One looked like a woman. I was about thirty yards behind them when the man, catching the sound of my footsteps, spun round. The moon was shining from behind me. I caught a glimpse of him and thought, "Could it be?" The man and the woman resumed their walk, but I had an idea and set off after them as fast as I could.

They walked on at the same leisurely pace as before,

As I continued on, it seemed that I was walking quicker than they were and the two shadows gradually grew larger.

unaware that they were being followed. I was now so close to them that I could distinctly hear every word they said. The path along the top of the bank was about six feet wide, scarcely room for three people to walk abreast. I easily overtook the couple, brushing the man's sleeve as I did so. Two steps ahead of them, I turned on my heel and stared at the man's face. The moon shone full and unrestrainedly on my face. It lit up everything from my close-cropped hair to my chin. The man gave a suppressed cry of surprise, suddenly swung towards the woman and hurriedly suggested they should turn back. Then they both headed back towards the hot-spring town.

I wondered whether Redshirt had the effrontery to think he could fool me, or whether he was too chickenhearted to speak up and admit it was him. Anyway, it seemed that I wasn't the only one to find the place too small for comfort.

I had begun to suspect Hotta after I came back from the fishing trip to which Redshirt had invited me. Being told by him to leave my lodgings on the merest pretext had confirmed me in my opinion that he was a rogue. I was puzzled, however, by his having spoken out so strongly in favor of punishing the boys severely. That had been unexpected. When old Mrs. Hagino told me that Hotta had been to have a talk with Redshirt about Koga, I had thought it was an admirable thing to do. On the other hand, the circumstances seemed to indicate that it was Redshirt, and not Hotta, who was the rogue—that Redshirt had indirectly filled my head with a lot of spurious information dressed up to look like the truth. I'd been confused about the whole thing. But since seeing Redshirt walking with the Madonna beside the Nozeri river, I'd become convinced that he was an old fox. I wasn't sure whether he was a crook or not, but he certainly wasn't a nice person. He was two-faced. You can't trust a man unless he's as straight as a die.

If a man's straight it's a pleasure to fight with him, but you have to watch a man who's all sweetness and light, refined, and shows off his amber pipe in a self-satisfied way. You'd have to be careful when and how you fought him. Even if you did pick a quarrel with such a man you couldn't have such a pleasant fight as you see the sumo wrestlers at the Ekōin temple having. Hotta, with whom I'd shocked the whole staff room by arguing about who was to have the one and a half *sen*, was far more human. I'd disliked Hotta when he'd glared at me in the meeting with his

round, deep-set eyes, but thinking about it afterwards I'd decided I preferred Hotta's eyes to Redshirt's garrulous, insinuating voice. As a matter of fact, I had started to speak to Hotta after the meeting, thinking I'd make up our quarrel. He had just turned those eyes of his on me without a word, and then I'd got angry and left things as they were.

Since then Hotta and I hadn't spoken to each other. The one and a half *sen* that I'd put on his desk still lay there—now covered with dust. I, of course, wasn't going to do anything about it, and Hotta steadfastly refused to pick it up. Those coins had become a barrier between us. I couldn't speak to him even if I wanted to, and he maintained a dogged silence. That one and a half *sen* was a curse on both of us. It had finally become painful to go to school and see the coins.

While relations between Hotta and myself had been severed, Redshirt and I still continued on the same terms as before. The day after I saw him beside the Nozeri river he hurried across to me at school, sat down beside me and began talking of this and that: how were my new lodgings?—and how about going fishing for Russian literature again? My feelings towards him at the time being not exactly pleasant, I remarked that I'd seen him twice the previous evening.

"Yes," he replied. "At the station—do you always go out at that time? It's rather late, isn't it?"

When I hit him with the information that I'd also seen him beside the Nozeri river, he said that he hadn't been there, and that he'd come straight home after his bath. What was the point of his trying to conceal it? I *had* seen him there and that was a fact. He was always lying. If he could be the second master in a middle school, I could be the president of a university. From then on I ceased to trust Redshirt. The world's a strange place. I was on speaking terms with Redshirt, whom I didn't trust, and not with Hotta, whom I admired.

One day Redshirt asked me if I'd call at his home, as he had something to talk to me about. I thought it a pity that I'd have to miss going to the hot spring, but I left for his place at about four o'clock.

Redshirt was a bachelor, but, being second master, he had long ago moved out of lodgings and now lived in a fine house with an imposing portico. I'd heard that the rent was nine and a half yen. It had such a fine entrance that I thought if you could rent a house like that in the country for nine and a half yen, I might send for Kiyo from Tokyo. She would have been delighted with such a place.

I called out from the porch, and Redshirt's young brother came to the door. I was teaching the brother algebra and arithmetic at school. He was useless. He had, however, lived in various places and seen something of life and had a far worse character than the boys who had been born and brought up in the country. When I met Redshirt and asked him what it was he wanted to talk to me about, his nibs, smoking some foul tobacco that smelled like quinine in his amber pipe, said, "Since you arrived, we've had better results than in your predecessor's time. The headmaster is very pleased. He feels that we were very lucky to get you. Since we at the school have such faith in you, I'd like you to make a real effort and do your best."

"I see. But I can't do any better than I am."

"Just carry on as you are. That will be fine. But I hope you won't forget the little talk we had the other day."

"You mean about people who find you lodgings being dangerous?"

"You mustn't be so outspoken, or the whole thing will be pointless . . . Anyway, that's all right; I am sure you are well aware of what I mean. If you continue making the effort you have been—the school notices things, you know—I think that in a little while, when the time is ripe, we may be able to do a little something about your remuneration."

"You mean my salary?" I asked in surprise. "I'm not worried about my salary, but, of course, I'd rather have it go up than not."

"Fortunately one of the teachers is going to be transferred to another school and, while naturally I can't make any promises without consulting the headmaster, it's possible that we might be able to spare you a little from his salary. Anyhow, that's what I'm thinking of asking the headmaster to do."

"Thank you very much. Who's going to be transferred?"

"It'll be announced soon anyway, so I don't suppose there's any harm in telling you. As a matter of fact, it's Koga."

"Mr. Koga? But he's lived here all his life."

"That's true, but there are circumstances—it's partly his own wish."

"Where's he going to?"

"To Nobeoka, in Hyūga province. Because of the inconvenience of the place, he'll be going there with a better salary."

"Who's going to take his place?"

"We have someone in mind and it's about settled. He's coming on terms that will make it possible to increase your salary."

"That's wonderful. But you don't have to raise it if it's going to cause problems."

"At any rate, I intend to talk to the headmaster about it. I think he agrees with me, but we may have to ask you to work more later on, so please be prepared to do so."

"You mean I'll have to work more hours?"

"No, your hours may be less."

"That seems strange. Less hours but more work."

"Yes, it does seem strange, I agree. It's rather difficult to be specific now, but—well, what I mean is, we may ask you to take on greater responsibility."

I was completely at sea. When he said "greater respon-

sibility" I imagined he was referring to being head of the mathematics department. But that was Hotta's job and I was sure he had no idea of resigning. Also, being the most popular teacher in the school, I couldn't see them planning to transfer or fire him. There was always a kind of fog around everything Redshirt said. Understand him or not, however, he had apparently finished telling me what he had to. We carried on a desultory conversation for a while, in the course of which Redshirt told me about the farewell party they were going to hold for Koga, asked me if I drank, and remarked that Koga was a gentleman who deserved everyone's affection. Finally, changing the subject, he asked me if I wrote *haiku*. Here comes trouble, I thought, and replying no, I didn't write *haiku*, I said goodbye and left hastily. *Haiku* are for Bashō or dilettantes with plenty of time on their hands. There's a poem which talks about morning-glory creepers entwined about the rope of a well-bucket.³ Well, you won't catch a mathematics teacher becoming entangled with *haiku* like that.

When I arrived home I fell to thinking. There were, I thought, some incomprehensible people in the world. Why would a man who owned a large house and taught in a school which was ideal for him in every way say that he was tired of the place where he had been born and bred and deliberately look for problems by going to a strange province that he knew nothing about? It would have been different if he had been going to a fine place, like Tokyo, that had trains and trams. But Nobeoka, in Hyūga province? The place where we were had a good boat service, and I even wanted to leave *there* after less than a month. Nobeoka lies deep in the heart of the mountains, beyond range after range. According to Redshirt, when you got off the boat it took a day by horse-and-cart to Mizaki. From Mizaki the only way to reach Nobeoka was by rickshaw. That took another day. The very name sounded uncivilized. It made you imagine a place populated

half by monkeys and half by men. I knew Koga was saint-like and acted like a sage, but what possible vagary could have possessed him that he should want to go and keep company with monkeys?

While I was thinking, the old lady brought in supper as usual. I asked her if we had potatoes again, but she said no, this evening it was bean-curd. Potatoes or bean-curd, there isn't much difference.

"I hear that Mr. Koga's going to Hyūga."

"Yes, poor soul."

"Why 'poor soul'? He chose to go there, so why feel sorry for him?"

"Chose to go? Who did?"

"Who did? Why, he did. Mr. Koga suddenly took it into his head to go, didn't he?"

"Ah. That, you see, is where you're very much mistaken. That's a different kettle of fish."

"Is it? But I just heard it from Redshirt. I don't know about fish, but if I am mistaken, Redshirt's the mother and father of all cock-and-bull stories."

"That's what you'd expect him to say. But you'd also expect Mr. Koga to say that he didn't want to go."

"So they're both right. That's what I like about you, you're always fair. But, tell me, what on earth's it all about?"

"Mr. Koga's mother came this morning and told me all about it."

"What did she say?"

"She said that after Mr. Koga's father died, they hadn't been as well-off as we'd supposed. In fact they were in difficulties. Mrs. Koga went to see the headmaster and asked him if he couldn't pay her son a little more each month, because he'd been at the school for four years."

"I see."

"The headmaster said he would give it serious consideration. Mr. Koga's mother was relieved; she thought they

were going to get the first increase they'd had in ages and she kept wondering if it would be this month or next month. Then suddenly the headmaster asked Mr. Koga to go and see him. When he went, the headmaster told him that he was sorry, but the school was short of money and they couldn't raise his salary. He'd heard, however, that there was an opening in Nobeoka and that, since the salary was five yen higher there and he'd thought that it would be what Mr. Koga wanted, he'd already completed all the formalities and Mr. Koga was free to go."

"Then he didn't discuss it with him—he ordered him to go!"

"That's right. Mr. Koga said that he'd rather remain where he was than go somewhere else for more money. He said he had his house and his mother to think of, so could he stay? But the headmaster said it was too late, because when he'd made the arrangements, he'd also found a replacement for Mr. Koga."

"Did he? That's a lousy thing to do—to make a fool of someone. So Mr. Koga doesn't want to go then? I thought it was funny somehow. I mean, no one would be fathead enough to go and live with a lot of monkeys in a place like that, stuck away in the mountains, just for the sake of five yen."

"What does 'fathead' mean?"

"It doesn't matter. Those are just the kind of tactics Redshirt would use. What a rotten thing to do! It's hitting below the belt. And he has the unmitigated gall to say he'll raise my salary. He can say what he likes, I won't let him raise it."

"Are they going to give you a raise?"

"That's what they say, but I'm thinking of refusing."

"Why are you going to refuse?"

"Because I am. Mark my words, that Redshirt's a fool and a sneak."

"A sneak he may be, but if he says he's going to give you

a raise, you'd do better to keep quiet and take it. A man often gets angry when he's young, but when he gets older and thinks back, he realizes to his regret that he was a fool not to have been more patient. It stands to reason that you'll kick yourself for being silly. You listen to an old woman: if Redshirt says he's going to give you a raise, say thank you and take it."

"Look, you're an old woman, so mind your own business. It's my salary and I'll decide whether it goes up—or down for that matter."

The old lady left without a word. Old Mr. Hagino was chanting passages of lyrical drama as though he hadn't a care in the world.

It seems to me that this kind of chanting is an art that was deliberately designed to make something which is perfectly understandable when you read it incomprehensible by adding horribly difficult tones. I just couldn't understand how the old man could wail that kind of thing every evening without getting tired of it. However, this was no time to be thinking about lyrical drama.

I hadn't particularly wanted my salary raised, but I'd agreed because I didn't like to see spare money go begging. I wasn't cold-blooded enough, though, to take a cut from the salary of a man who was being transferred against his wishes. What did Redshirt and the others think they were playing at, making Koga settle way down there in Nobeoka? There was a famous public official in the ninth century, Sugawara Michizane, who fell into political disfavor and was sent into exile—but only as far as Hakata. Even Kawai Matagoro, the seventeenth-century assassin, found refuge at Sagara. However, be that as it may, I knew that I wouldn't be satisfied until I'd gone to Redshirt and refused his offer.

I put on my duck-cloth *hakama*⁴ and went out once more. Standing in the spacious entrance, I called out and Redshirt's young brother came to the door again. When

he saw who it was he gave me a look which plainly said, "What, you again?" If I had business with Redshirt, I'd come as many times as I liked. I'd even knock on his door in the middle of the night if necessary. If he thought I was the kind of person to come and pay my respects to the second master, he was very much mistaken. I'd come because I didn't want my salary increased.

The boy told me that his brother had a visitor at the moment. But when I said that I only wanted a few words with him and that the porch would be fine, he went back into the house. Looking down, I saw a flimsy pair of elegantly shaped clogs. From inside the house I heard someone say, "We've as good as won." I realized that the visitor was Yoshikawa. Only the Clown had such a shrill voice and would wear such arty clogs.

A few moments later Redshirt came to the door, carrying a lamp. "Come in. There's only Yoshikawa here."

"No, thank you. Here will do very well. It won't take long to say what I have to."

Redshirt's round face was flushed as red as a beet. It looked as though he'd been having a few drinks with old Yoshikawa.

"There was some talk, when I was here before, of raising my salary. Well, I've thought it over and changed my mind. I've come to tell you that I don't want to have it increased."

Redshirt held the lamp forward and peered at my face from behind it. The abruptness of my remark had taken him by surprise. He just stood there gaping at me, not knowing what to say. Perhaps he was dumbfounded on being suddenly confronted by the only man in the world to refuse an increase in salary. Or maybe he thought that even if I was going to refuse, there was no need for me to have come back so soon after I'd left. Perhaps it was a combination of both facts that had rooted him where he stood, with his mouth working in a strange way.

"I only accepted before because you told me that Koga was being transferred at his own request, but . . ."

"That's right. Being transferred is partly his own wish."

"No it isn't. He wants to stay here. He wants to stay here where he was born even if it means keeping the same salary."

"Did you hear that from Koga himself?"

"Well, no, not exactly."

"Then who did you hear it from?"

"My landlady heard it from Mr. Koga's mother and told me today."

"So the old lady at your lodgings told you?"

"Well, yes."

"I don't wish to be rude, but that's not quite correct. According to what you say, it sounds as though you believe what the old lady at your lodgings tells you, but not what the second master tells you. Have I understood your meaning correctly?"

I was in a dilemma. BA's are clever devils. They pounce on some nicety and stick with it until they have made their point by worrying and nagging at you. My father often used to say that I was too hasty and harum-scarum. It looked as though he was right. When Mrs. Hagino told me about Koga, I had rushed out impulsively without bothering to find out the details from Koga himself or his mother. Now I was in a predicament. Redshirt had caught me with one of his scholar's thrusts, and I was rather at a loss as to how to parry it.

It was, as I say, difficult to parry this frontal attack, but I'd already marked Redshirt down in my mind as someone not to be trusted. My landlady was, admittedly, tightfisted and grasping, but she wasn't a liar; nor was she two-faced like Redshirt. The only answer I could give was: "What you say may be true, but I still don't wish to have my salary raised."

"Stranger and stranger. As I understand it, you came

here because you had found a reason that made it impossible for you to accept a raise in salary. Yet when I explain things to you and remove that reason, you still decline the increase. I find that a little difficult to understand."

"Difficult to understand or not, I still refuse."

"If you feel so strongly about it, I won't urge you to accept, but you realize that changing fronts as you have within the short space of two or three hours, and without any real reason at that, may affect our faith in you in the future."

"I don't care about that."

"Oh come now! There's nothing more important to a man than trust. Let us just suppose that what your landlord . . ."

"It wasn't the landlord, it was the landlady."

"Well, whoever it was. Let's suppose that what your landlady told you was correct. Your accepting a raise still wouldn't be taking anything away from Koga. He's going to Nobeoka, and a replacement is coming here. That replacement has agreed to teach for rather less than Koga was being paid and we decided to pay you the difference, so there's no need to feel sorry for anybody. Going to Nobeoka is a promotion for Koga, and his replacement agreed from the first to come for less money—which means an increase in salary for you. It couldn't be better for all concerned. Of course you don't have to accept. But why don't you go home and think it over carefully again?"

I'm not very bright, and normally when someone argues as eloquently as Redshirt had, I become convinced that I'm in the wrong and withdraw in confusion. But not tonight. I'd had an aversion to Redshirt right from the outset. It's true that at one time I'd changed my opinion and thought him a kind, rather effeminate sort of man. When I found, however, that he was anything but kind, reaction set in and I began to dislike him more than ever. Thus, no matter how logically and ably he might press his

point, however much he might stand on his dignity as second master and try to corner me with words, his arguments made no impression on me.

Just because a man is good at arguing, it doesn't necessarily mean that he's a good person. Nor is it necessarily true that a person who is bested in arguments is bad. On the face of it, Redshirt's arguments were one hundred percent correct, but appearances alone, however attractive, cannot make you fall in love with a person's whole character. If you could buy people's admiration with money, power, or logic, then usurers, policemen, and university professors would have more admirers than anybody else. The idea that I could be won over by the reasoning of a mere middle-school second master was absurd. People work on likes and dislikes, not on reasoning.

"You're perfectly right in what you say, but as I don't want a raise, I—well, I refuse it. There's no point in thinking it over; the answer would still be the same. Goodbye."

With that, I walked out of the gate. Overhead the Milky Way bridged the sky.

9

When I went to school on the morning of the day of Koga's farewell party, Hotta suddenly made the following long-winded apology.

"The other day when Ikagin came and asked me to get you to leave his place because you were too rowdy, I thought he was telling the truth. That's why I asked you to get out. But since then I've found out that he's a bad lot. They say he often sells paintings and drawings with forged signatures and seals, so I'm sure he was lying when he told me about you. He hoped to make some money by selling you some scroll-paintings and antiques, but since you wouldn't have anything to do with him, he made up that pack of lies. I'm very sorry for what I said to you, but I didn't know what kind of a person he was. I hope you'll accept my apology."

I picked up the one and a half *sen* from Hotta's desk without a word and put it in my purse.

"Are you really going to take that back?" Hotta asked incredulously.

"Yes. You see," I explained, "I didn't want to be treated by you, so I was determined to pay you back. But, thinking it over, I gradually came to the conclusion that it would be better if I accepted, so I'm taking the money back."

Hotta let out a great bellow of laughter and said, "Why didn't you take it back sooner?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I was going to several times, but something always prevented me and I left it there. Every time I've come to school lately it's been a misery to see it."

"You don't like to admit defeat, do you?" remarked Hotta, so I said that he was pretty pigheaded too. After that, something like the following dialogue ensued.

"Where are you from?"

"Tokyo. You?"

"Aizu."

"All people from Aizu are the same: they're all obstinate. Going to the farewell party this evening?"

"Of course. You?"

"Of course I'm going. I was even thinking of going down to the boat to see Koga off."

"Farewell parties are good fun. You wait and see. I'm going to really drink tonight."

"Please yourself. I'm going home as soon as the food's finished. Only fools drink."

"You're always trying to start a fight. You're a typical Tokyoite—flippant and excitable."

"Well, let it drop. Call in at my lodgings on the way to the party, will you? I've got something to tell you."

Hotta came to my lodgings as arranged. Every time I'd seen Koga recently, I'd felt sorry for him, and now, today, when he was going to leave at last, I felt such a great sense of pity for him that, had it been possible, I'd have liked to go in his place. I wanted to make a long speech at the farewell party and give him a hearty send-off, but I knew it was out of the question because of my crude Tokyo language. That's why I'd sent for Hotta. I thought he, with his loud voice, would best be able to frighten the life out of Redshirt.

I started off by telling Hotta about the business with the Madonna, but he knew more about it than I did. I went on to tell him about what had happened by the Nozeri river and called Redshirt a fool. Hotta replied that I was always branding people fools. He said I had called *him* a fool that day at school. And if he was a fool, Redshirt wasn't, he insisted, because he and Redshirt were out of

different molds. Well then, I amended, if Redshirt wasn't a fool he was a shiftless, good-for-nothing dimwit. Hotta readily agreed with this. There was no doubt that Hotta was strong, but it didn't seem that his vocabulary in such matters was a patch on mine. I think all Aizu people are like that.

Next I told Hotta what Redshirt had said about giving me a raise and a more responsible position. At this, he snorted and said it looked as though they were trying to get rid of him. When I asked him if he had any intention of going, he threw out his chest and said that he emphatically had not, and that if he went he'd take Redshirt with him. However, when I put the ball back into his court and asked him how he proposed to accomplish this, he replied that he hadn't thought yet. Hotta looked powerful, but he didn't seem to be very strong on brainwork. I told him I'd refused to have my salary increased. He was very pleased and was full of praise for me, saying that I was a real Tokyoite.

I asked Hotta why, if he knew Koga disliked the idea of leaving so much, he hadn't taken steps to try and keep him where he was. He replied that by the time Koga told him, everything had already been arranged. He had, he said, been to discuss the matter with the headmaster twice and Redshirt once, but that nothing had come of it. In his opinion the trouble was that Koga had been too nice about the whole affair. When Redshirt first spoke to him he should either have refused point-blank or got out of it by saying that he would think it over. Instead, he'd been talked into giving his instant consent by Redshirt, with the result that all his mother's crying and Hotta's intercession had not had the slightest effect. This, said Hotta, was extremely unfortunate. I remarked that I thought the whole thing was a scheme of Redshirt's to get the Madonna by sending Koga away.

"Of course it is," said Hotta. "No doubt about it. He

looks as though butter wouldn't melt in his mouth, but he gets up to all sorts of mischief. If anyone accuses him of anything, he always has a plausible excuse ready. The man's as crafty as a wagonload of monkeys. The only way to deal with a person like that is to teach him a lesson by giving him a good hiding." So saying, Hotta rolled up his sleeve to reveal an arm knotted with muscle.

While we were on the subject, I remarked that he seemed to have strong arms and asked him if he did jujitsu. Hotta flexed the muscles in his forearm and told me to squeeze it. I felt it with the tips of my fingers. It was as hard as the pumice stone in a public bath. I was so impressed that I said that with arms like that I expected he could flatten five or six Redshirts at a time. "Of course I could," he answered, and started to straighten and bend his arm, so that his biceps began to jiggle around under the skin. It was an exhilarating experience. Hotta swore that he could break two plaited twists of paper tied around his biceps by bending his arm and flexing his muscles. I said I supposed I could too.

"Never!" said Hotta. "Go on, try it and see."

I decided not to, since it wouldn't have looked good if I'd failed.

"Hotta, how about it? After you've had a good drink at the farewell party tonight, why don't you give Redshirt and the Clown a thrashing?" I suggested half-jokingly. But Hotta thought about it quite seriously and then said he didn't think he would tonight. When I asked why, he answered that it would put Koga in an awkward position and, besides, if he was going to thrash the pair of them, he'd have to do it when he caught them in the act of doing something wrong, otherwise he'd be blamed for it. This sounded sensible to me. It appeared that Hotta had more ideas on the subject than I did.

"Well then, make a speech and say a lot of nice things about Koga. My Tokyo dialect is too fast and smooth; it

lacks the proper weight. Not only that; whenever the time comes for me to speak, my mouth fills with bile, a large lump comes into my throat, and no words come out; so I'll leave it to you," I said.

"That's a strange illness. So you can't speak in front of people? That must be inconvenient."

"It's not inconvenient at all," I replied.

Hotta and I talked until it was time to go to the party and then left together.

The party was to be held at a place called the Kashintei. This was supposed to be the finest restaurant in the area, but I'd never been there before. I'd heard that the building had originally been the mansion of the chief retainer of the local lord and had been purchased and opened as a restaurant just as it was. The place did, in fact, have an imposing appearance. Turning the mansion of a chief retainer into a restaurant is like turning a military coat into underwear.

Most of the others were already present when Hotta and I arrived. They stood around in two or three groups in a large room about thirty feet by thirty. The *tokonoma* was as wonderfully large as you would expect in a room of that size. I'd thought the *tokonoma* large in the fifteen-by-eighteen room I'd occupied at the Yamashiroya, but there was no comparison with this one. It measured twelve feet in width. In the alcove on the right stood a *setomono* vase with a red pattern. In it was a large pine branch. I wondered what the idea of the pine branch was and then concluded that it was to save money, since, unlike flowers, pine would last month after month.

I asked the natural history teacher where the *setomono* vase had been made, only to be told that it wasn't *setomono* but Imari-ware. I said that I thought Imari-ware was *setomono*, at which he just laughed. I found out later that they only use the word *setomono* for earthenware that is made in Seto. Coming from Tokyo, I'd thought the word applied to any earthenware.

In the center of the alcove hung a large scroll. On it were twenty-eight Chinese characters, each about the size of my face. They looked badly written to me. They looked so bad, in fact, that I asked the teacher of Chinese classics why they'd hung such a thing so conspicuously. He told me that the characters had been written by the famous calligrapher, Nukina Kaioku, who lived at the turn of the nineteenth century. Kaioku or not, I still think they were badly written.

Eventually Kawamura, the secretary, told us all to be seated, and I found a place near a pillar that I could lean back against. The Badger, as the most important person present, sat in front of the Kaioku scroll. He was dressed in formal *haori*⁵ and *hakama*. Redshirt, also in the same attire, had taken up his place on the Badger's left. Koga, as the evening's guest of honor, sat on the Badger's right. He too wore Japanese dress. The Western clothes that I was wearing made it too uncomfortable to kneel formally and I immediately sat cross-legged. The sports master next to me, however, despite his black trousers, was keeping himself in training by sitting with his legs folded under him in the formal kneeling position. Eventually the food arrived on individual, portable tables. On each there stood a flask of *sake*.

The teacher who had made the arrangements for the party stood up and opened the proceedings. He was followed by the Badger, and then by Redshirt. They all, in their farewell speeches to Koga, were unanimous in announcing what an excellent teacher and a fine man he was, and how his leaving was not only a sad loss to the school but a matter of regret to them as individuals also. They all maintained, however, that since the transfer was the earnest wish of Mr. Koga himself, they must reluctantly allow him to go. They weren't in the least embarrassed at throwing a farewell party for Koga and telling such a pack of lies. Of the three of them, Redshirt was the most profuse in his

praise of Koga. He expressed sadness at losing such a good friend. Strangely enough, he sounded as though he meant what he was saying. He spoke, as always, in a quiet, gentle voice, and I knew that anybody hearing him for the first time would be convinced of his sincerity. In all probability he'd caught the Madonna by the same trick. Right in the middle of Redshirt's speech, Hotta, who was sitting opposite me, telegraphed what he thought of Redshirt with a flash of his eyes. I signaled my agreement by pulling my lower eyelid down with my index finger.

No sooner had Redshirt sat down than Hotta leaped to his feet. I was so pleased at this that I found myself applauding. I was a little embarrassed when everyone from the Badger down turned and looked at me, but I was all ears to hear what Hotta was going to say.

"The headmaster and second master have just said how unfortunate it is that Mr. Koga is being transferred. I'm afraid I don't quite agree. I earnestly hope that Mr. Koga will leave this place without delay. I know that Nobeoka is a remote, out-of-the-way place, and that it may have some material disadvantages compared with here. But I have heard that it is a pastoral spot, where manners and customs are of the simplest and where both teachers and pupils alike are gentle and well-behaved, like the people of past ages. There are, I believe, no fops there who go around dispensing flattery they do not really mean and using their outward charm to trap a gentleman. I am sure, therefore, that a kind and sincere person like yourself, Mr. Koga, will be warmly welcomed by everyone there, and I wish to congratulate you heartily on your transfer.

"In conclusion, let me just say that when you arrive in Nobeoka, I hope you will find a wonderful woman, fit to be the wife of a gentleman, and build a happy and peaceful family life for yourself as soon as possible—thereby, in effect, causing a certain faithless hussy to die of shame."

Hotta loudly cleared his throat twice and sat down.

I thought about clapping again, but stopped myself because I didn't want everyone to look at me. After Hotta sat down, Koga got to his feet. Instead of speaking from where he was, he politely walked to the side of the room and, with a low bow to everyone, made the following speech:

"I have recently decided to move to Kyushu for personal reasons and I would like to say how deeply touched I am, gentlemen, that you should have given me this truly magnificent farewell party. I shall never forget it. I am particularly grateful for the kind things said about me by the headmaster and the second master and the other gentlemen; and I would like you to know that those words will always remain with me. Although I shall be far away, I hope that you won't forget me, but will remember me with the kindness you have always shown me." Koga bowed low again—virtually prostrating himself, and then returned to his place.

Koga's goodness was almost unlimited. There he was, respectfully thanking the headmaster and Redshirt—the very people who were making such a fool of him. It wasn't just for the sake of formality, either; you could tell from his manner, his way of speaking and his face that he was really and truly grateful. You would have thought that when the Badger and Redshirt heard themselves being thanked in all good faith by a saint like Koga, they would have had the grace to feel some compassion for him and blushed; but they both sat there and accepted his thanks seriously.

As soon as the speeches were finished, the sound of sucking and slurping arose on all sides. I followed suit and tried some of the soup, but it was dreadful. Some hashed fish had been served with the soup. It was so dark that I thought they must have bought the cheapest kind of fish and then made a mess of preparing it. There was also a dish of sliced raw fish. Instead of being cut finely, however,

it was in great slabs. It was like eating raw tuna steaks. Nevertheless, the people around me seemed to be enjoying the food. They'd probably never tasted Tokyo cooking.

It wasn't long before hot flasks of *sake* started to circulate freely, and suddenly the whole place burst into life. The Clown knelt in front of the headmaster and, according to custom, asked him for his *sake* cup so that he could drink his health. Disgusting! Koga was going the rounds, exchanging drinks with people. It looked as though he intended to do it with everyone. What a job! When he came to me, he knelt and, arranging the folds of his *hakama* correctly, asked me for my cup. I sat up in the formal position, although it was uncomfortable in my trousers, and poured him a drink.

"What a pity we have to say goodbye so soon," I said. "We've only just met. When do you leave? I'll come down to the beach to see you off."

"Oh, no! You're far too busy. You mustn't go to all that trouble," Koga replied.

Whatever Koga said, however, I still intended to take some time off from school and go to see him off.

Within the next hour the place really became disorderly. One or two were speaking thickly, slurring their words, and you could hear such snatches of conversation as, "Have a drink—Hey! Have a drink, I said." I was a little bored and went outside to the lavatory. I was standing staring at the old-style garden in the starlight when Hotta came out.

"Well, what did you think of my speech? Good, eh?" He seemed elated. I told him that I agreed with everything he'd said in general, but that there was one place I didn't like.

"Where was that?" he asked.

"You said that there were no fops in Nobeoka who would try to trap a man with their outward charm, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, 'fops' wasn't enough."

"Oh? What should I have said?"

"You should have said: foppish, swindling, mountebank, wolf-in-sheep's-clothing, cheating-tinker, fly-by-night, dirty, spying, if-they-barked-you-couldn't-tell-'em-from-a-dog—rogues."

"I couldn't get my tongue round all that. You're very fluent. And anyway, for one thing, you know lots of words. I must say, it's funny you can't speak in public."

"Oh, they're just the stock words I filed away for when I have a quarrel. I can't speak as freely as that when I make a speech."

"No? But, you know, that string of words just rolled out. Say it again."

"As many times as you like. Ready? Foppish, swindling, mountebank . . ."

I'd only gone that far, when two people came staggering and clumping along the verandah at a great pace.

"Hey!" they called. "You two! You can't run off like that . . . You can't leave as long as we're here . . . Come and have a drink . . . Mountebank? That's good. Mountebank's good . . . Come and have a drink."

So saying, they dragged Hotta and me off with them. As a matter of fact, they'd both probably come out to go to the lavatory, but being drunk they'd forgotten all about it and hauled us off instead. Whenever a drunk sees anything happening he always thinks he has to poke his nose in and becomes oblivious to everything that went before.

"Gen'lmen, I've caught a mountebank. Give 'im a drink. Give 'im a lot. Get the mountebank drunk. Hey! You musn' run away."

I hadn't tried to run away, but the drunk pushed me up against the wall. I looked around the room and saw that there wasn't a dish of food that had been left untouched on any of the tables. There were some people even who had finished their own food and advanced ten or twelve yards

forward on foraging expeditions. I don't know when the headmaster left, but he was no longer in evidence.

I heard a voice asking if the room was this way, and three or four geisha came in. I was rather surprised, but, being pinned to the wall, I just kept still and looked on. As the girls entered, Redshirt, who up till then had been leaning against a pillar of the *tokonoma* with his amber pipe in his mouth, looking self-satisfied, suddenly got to his feet and started to leave the room. One of the geisha smiled and bowed, and said something as they passed. She was the youngest and prettiest of them. I wasn't close enough to hear what she'd said, but I think it was only something like, "Oh, good evening." Redshirt, ignoring her, left the room and didn't come back. I expect he followed the headmaster and went home.

The room suddenly became cheerful with the arrival of the geisha. The cheers and yells that greeted them from all quarters were so loud that they sounded like war cries. Some began to play odds-and-evens with the geisha. The yells they gave as they played reminded me of the cries that swordsmen give when they practice the quick-draw from a kneeling position.

Others, near me, were engrossed in a complicated game of "stone, scissors, paper," waving both hands about and interspersing shouts of "Yo!" and "Ha!" as they played. Their jiggings and gesticulations were a lot better than those dolls in Dark's puppet theater.⁶

In the far corner one man was shouting for a geisha to pour him a drink; then, realizing that his flask was empty, he waved it in the air and changed his appeal to one for more *sake*. The place was unbearably noisy and rowdy. The only man in the room who didn't know what to do with himself was Koga. He sat there with his head bent, lost in thought. They hadn't thrown this farewell party for his sake, nor because they were sorry that he was being transferred. It was so they could all drink and enjoy themselves,

One of the geisha smiled and bowed, and said something as they passed.

and so he could sit there by himself, twiddling his thumbs. It would have been a lot better to have had no party at all than one like this.

After a while the room was filled with a cacophony as each person began to sing his own particular song in a thick, raucous voice. A geisha came and sat in front of me and asked me to sing something, holding her *samisen* ready to accompany me. I replied brusquely that I didn't sing, but told her to. She began singing:

*If they walk the streets with drum and gong,
With a tom tom tom, and a ching ching ching,
And find a child who is lost,
With a tom tom tom, and a ching ching ching;
Then beat the drum and ring the gong,
With a tom tom tom, and a ching ching ching,
For there's a man I too would find,
With a tom tom tom, and a ching ching ching.*

She sang the whole song in two breaths and then said, "Whew! That's tiring."

Why hadn't she sung something easier if that one was going to make her puff?

Yoshikawa had appeared from somewhere and sat beside her.

"Poor Suzu. The man you wanted to meet left just when you thought you'd found him," he said, sounding as usual like a professional storyteller. The girl tossed her head and said she didn't know what he was talking about. But the Clown, taking no notice, continued by trying to sing a snatch from the ballad drama *Asagao Nikki*, which tells the pathetic love story of a blind girl. "*By chance I met him; ah! but then . . .*" He had a terrible voice. The geisha told him to stop and gave him a slap on the knee. Yoshikawa was immensely pleased by this and his face split in a grin. This was the geisha who had said good evening to Redshirt. Apparently the Clown wasn't averse to a playful slap from a geisha either.

"Suzu," he said, "I'm going to dance. Play *Kiinokuni* for me."

"Good grief!" I thought. "Is he going to dance too?"

The old teacher of Chinese classics sitting across the way began to sing, contorting his toothless mouth this way and that and trying to imitate a woman's voice: "*Ah, Gembei. How could you be so cruel? After all we've meant to each other . . .*" He got that far safely, but asked a geisha, "What comes next?" Old men have shocking memories.

One of the geisha had buttonholed the natural history teacher and was asking him if he'd like to hear a song that had just come out.

"Now pay attention and listen," she said and began to sing about a modern girl whose hair was dressed in foreign style and tied up with a white ribbon; who rode a bicycle, played the violin, and who only knew a smattering of English, but went around saying to everyone, "I am glad to see you." The natural history teacher was impressed and thought the song amusing because it had some English in it.

Hotta called out in a tremendous voice, "Geisha! geisha! I'm going to do a sword dance. Play the *samisen*."

His tone was so violent that the geisha just stared at him in amazement and didn't answer. Not to be put off by details, Hotta advanced alone into the middle of the floor, carrying a walking stick to serve as a sword; and with the song "*The wreaths of cloud round myriad lofty peaks crushed beneath my feet . . .*" he performed his party piece.

The Clown had exhausted his repertoire of dances, having been through *Kiinokuni*, *Kappore* and *The Daruma on the Shelf*, and now began to march up and down the room, naked except for a loincloth and singing the war song which begins with the words, "*Negotiations between Japan and China have been broken off.*" Lunatic!

I felt sorry for Koga, who had been sitting there all the time looking uncomfortable and still wearing his *hakama*.

Even if it was his own farewell party, I thought, there was no need for him to put up with watching a near-naked dance by a madman in a loincloth, while *he* was in full Japanese dress. I went over to him and suggested that we leave.

"This is my farewell party and it would be rude if I left first, but you go ahead, please," he answered, and refused to budge.

"Don't worry about that. If it's a farewell party they should behave as though it was. Look at them all! This isn't a farewell party, it's a madhouse. Let's go."

I persisted, and at last Koga rose to follow me. But as we were about to leave the room, the Clown came up wielding a broom and exclaiming, "Good gracious! We can't have the guest of honor going home first! We're having Sino-Japanese negotiations. I won't let you pass!" So saying, he held the broom crosswise and blocked our path.

All my pent-up anger boiled to the surface and I said, "Well, if these are Sino-Japanese relations, you must be a Chink." With this, I gave him a smart rap on the head with my fist.

For two or three seconds he just stood there gawping like a gaffed fish. Then, finding his voice, he came out with a meaningless stream of words.

"How dreadful! Ah, cruel blow! You struck me! Me, Yoshikawa! Many thanks. This has really turned into Sino-Japanese negotiations."

While he was in full spate, Hotta, noticing the excitement, stopped his sword dance and came bounding up from behind Yoshikawa. Seeing how things stood, he shot out his hand, grabbed the Clown by the scruff of the neck and yanked him backwards.

"Sino-Japanese . . . Ouch! Ouch! This is violence!" He was twisting this way and that in an effort to escape, when Hotta flipped him sideways and he landed on the floor with a thud.

I don't know what happened after that. Koga and I parted on our way home, and I arrived back at my lodgings just after eleven o'clock.

10

The school had a holiday to celebrate the victory of the Japanese army in China. There was to be a ceremony on the town parade ground, and the Badger had to attend at the head of the pupils. As a member of the staff, I had to go too. The whole town was so ablaze with the Japanese sun flag that it was dazzling.

There were eight hundred pupils in the school. The plan was for the sports master to dress the ranks, and for the whole school to march in companies, with one or two teachers in the space between each company to keep control. That was the plan. On paper it was the picture of ingenuity, but when put into effect, it produced something that was extraordinarily clumsy.

Since the boys were not only childish but impertinent too, and thought that it reflected on their good name if they didn't break the rules, it served no useful purpose to have teachers with them, however many there were. They sang war songs, without waiting for instructions, and when they'd finished singing let out great whoops and yells. All in all, it was as though a band of lawless samurai were tramping through the streets.

When they weren't singing war songs or yelling, they were chattering among themselves. You'd think that it would have been possible to walk without chattering, but all Japanese are born into the world mouth first, and no amount of scolding would stop the boys. Plain chattering wouldn't have been too bad, but this vulgar crew were saying insulting things about the teachers. I'd thought I'd taught the boys a lesson when I'd made them apologize

for what had happened when I was on night duty, but that was a big mistake. To borrow a phrase from my landlady, getting them to apologize was one thing, but teaching them a lesson was altogether a "different kettle of fish."

When the boys had apologized, it hadn't been because they were truly sorry for what they'd done. Their apology had been a mere formality—something that they had done because the headmaster had ordered them to.

In the same way that a merchant will bow and scrape and continue to cheat you, the general run of pupils will apologize without the least idea of giving up mischief. On reflection, it seems that the world is composed entirely of people like those boys. People apologize to you and say they're sorry, but they think you're a fool and too naive if you take their apology seriously and are willing to forgive them. You won't go far wrong if you remember that when somebody apologizes to you, he doesn't really mean it, and therefore you should only pretend to forgive him. The only way to make someone really apologize is to beat him until he truly regrets what he's done.

As I was marching along between two of the companies, I heard the words "fried prawns" and "dumplings" time and again. There were too many boys to know who was saying it. Even if I'd been able to find out the culprits, they were bound to deny that they'd been talking about me and would have said that it was nervous debility that made me suspect they had been. Such cowardice was a habit, having been nurtured in the area from feudal times, and I was afraid that even I, for all my integrity, would begin to copy it if I remained in the place for a year.

I wasn't so stupid as to let the boys talk themselves out of a situation in such a way that I was made to look a fool and put in the wrong. Two could play at that game. Pupils or not—children or not—they were bigger than I was, and in common justice I was entitled to retaliate and punish them. The only problem was, however, that if I tried to

retaliate in some ordinary way, they would turn the tables on me. If I accused them of anything, they'd effusively insist on their innocence with all sorts of excuses that they'd prepared beforehand. Having argued eloquently and put themselves apparently in the right, they'd turn and attack me. Since my object was retaliation, I could not vindicate myself unless I brought their wrong to light. In short, if I couldn't do so, people would think that I was the real cause of the quarrel even though the boys had instigated it; and if that happened, it would be a calamity for me. On the other hand, if I was lazy and let them get away with it, they'd be more puffed-up than ever and that, to exaggerate but a little, wouldn't be a good thing for the world at large. It seemed that the only way open to me was to take a leaf out of their book and retaliate in such a manner that they couldn't pin anything on me; but that would degrade me, a Tokyoite, too. But, degrading or not, I am only human, and I knew that if I stayed in the place for a year, being constantly bested by the boys, I'd do it, because there would be no other way to settle things with them. The only thing for me to do was to return to Tokyo and Kiyo as quickly as possible. It was as though living in the country spelled degeneration for me. I'd have been better delivering papers for a living than to have sunk to this.

I was walking reluctantly along with the boys, mulling all this over in my mind, when suddenly I heard a commotion coming from up front. At the same time, the column came to a full stop. I thought this was odd and moved right, out of the line, to take a look. The corner where Yakushimachi branches off from Ōtemachi was completely congested and a confused mass of people was jostling, pushing forward and being pushed back. The sports master came down the line, shouting in a hoarse voice for everyone to quiet down. I asked him what was happening, and he replied that our middle school and the normal school had clashed at the corner.

I've heard that a middle school and a normal school in any prefecture are like cat and dog. Why, I don't know, but it seems that their characters are so radically different that they just can't get along together. They fight on the slightest pretext. I imagined that for these boys living a restricted life in the country this was just a way of killing time.

I'm rather partial to a fight, so, partly out of curiosity, I ran towards the head of the column when I heard that there had been a clash. Some of our boys up front were yelling for the normal school to get back and shouting, "Get out of the way! You've only got a school because of the local taxpayers!" Others behind them were calling out, "Push! Push!"

I was elbowing through the boys who were blocking the way and had nearly reached the corner, when I heard the command, "Forward march!" given in a high, sharp voice. At this, the normal school started to move forward quietly. Some agreement had clearly been reached about the original bone of contention. Our school, in fact, had given ground. The normal school is said to have a higher standard than the middle school.

The victory celebration ceremony was very simple. A brigadier from the army read a congratulatory address and the prefectural governor read another. Everyone on the parade ground gave three cheers and that was the end.

I'd heard that there was to be some entertainment, but not until the afternoon, so I went back to my lodgings for a while and began to write to Kiyo, because it had been on my mind for some time. Kiyo had asked me for a longer letter with more details than I'd written before, and I felt obliged to do as she'd asked as conscientiously as possible. When I actually got some paper and tried to write, however, I had so much to say that I didn't know where to begin. Some things I rejected because they were too troublesome to put down on paper, and others because

they weren't interesting. I wondered if there wasn't something that wouldn't be too difficult to write about and yet, at the same time, would be interesting for Kiyo to read. Nothing that had happened to me seemed to fulfill those two requirements. I rubbed my ink-stick on the stone, dipped my brush into the ink and gazed at the paper. I gazed at the paper, dipped my brush into the ink and rubbed my ink-stick on the stone: the same actions over and over again. I finally decided that I couldn't write letters and, giving up the attempt, put the lid back on the ink-box.

Throwing aside my brush and writing paper, I rolled over onto my stomach, pillowed my head on my arm and looked out at the garden. I was anxious about Kiyo, but I felt sure that she would be aware of my concern for her health—that my true feelings would somehow communicate themselves to her. And if that was so, it wasn't necessary to send her a letter. If she didn't hear from me she would assume that I was well. You only need to write a letter if someone dies or is ill, or when something happens.

The garden was a plain, flat area about forty yards square, without any kind of rockery or other relief, and with no flowers or plants to speak of. There was, however, an orange tree which rose high enough above the wall to act as a landmark from outside. Whenever I came home, I would always sit and gaze at this tree. For someone who had never been out of Tokyo before, it was a novelty to see an orange tree with the fruit hanging on the branches. Those green oranges would gradually ripen and turn yellow. They would, I thought, look pretty. There were already some whose color had partly changed. When I asked my landlady about the oranges, she said they were very juicy and sweet. She told me that they would soon be ripe and that when they were I could eat as many as I liked. I'd made up my mind to eat two or three every day. I thought they'd be ready for eating in another three weeks at the most. I couldn't see the faintest possibility of my

leaving there before that time. While I was thinking about the oranges, Hotta happened to drop by to talk to me.

"As today's a victory celebration," he said, "I bought some beef so that you and I could have a good feed together."

He slipped a package wrapped in a bamboo sheath from the sleeve of his kimono and tossed it into the middle of the room. Not only had I been subjected to torture by potatoes and bean-curd in my lodgings, I was also under an interdict not to go to a noodle or a dumpling shop. I told Hotta that the meat was a wonderful idea, went and borrowed a pan and some sugar from old Mrs. Hagino at once, and set about cooking it.

Cramming beef into his mouth, Hotta asked me whether I knew that Redshirt had a regular geisha.

"Of course I knew," I answered. "She was one of the girls that came to Koga's farewell party the other evening, wasn't she?"

"That's right. I only just realized it. You're very shrewd." After this compliment Hotta continued, "He's forever talking about 'character' and 'spiritual recreation' and all the time the cheeky devil's having an affair with a geisha on the sly. It'd be all right if he was tolerant of other people enjoying themselves, but he isn't. I mean, it was Redshirt who warned you, through the headmaster, that just going to a noodle or a dumpling shop would be bad for discipline, wasn't it?"

"Yes. He seems to think that buying himself a geisha is spiritual recreation, but that eating fried prawns or dumplings is material pleasure. If that's spiritual recreation why doesn't he do it openly? What does he think he's playing at? When his favorite geisha came into the room, he stood up and slipped away. I can't stomach him, because he's always trying to fool people. If you attack him, he'll try and pull the wool over your eyes by saying he doesn't know what you mean, or by talking about Russian literature, or

saying that modern poetry is the bosom friend of the *haiku*. A weakling like that isn't a man! He's like a reincarnation of a court lady-in-waiting. Perhaps his father was one of the 'backroom boys' at the famous teahouse in front of the Michizane shrine at Yushima."

"What were they?"

"Well, whatever they were, they weren't exactly masculine . . . That part's not cooked yet. You'll get a tapeworm if you eat it like that."

"Oh? I think it's about done, though. Anyway, they say Redshirt goes into the hot-spring town without anyone knowing and meets his geisha at the Kadoya."

"Kadoya? Is that that inn?"

"It's an inn and a restaurant. I'm going to keep watch and catch him red-handed going in with the girl. Then I'll confront him with it on the spot. That's the best way to get Redshirt."

"Keep watch? You mean, all night?"

"Yes. There's an inn called Masuya on the opposite side of the road to the Kadoya, right? I'll take a room on the second floor at the front, poke a hole in one of the paper screens overlooking the street and keep watch through that."

"Do you think he'll come while you're watching?"

"I should think so. One night won't be any good. I'll have to be prepared to do it for two weeks."

"You'll do yourself some harm, you know. I sat up for a week nursing my father just before he died. Afterwards I felt listless and as weak as a kitten."

"I don't mind if it does affect me a little. It'd be a disservice to Japan to let a rogue like him carry on that way, so I'm going to execute him in the name of Heaven."

"Excellent! If that's what you've decided to do, I'll join you. Shall we start keeping watch tonight?"

"No, we can't tonight. I haven't spoken to them at the Masuya yet."

"Well, when do you intend to start?"

"Soon. I'll let you know when, and then you can come and help me."

"Good. I'll help you any time. I'm no good at planning things, but I'm pretty nimble in a fight."

As Hotta and I were eagerly discussing our plan for a crusade against Redshirt, my landlady came and said that one of the pupils had called to see Hotta. He had, it seemed, gone to Hotta's place, but, finding him out, had come here because this was where he had thought he'd probably be. Having delivered her message, Mrs. Hagino waited, kneeling on the threshold, for Hotta's reply.

"I see," said Hotta, and walked out to the front porch.

He returned after a while and said to me, "The boy came to ask me if I'd like to go and see the sideshows and the entertainment they're having as part of the victory celebrations. Apparently there's a large troupe of dancers who've come all the way from Kōchi to do some dance or other. He says I shouldn't miss it, as it's not often that you get a chance to see it. You come and see it with me."

Hotta was very eager for me to go. I'd seen any number of dances in Tokyo. Every year at the festival of the Hachimon shrine they used to pull a movable stage through the streets, so I knew *Shiokumi* and all the other dances. I had no wish to see some meaningless dance from Tosa. Hotta's taking the trouble to ask me, however, made me feel somehow that I'd like to go, and we walked out of the gate together. The boy who had come to call for Hotta was Redshirt's young brother. There was something fishy about that.

Around the grounds where the entertainment was to be held were a number of flagpoles from which flew long pennants. The scene reminded me of the Ekōin temple when they have a wrestling tournament, or the Honmonji temple when they hold a Buddhist mass. Besides the pennants, the place was festooned with string upon string of

flags, as though they'd borrowed a flag from every country in the world. The broad expanse of the sky had been changed into a gay tapestry by these decorations. In the eastern corner of the grounds stood a hastily erected stage on which the something-or-other dance from Kōchi was to be performed.

About fifty yards or so to the right of the stage there was a booth made of rush-blinds where they were displaying examples of the art of flower-arranging. Everyone was gazing at the arrangements with admiration, but I thought they were all so much rubbish. A person who enjoys looking at twisted plants or bamboo might just as well be proud of having a hunchbacked lover or a lame husband.

On the side of the grounds away from the stage, fireworks were being set off and rockets were rising thick and fast into the air. One of the rockets released a balloon on which was written *Long Live the Empire*. It drifted over the pine trees around the castle keep and came to earth in the barracks. Bang! Another rocket rose like a black dumpling, hissing into the air and seeming to cleave through the autumn sky. When it was directly over my head it burst, and streamers of green smoke arched out like the ribs of an umbrella and were then swept away into the depths. Another balloon went up. This one had *Long Live the Army and the Navy* written in white on a red ground. It was caught by the wind, wafted off over the hot-spring town and then on in the direction of the village of Aioi. Perhaps it finally came to earth there in the compound of the Kannon temple.

There hadn't been many people present at the ceremony in the morning, but now the place was packed. I was surprised to see that so many people lived in a country town like this. The place was swarming. There wasn't much to be seen in the way of intelligent faces, but numerically the crowd wasn't to be laughed at. Soon the troupe from Kōchi that everyone had been talking about began their

dance. When I had heard the word "dance" I'd jumped to the conclusion that it would be something like the Fujima school of dancing do. I was very much mistaken.

Three rows, each composed of ten men, extended across the stage. Each man wore an imposing band tied around his head and knotted at the back, and a *hakama* which was girded up around his knees. What really astonished me was that every one of the thirty men carried a drawn sword. The three rows were separated from each other by about eighteen inches and each man had that distance, or perhaps less, between himself and those on either side of him. One man stood alone on the edge of the stage, away from the others. This solitary figure wore a *hakama* like his colleagues, but had dispensed with the headband and, instead of a drawn sword, carried a drum slung across his chest. It was the same kind of drum as they use when they perform a lion dance in the streets.

After a while he chanted, "Iyaa—, Haa—" in a leisurely voice and began to sing a weird song, beating the drum rhythmically as he did so. I'd never heard such a strange melody before. You won't be far out if you imagine it as a cross between the comic song which strolling players sing at New Year and a melancholy hymn. The melody was extremely lethargic and as formless as jelly in midsummer, but the drummer punctuated it with beats on his drum and this served to keep a constant rhythm. The drawn swords flashed in time with this rhythm, and such was the rapidity and skill required, I broke out in a cold sweat, although I was only an onlooker.

Imagine it from the dancers' point of view. Eighteen inches to either side, and behind and in front of you, is a living person who is wielding a sharp, naked blade, the same as you. Unless you keep strictly in time, you'll hit one of your colleagues and someone will get hurt. It wouldn't have been so dangerous if they were only standing still, just swinging the swords before and behind, or up and

down; but sometimes all thirty of them would give a stamp and turn to the side; sometimes they would spin in a complete circle, or bend their knees. If the person next to you was a fraction too quick or too slow, you might lose your nose, or split his head open. Each man had complete control of his own sword, but not only was that sword walled in on all sides in an area eighteen inches square, it also had to be brandished in the same direction and at the same speed as those of the people before and behind and to left and right.

I was told that it takes years of devoted practice to perform this dance, and that it's extremely difficult to keep the time. They say the man who has the most difficult job of all is the maestro who puts in those indispensable drum beats. Every movement of the legs and hands and every bend of the hips of thirty men is decided by the rhythm of our friend with the drum. What is surprising is that it looks as though the drummer has the easiest time, and that all he has to do is chant, "Iyaa—, Haa—" in a leisurely way, whereas, in fact, he has a very heavy responsibility and an extraordinarily arduous task.

Hotta and I were filled with admiration and were engrossed in watching the dance when, all of a sudden, a loud yell went up about a hundred yards away and all the people who had up till then been quietly inspecting the various sideshows abruptly began to move in great waves to right and left. "Fight! Fight!" somebody shouted, and all at once Redshirt's young brother threaded his way through the crowd and said, "Sir! They're fighting again. The middle school's going to get its own back for what happened this morning. They're going to fight it out to the finish with the normal school. Come on, sir. Hurry!"

He'd no sooner finished than he slipped back into the waves of people and was gone.

"Are those kids at it again? They're the bane of my life. Can't they ever stop?" said Hotta, and dashed off at full

tilt, dodging around the people who were trying to get away. Since he could hardly just stand and watch the fight, I imagined he was going to try and break it up. Needless to say, I had no intention of running away, and set off on Hotta's heels for where the fight was. When I arrived it was in full swing. There were about fifty or sixty pupils from the normal school, but there must have been thirty percent more of our boys. The normal-school boys still wore their uniforms, but the majority of the middle-school pupils had gone home after the ceremony in the morning and changed out of their uniforms into Japanese clothes, thus making it easy to tell who was on who's side. However, they were all mixed up in such a confused melee, now coming together in knots, now disentangling, that I had no idea where to begin in pulling them apart.

Hotta had stood staring in dismay at this chaotic state of affairs for a while, but now he looked across at me and said, "There's nothing for it. There'll be trouble if the police come. We'll have to dive in and break them up." Without any answer, I leaped right into what looked like the thick of the fight.

"Stop it! This violence is a disgrace to your schools. WILL YOU STOP IT!!" I was yelling at the top of my voice and trying to force my way through to what seemed to be the boundary between the opposing armies. Unfortunately it wasn't as easy as all that. Having advanced two or three yards into the crowd, I couldn't go forward and I couldn't retreat.

Just in front of me a comparatively big boy from the normal school was grappling with a fifteen- or sixteen-year-old middle-school boy.

"Stop it! Will you stop it!" I shouted and, grabbing the normal-school boy by the shoulder, tried to pull him off by force. As I did so, someone swept my legs out from under me. Taken by surprise, I released the shoulder I'd been holding and fell sideways. Somebody stood on my

back with his hard shoes. I was on my hands and knees and from this position thrust myself upright, sending the boy on my back tumbling off to the right. As I stood up, I caught sight of Hotta about six yards away, his big frame wedged in among the boys, being jostled and shoved back.

"Stop it!" he was shouting. "Stop this fighting!"

"Hey!" I called to him. "It's no good. We're not getting anywhere." But I couldn't make myself heard, and Hotta said nothing.

A stone came whizzing through the air and caught me a smart crack on the cheekbone. At the same time someone behind me started to beat me on the back with a stick. Somewhere I could hear a voice saying, "Teachers! Poking their noses in. Hit 'em! Hit 'em!" Another voice was shouting, "There's two of 'em. A big one and a small one. Stone 'em!"

"What?" I roared. "Less of your lip you cheeky brats. Oafs!" And with this I lashed out and clouted the nearest normal-school boy across the head. Another stone sailed through the air. This one grazed the top of my cropped head and flew off behind me. I couldn't see what had happened to Hotta. There was only one thing for me to do. My original intention had been to stop the fight, but I'd been clubbed and had stones thrown at me. I wasn't about to crawl off with my tail between my legs.

"Who do you think I am?" I shouted again. "I may be small, but Tokyo's the home of fighting, and I can still show you a thing or two."

I flailed about me blindly, hitting people and being hit back, until at last I heard somebody call, "Police! Run for it! It's the police!" Up till then I'd been scarcely able to move and had felt as though I were swimming through dough, but now things seemed to have suddenly become easier. Friend and foe alike had completely disappeared. Oafs and clods they may have been, but they were very adept at retreating. I don't think that even the Russian

general Kuropatkin could have made a better retreat from the Japanese army.

I looked round to see what had become of Hotta and saw him standing a little way off, wiping his nose. His unlined *haori* with his family crest on it was in shreds. He'd been hit on the bridge of the nose and had lost a fair amount of blood. His nose was an ugly sight, swollen and bright red. The kimono I was wearing was lined and had a splashed pattern, so, although it was covered with mud, it wasn't in nearly such bad shape as Hotta's *haori*. My cheek, however, stung like anything. Hotta told me that it was bleeding pretty badly.

About fifteen or sixteen policemen had arrived on the scene, but since the boys had all withdrawn in the other direction, Hotta and I were the only ones to get caught. We gave them our names and told them everything that had happened, but they said we had to go to the police station. Having given all the particulars to the chief of police there, I went back to my lodgings.

Next morning when I opened my eyes I found that I ached all over. I hadn't had a fight in a long time and was out of training, so I suppose it was only natural that it should have told on me like that. I was lying in bed, thinking that the condition I was in didn't give me much cause to be proud of myself as a fighter, when my landlady brought in the *Shikoku Daily* and put it down near my pillow.

I didn't really even feel in a fit state to read a newspaper, but, thinking that I wouldn't be much of a man if I allowed myself to be beaten by such a trifling matter, I forced myself to roll over onto my stomach and, lying there in bed, I opened the paper at page two.

A shock was in store for me. The previous day's fight had been written up. It wasn't the fact that the story appeared but their account of the fight that gave me a shock. It ran something like this:

Not only did Mr. Hotta (first name unknown), a teacher at the middle school, and a certain insolent Mr. So-and-so, a new teacher from Tokyo, inveigle obedient and law-abiding boys into trouble and instigate a disturbance, they actually took command of the boys present and committed an unprovoked and wanton act of violence against pupils of the normal school. [It went on to say:] The middle school in this prefecture has always been the envy of the whole country, as a place where a spirit of gentleness and obedience prevailed. Now, through the actions of these two perfidious whelps, the prerogatives of our school have been compromised and the whole town disgraced.

Under such circumstances we feel obliged to undertake a

vigorous inquiry into where the responsibility lies. We believe, however, that the authorities concerned will take appropriate action before we do and ensure that neither of these men can ever appear in the educational world again.

They'd printed the whole thing in italics in an effort to make the effect more caustic.

"Shit!" I shouted, and leaped out of bed. Before, every joint in my body had been very painful, but as soon as I was up the pain seemed to decrease, oddly enough, and I forgot all about it.

I screwed the newspaper up into a ball and hurled it out into the garden, but this still didn't satisfy me, so I went round and threw it down the toilet.

Newspapers are always telling lies. There isn't anything or anyone in the world more given to exaggeration and making mountains out of molehills than a newspaper. The *Shikoku Daily* had set out in print a lot of things that only I was qualified to comment on. Not only that! What did they mean by "a certain insolent Mr. So-and-so, a new teacher from Tokyo?" Whoever heard of anyone with the name So-and-so? Where was their sense? I have as well-established and decent a name as the next man. If they wanted to see my family tree, I'd show it to them with every one of my ancestors from Tada Mitsunaka down.

When I washed my face, my cheek suddenly started to hurt. Old Mrs. Hagino brought me the mirror I asked for and inquired whether I'd looked at the morning paper. I told her that I'd read it and thrown it down the toilet, and that if she wanted it she could go and fish it out again. She withdrew in surprise. I looked at my face in the mirror and saw that I still had the cut from the previous day. It's not much of a face, but it's important to me. And to have it cut and then, on top of everything else, to be labeled "the insolent Mr. So-and-so" was too much.

Thinking that I'd never live it down if it was said that I'd stayed away from school because I'd been intimidated

by the newspaper article, I ate my breakfast quickly and was the first at school. One after another the teachers began to arrive. Every one of them looked at my face and smiled.

"What's so funny?" I thought to myself. "I don't owe you anything for my face—you didn't make it."

After a while Yoshikawa appeared and said, "That was quite an achievement yesterday. Is that the honorable wound?"

I imagined he was getting his own back for my having hit him at the farewell party. He jeered at me so much that I told him to mind his own business and to go and suck his paintbrush.

"I *am* sorry, I'm sure," he replied. "But it must be very painful."

"Painful or not," I roared, "it's my face and I don't need anything from you."

Yoshikawa went and sat at his desk on the other side of the room and whispered something with a grin to the history teacher, sitting next to him.

A little later Hotta put in an appearance. His nose was purple and so swollen that it looked as though pus would gush out if you lanced it. It might have been only vanity on my part, but his face seemed to have fared far worse than mine. Since Hotta's desk and mine were next to each other, it meant that when we sat down we were lined up side by side. To make matters worse, we were unlucky enough to have our desks directly facing the door of the staff room. There they were, those two sorry-looking faces, side by side. I was sure that whenever one of the others got bored with what he was doing he would look across at us. It was also evident that however much they might pretend to sympathize with us, they were really thinking to themselves that we were fools. Otherwise they wouldn't have been whispering together and sniggering as they were.

I was greeted by applause when I went to the classroom, and two or three boys even cheered. But I didn't know whether they meant it or were being sarcastic. Although Hotta and I were the focal point of attention for the whole school, Redshirt alone came up to us as though nothing had happened and remarked that the whole affair was a calamity.

"I feel terribly sorry for you," he said. "But you needn't worry. I've already discussed the article with the headmaster and we've decided to ask them to print a retraction. I feel very badly about the whole thing, because it was my brother that fetched Mr. Hotta. I'm going to make every effort over this business, so I hope you won't hold what has happened against me."

He sounded almost apologetic.

The headmaster came from his room during the third period to see us. He looked very worried and said how embarrassing it was that the newspaper should have written such an article, and that he hoped no complications would arise. I wasn't worried at all, because I'd decided that if they were going to fire me I'd hand in my resignation before they could do so. If I resigned without having done any wrong, however, it would make those loudmouthed newspapermen more presumptuous than ever. By rights, I thought, I should make them print a retraction and carry on teaching at the school, even if I had to dig my heels in to do it. I thought that I might go and talk to them at the newspaper on my way home, but I didn't because Redshirt had said that the school would ask them for a retraction.

When the headmaster and Redshirt had a few minutes to spare, Hotta and I explained to them the truth of the matter. They both accepted our version of the affair and concluded that the newspaper had purposely printed the article because they harbored some grudge against the school.

Redshirt went round to every teacher in the staff room,

defending our action. In particular, he announced that it was his brother that had gone to invite Hotta to the entertainment. The way he spoke made it sound as though he himself had been at fault. Everyone agreed that the newspaper was in the wrong, that it was disgraceful, and that the article was a terrible blow to both Hotta and me.

On our way home Hotta said to me, "You know, there's something fishy about Redshirt. If we're not careful he'll have us."

"There's always been something fishy about him. Today wasn't the first time."

"You don't seem to appreciate it yet, but it was Redshirt's brother that came to call for me at your house, and it was Redshirt's brother that got us involved in the fight."

Hotta was right. I hadn't realized that. I had to admire Hotta; he seemed wild, but he was cleverer than me.

"Redshirt got us into the fight like that, then went straight round to the newspaper office and got them to write that article. The man's a real rogue."

"The article too? Well, I'll be damned! But would the newspaper believe what Redshirt said—just like that?"

"Believe him? There'd be no problem if he had a friend on the paper."

"But does he?"

"Even if he doesn't it'd still be easy. You go to a newspaper, lie to them and tell them such and such happened, and they'll print it straight away."

"That's dreadful! If Redshirt really planned the whole thing we may both lose our jobs over this."

"If things go badly we could find ourselves in trouble."

"In that case I'm going to give my notice in tomorrow and go back to Tokyo. I wouldn't stay in a place like this if they begged me to."

"It won't worry Redshirt if you give your notice."

"That's true. What would worry him?"

"The man's as wily as a fox. He always contrives things

so that there's no evidence against him. He's difficult to catch out."

"It's a real problem. If we say anything, we'll be accused of bringing a false charge against him. It's all very discouraging. I sometimes wonder whether there's such a thing as divine justice."

"Anyway, let's see how things go for the next two or three days. Then, if the worst comes to the worst, we'll have to catch him at the hot spring."

"You mean, leave the affair of the fight aside?"

"Yes. We'll take the offensive and hit him where it hurts."

"That's an idea. I'm no good at planning. I'll leave everything to you. But when it comes to the push I'll do anything."

Hotta and I parted at this point. If Hotta's guess about what Redshirt had done was correct, then he really was a rogue. It would be useless to try and beat him in a battle of wits; he was far too clever for us. The only way to beat him was with brute strength. War, I thought, will always be present in the world. Even individuals resort to force to settle things in the end.

The next day I waited impatiently for the newspaper to be delivered. When it eventually came I searched through it, but there was neither correction nor retraction. I went to school and taxed the Badger with this, but he said that it would probably appear the next day. Sure enough, it did; but in small, six-point agate type. It was the correction that the school itself had submitted and there was, of course, no word of apology from the newspaper.

Once again I went to talk the matter over with the headmaster. He said there was nothing more he could do. It seemed that the headmaster really had very little power, for all his badger-like face and his strutting around in a frock-coat. He couldn't even make a country newspaper apologize for writing a libelous article. I was so angry that I

told him I would go and talk to the editor myself. But he told me not to, because, if I did, they would only slander me again. He concluded by saying that once a newspaper has written something about you, whether it be true or false, there is nothing you can do about it. One could only resign oneself, he said. He sounded like a priest giving a sermon.

If newspapers are really like that then the sooner they are all smashed and put out of business the better for everybody. The Badger's words made me realize for the first time that a newspaper has a lot in common with a snapping turtle: once either of them latch on to you they won't let go.

About three days later, in the afternoon, Hotta came round in a towering rage to see me. He said that the time was ripe at last, and that he was going to carry out the plan he'd told me about. I immediately replied that, if that was the case, he could count me in. Hotta, however, shook his head and said that I'd better not.

"Why?" I asked.

Hotta's reply was to inquire whether the headmaster had called me and asked for my resignation.

"No," I answered. "Did he ask for yours?"

"Yes. He called me to his room today and said that he was very sorry but, due to circumstances beyond his control, he'd have to ask for my resignation."

"What kind of a trial is that? You know how a badger is supposed to beat its belly like a drum when it's contented? Well, our Badger must have beaten such a tattoo on his that he's addled his brains. You and I went to the victory celebration together, we went to see those dancers from Kōchi doing the sword dance together, and we tried to stop the fight together. If he's going to ask for resignations, then to be fair he should ask for both yours and mine. Why is it that in country schools they have no idea of logic? It really makes me mad."

"Redshirt's at the back of this. The way everything has turned out up till now, he and I could never work together. But he doesn't see any harm in letting you stay here."

"You think I could work with Redshirt? He's got a damned cheek not to see any harm in my staying here!"

"He thinks you're so naive that he can pull the wool over your eyes even if you do stay."

"That's even worse. As if anybody could work with him!"

"There's another reason too. Something came up, and the man who was supposed to take over from Koga hasn't arrived yet. As things stand, if they threw you and me out together there'd be such a gap in the boys' timetable that it would seriously interfere with their classes."

"So they're just going to use me as a stopgap? Damn! If they think I'm going to fall for that one they're mistaken."

Next day I went to school and spoke to the headmaster in his room.

"Why didn't you ask for my resignation?"

"Pardon?" The Badger was astonished.

"It's absurd to think that you can ask for Hotta's and not for mine."

"There were reasons why, for the sake of the school . . ."

"Well those reasons are wrong. If I needn't resign, why should Hotta?"

"I'm afraid I cannot explain things to you; but while I regard Mr. Hotta's leaving as unavoidable, I see no necessity for you to resign."

Badgers are crafty. And the headmaster was well named. He talked in circles and avoided coming to the point, and yet he was completely self-possessed.

I saw no other way out, so I said, "Then I resign too. You may have thought, sir, that I would stand idly by

while you dismissed Hotta by himself, but I'm afraid that I can't be so callous."

"You can't do that. If you both leave we shan't be able to teach mathematics at the school at all, and . . ."

"Whether you can or not is nothing to do with me."

"You can't be that selfish. You must have a little consideration for the position the school is in. Another thing: if you resign now, when you haven't been here a month, it will have a serious effect on your future career. That's something you should give some thought to."

"I don't care about my career. Justice is more important to me."

"But of course. What you say is absolutely right. But please try and appreciate what I am saying. If you are determined to resign, then I won't try and stop you. But I would like you to remain until we can find a replacement. Anyway, go home and think it over again."

My reasons for leaving the school were so plain that I knew no amount of reconsideration would make me change my mind. But the Badger's face was paling and flushing by turns, so, feeling sorry for him, I said I would think it over again and left. I didn't say anything about the matter to Redshirt, because I thought that since we were going to settle our account with him anyway, it would be better to do so all at once.

When I told Hotta all that had passed between the Badger and myself, he said that he'd guessed something of the sort would happen, but that it wouldn't interfere with our plans if I were to postpone giving my notice until the the last minute. I did as he said. He seemed to have a better head on his shoulders than me, and I made up my mind to do whatever he advised.

Hotta at last handed in his resignation, said goodbye to the other teachers, and went to the Minatoya, the inn down by the beach. Unbeknown to anyone, however, he doubled back to the Masuya in the hot-spring town and went into

hiding in a second-floor room at the front, where he poked a hole in the paper screen and began to keep watch. I was the only one who knew this.

Redshirt could only attempt to go to the inn opposite at night. Early evening would be too dangerous because of the chance of being seen by pupils or other prying eyes. The earliest he would appear would be nine o'clock. For the first two nights I kept watch with Hotta until eleven o'clock, but there was no sign of Redshirt. The third night we watched from nine till half past ten, but still with no luck. There's nothing, I felt, so ridiculous as having to tramp back to your lodgings in the middle of the night after a fruitless watch. After four or five nights of this, my landlady began to feel a little concerned. She said that a married man shouldn't go gadding about at night. I told her that what I was playing at at night wasn't the kind of playing she thought at all—that I was about to carry out divine retribution.

However, after a week had passed with still no result, I began to be discouraged. When I get enthusiastic about something I can sit up all night working, but, being impetuous by nature, my enthusiasm for anything I've set my hand to has never lasted long. Even though I was supposed to be the avenging right arm of Heaven, I still got bored.

By the sixth night I was a little restless. On the seventh I wanted to stay at home. Hotta, on the other hand, was obstinacy itself. He would sit with his eye glued to the peephole from early evening until after midnight, staring at the area beneath the round gas lamp that hung outside the Kadoya. When I arrived he would surprise me with such statistics as how many customers there had been that day, how many of them had stayed the night, and how many of them had been women. If I chanced to remark that it didn't look as though Redshirt would come, he'd say, "He'll come, all right," but would sometimes fold his arms

and heave a sigh. I felt sorry for Hotta. If Redshirt didn't come Hotta would lose the one chance in his life to inflict divine retribution on him.

On the eighth day I left my lodgings at seven o'clock. I first went to the hot spring and took a long, comfortable bath, then bought eight eggs in the town. These were to offset the torturing diet of potatoes that old Mrs. Hagino subjected me to. With four eggs in each of my sleeves, my favorite red towel draped over my shoulder, and my hands thrust into the breast of my kimono, I climbed the stairs of the Masuya and slid back the *shōji*⁷ of Hotta's room. As soon as I walked in he shouted, "Hey! We have a chance! We have a chance!" His face, which I've said before reminded me of the monstrous guardian god Idate, had suddenly become animated. Until the previous evening he'd seemed to be moping, and even I, who was only a bystander, had been infected by his gloom; but seeing his face now I suddenly felt elated and, before he had a chance to tell me anything, I let out a cry of delight.

"Kosuzu—you know, the geisha—went into the Kadoya at about half past seven."

"With Redshirt?"

"No."

"Then it's no use."

"There was another geisha with her, but I think there's hope."

"Why?"

"Why? Because Redshirt's crafty. He probably sent the geisha on ahead and intends to sneak in later."

"Maybe. It's nine o'clock now, isn't it?"

"It's twelve minutes past," said Hotta, looking at a nickel-plated watch he had taken from his sash. "Hey! Turn that lamp out! If he sees the shadows of two cropped heads on the *shōji* he'll smell a rat. Foxes are always suspicious."

I blew out the lamp, which stood on a low, lacquered table. The stars threw a little light on the *shōji*, but the

moon wasn't out yet. Hotta and I put our faces to the peephole and concentrated on keeping watch, scarcely daring to breathe. The wall-clock downstairs struck half past nine.

"Hotta," I said, "do you really think he'll come? If he doesn't turn up tonight, I've had enough."

"I'm not giving up as long as my money holds out."

"How much have you got left?"

"I've paid out five *yen* sixty *sen* in rent for the eight days up till now. That includes the money for tonight. I always pay my bill every evening so that I can leave whenever I like."

"That shows foresight. But I bet they were surprised here in the hotel, weren't they?"

"They're no trouble. What bothers me is that I can never relax."

"You can take a nap during the day though, can't you?"

"Yes, but I can't go out. It's killing to be shut up like this."

"It's a hard job being a divine avenger, but we can't let Redshirt slip through the net now."

"Don't worry, he'll come tonight . . . Hey, look! Look!"

Hotta's voice had dropped to a whisper, and my heart missed a beat. A man in a black hat looked up at the gas lamp outside the Kadoya, but walked on, out of the pool of light, into the darkness. It wasn't Redshirt. I sighed to myself. The clock down in the front office, with no thought for our feelings, struck ten. It seemed, after all, we were going to be out of luck this evening too.

Things began to quieten down outside and I could hear the drums in the brothel quarter very clearly. The moon peeped out from behind the hills around the hot-spring town, throwing its light onto the street below. All at once the sound of voices came from the end of the street. Since I couldn't put my head out of the window, I wasn't able to locate their source, but they sounded as though they were

gradually coming nearer. I could hear the wooden ring of low clogs on the roadway. At last two shadowy figures drew close enough for me to see if I angled my head and looked sideways through the peephole.

"We're all right now. We've got rid of the one that was in our way." There was no mistaking the voice, it was the Clown's.

"Brute strength is no good without guile." That was Redshirt.

"That's true . . . Like the rough one that's always using such vulgar, downtown-Tokyo language. He's such a spirited, dashing young boy. There's a certain charm about him."

"You know, he refused to have his salary raised and wants to resign. He must be deranged."

I wanted to open the window, leap down from the second floor and knock the pair of them flat, but in the end I managed to control myself. Laughing, they both passed under the gas lamp and into the Kadoya.

"Hey!"

"Hey!"

"He's come."

"At last!"

"Now I can relax."

"Did you hear what that swine Yoshikawa called me? A 'dashing young boy.'"

"It was me they meant when they said the one that was in their way. Confounded impertinence!"

Hotta and I had to take the Clown and Redshirt by surprise on their way home, but we had no idea when they would come out. Hotta went downstairs and told them in the front office that we might have to go out during the night, so would they please leave the front door unlocked. Looking back on it now, I'm surprised the people who ran the inn agreed. Most people would take you for a burglar if you suggested such a thing to them.

At last two shadowy figures drew close enough for me to see if I angled my head and looked sideways through the peephole.

It had been hard waiting for Redshirt to arrive, but it was worse now, sitting there waiting for him to come out. We couldn't go to sleep, and what with having to keep staring through the crack in the *shōji*, and with one thing and another, I was all on edge. I've never had such a wretched time, before or since.

Rather than just sit there waiting, I proposed to Hotta that we should go into the Kadoya and catch the Clown and Redshirt red-handed. A word from Hotta, however, put an end to my idea. If, he said, we both went barging in now, the people at the inn would say we were rough-necks and head us off before we could reach the two of them. If we explained why we were there and asked to see Yoshikawa and Redshirt, they'd either say they weren't there or show us into another room. Even if we could get in without anybody knowing, Hotta continued, we didn't know which of the dozens of rooms the two of them were in. Therefore, he concluded, the only course of action open to us was to wait until they came out, even though it was boring.

We finally ended up waiting there, containing ourselves, until five in the morning.

No sooner did we see the two figures leave the Kadoya than Hotta and I were off after them. It was too early for a train, so they would have to walk back to the castle town. On the outskirts of the hot-spring town, cedar trees lined the road for about fifty or sixty yards, and to left and right there were rice fields. Beyond this, here and there, lay thatched cottages, and a dyke led through the fields to the castle town. Once outside the town, we could overtake Yoshikawa and Redshirt anywhere, but we wanted if possible to catch them in the avenue of cedars, where there were no houses, so we kept out of sight as we followed them.

As soon as we were out of the town, Hotta and I put on a spurt and came up on the two from behind like a sudden

squall. One of them looked round in fright as he heard us behind him. It was Redshirt.

"Not so fast," said Hotta, and laid a hand on his shoulder. The Clown looked panic-stricken and seemed about to run for it, so I slipped round in front of him and blocked his path.

"Why would a man who holds the post of second master go and stay the night at an inn like the Kadoya?" asked Hotta, immediately on the attack.

"Is there any rule that says that a second master may not stay at the Kadoya?" replied Redshirt. He spoke in his usual polite way, but his face had turned a shade paler.

"You were so scrupulous that you said it was bad for discipline for a teacher to go to even a noodle or a dumpling shop, so how come you spent the night with a geisha at the Kadoya?"

Yoshikawa was looking for a chance to make his escape, so I stood in front of him and roared, "Who's a vulgar, downtown young boy?"

"I wasn't talking about you. I meant someone entirely different." The Clown still had the effrontery to make excuses.

Just then I realized that I was holding both my sleeves. I'd had to do this, otherwise the eggs in them would have been swung about when I ran. I shot a hand into my sleeve, drew out two of the eggs, and with a yell smashed them into the Clown's face. The eggs broke and large gobs of yolk began to run down and drip from his nose. He looked absolutely petrified and, letting out a cry of fright, plumped down onto his backside. He then began to call for help.

I'd bought the eggs to eat and hadn't put them in my sleeves with any intention of using them on Yoshikawa. But I was so angry that I'd hit him with them before I really knew what I was doing. Seeing Yoshikawa fall over, however, I realized for the first time how effective the eggs had been and, taking the remaining six eggs from

my sleeves, I hurled them at him, calling him a pig as I threw each one. Yoshikawa's face was now covered with egg yolk.

While I had been throwing eggs, Hotta had continued his cross-examination of Redshirt and the exchange was now in full swing.

"Do you have any proof that I took a geisha to the Kadoya and stayed the night with her?"

"You can't fool me. I saw your favorite geisha go into the Kadoya early yesterday evening."

"I see no reason why I should try and fool you. I spent the night there with Yoshikawa. It's nothing to do with me if a geisha went in there yesterday evening or not."

"Shut up!" shouted Hotta and punched him. Redshirt staggered.

"That's violence," he cried. "It's an outrage. It's unjust to use force on a man without listening to the pros and cons of the case."

"Unjust or not, it's what you need." And Hotta hit him again. "The only thing a rogue like you understands is a good hiding." With this, Hotta continued to punch Redshirt.

Meanwhile I was raining blows on Yoshikawa. Finally they both cowered at the base of a cedar tree. I don't know whether they couldn't move or whether they were just dazed, but they made no attempt to escape.

"Have you had enough? If not we'll keep hitting you," we asked Redshirt, both giving him a punch.

"I've had enough."

"How about you?" we asked the Clown.

"I've had enough, of course," he replied.

"You're a pair of ruffians," said Hotta. "And what you've just had from us is a taste of divine retribution. I hope you've learned your lesson and that you'll be more prudent in the future. It doesn't matter how eloquently you defend yourself, you can't cheat justice."

Neither of them said a word. They were probably too exhausted to talk.

"I'm not going to run away and I'm not going to hide," said Hotta. "If you want me, or want to send the police or anyone else after me, I'll be at the Minatoya down by the beach until five this evening."

I followed Hotta's example and said, "I'm not going to run away or hide either. I'll wait with Hotta. So if you want to complain to the police, you can." With that, the two of us walked off briskly together.

I arrived back at my lodgings just before seven in the morning. I went to my room and began to pack straight away. The landlady was surprised and asked me what I was going to do. I told her that I was going back to Tokyo to fetch my wife, then paid my bill and immediately took a train for the beach. When I arrived at the Minatoya, I found Hotta asleep in a room on the second floor.

I was going to write out a formal letter of resignation immediately, but I didn't know what to say, so I just wrote the following note:

Dear Sir,

Due to certain personal circumstances, I am going back to Tokyo. Thanking you in advance for your understanding.

I addressed this note to the headmaster and posted it.

The boat was to sail at six o'clock in the evening. Both Hotta and I were tired and slept soundly. When we awoke it was two o'clock. We asked the maid if the police had been, but she said no, they hadn't.

"It seems that neither the Clown nor Redshirt has made a complaint against us," we said, and laughed hugely.

That evening Hotta and I left that wretched hole. The farther the boat got from the shore, the better we felt. We took a train straight through from Kobe to Tokyo, and when we reached Shimbashi station we felt that we were at last back in the world after a spell in prison. Hotta and I parted at the station and I've never seen him since.

I forgot to tell you about Kiyo. As soon as I arrived in Tokyo I went straight round to see her, without calling at my lodgings. Bag in hand, I burst in and called, "Kiyo, I'm home."

"Oh, Botchan! I *am* glad you came back so soon," she said, and tears ran down her cheeks.

I was so happy that I said, "I'll never go down to the country again. I'll get a house in Tokyo and live with you."

Not long after, a friend of mine got me a job as an assistant mechanic with the Tokyo Tramcar Company. I earned twenty-five yen a month, of which I paid out six in rent. Kiyo seemed to be perfectly happy, even though the house we lived in didn't have a fine portico. Unfortunately, however, she caught pneumonia and died in February this year. The day before she died, she called me to her and said, "Botchan, when I die, please, for mercy's sake, let me be buried in your family temple. Then I can wait happily for you to come."

So Kiyo's grave is in the Yōgenji temple at Kobinata.

Notes

1. The first man to open a photographic studio in Japan.
2. "Old ponds and frogs" is a reference to what is probably the best known of Japanese *haiku*, written by the famous poet Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694).
3. This is a reference to the *haiku* by the famous poetess Kaga Chiyo (1703-1775).
4. A *hakama* is a long divided skirt worn over a kimono.
5. An outer coat worn over a kimono.
6. Dark was an Englishman who took the first Western puppet theater to Japan in 1894.
7. A translucent paper sliding screen.

THE TRANSLATOR: Alan Turney was born in London in 1938. After graduating in 1962 from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, he came to Japan. Now lecturing in English at Seisen Women's College, he is pursuing studies in Japanese literature, and in particular the works of Sōseki. He has previously translated Sōseki's *The Three-Cornered World*, and his own collected essays, *Westerners in Japan*, reached a wide and appreciative audience.

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“Natsume Sōseki is unquestionably one of Japan’s greatest modern novelists, and the easiest approach to his work is through his delightful early satire, *BOTCHAN*. Heretofore *BOTCHAN* has been ill-served by translators but Alan Turney’s new version remedies that: it is lucid and lively, it neatly skewers Sōseki’s targets, it deftly catches the spirit of his irrepressible hero. At last *BOTCHAN* is fun to read in English.”
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“The author, Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916), contributed perhaps more than any other writer to the development of the modern Japanese novel, and his works remain best-sellers to this day. Although this is not Sōseki’s only humorous work, it is certainly his lightest and funniest. It was, moreover, his own favorite. The vividness of such characters as Redshirt, the Clown, and the Porcupine, captured in this fluent new translation, has ensured for them a place in Japanese literature as secure as that of the comic creations of Dickens in English literature.”
DONALD KEENE (Professor of Japanese Language and Culture, Columbia University)

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