# CONDONING AND CONTESTING COLONIAL NARRATIVES OF SPACE, IDENTITY, AND BODY IN THE EARLY WORKS OF NAKAJIMA ATSUSHI (1927-1932)

by

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Thesis directed by Dr. Faye Yuan Kleeman

## Abstract

While Nakajima Atsushi (1909-1942) is well-known in the modern Japanese literary canon for his tales set in ancient China, this project examines six of his early works, written from 1927 to 1932, which have been disregarded in serious literary scholarship. The six short stories take place in Japan, colonial Seoul, Japanese-occupied southern Manchuria, and a frigid city in pre-colonized northern Manchuria, and include some of Nakajima's most dynamic and diverse works. The project examines the ways in which these texts respond to hegemonic colonial narratives about space and landscape, about gendered and ethnicized hierarchy prescribed by the Empire, and about illness, hygiene, and bodily experience. The introduction situates the project in the understanding that meaning is dynamically negotiated at every instance of reading a text, that all texts are predicated on dialogue with various contexts, and that texts are hybrid spaces wherein the resistance toward and reification of one single narrative have the potential to exist as one multifaceted position. Given this knowledge, each chapter explores the short stories' complex positions toward the hegemonic narratives in question. Chapter One traces a literary history of spatial representation in modern Japanese literature, which uncovers the privileging of the Japanese settler viewing subject. The chapter reveals the texts' occasional challenges toward – but usually reinscription of – colonial space narratives. Chapter Two explores the texts' hierarchical configuration of the multiethnic Empire vis-à-vis male settler desire, showing that although Nakajima's Japanese male protagonists take a passive role in most situations, they are still privileged figures within this hierarchy, being afforded the most subjectivity. Chapter Three discusses the texts' many instances of ill or bodily non-hegemonic characters and how their characterizations challenge the Japanese notion of *fukoku-kyōhei* ("rich nation, strong army"), which idealized strong and healthy male bodies to settle the colonies, and how they also assert notions of Japanese male settler privilege. This analytical project, followed by original translations of the six stories, aims to present the dynamicity of understudied stories within the realm of Japanese colonial literature.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Scope and Aims of the Project

I encountered the work of Nakajima Atsushi in Professor Faye Kleeman's Fall 2017 seminar, when we read his 1942 short story "Sangetsuki" (translated as "The Moon Over the Mountain" by Paul McCarthy). This metamorphosis tale takes place in ancient China, and recounts the story of a failed poet who transforms into a tiger as a mark of his shame. I was struck by Nakajima's ability to merge the rich details of the historical setting with the poignant human emotions of ambition and dejection, and sought to know more about this writer. My interest multiplied when I learned that Nakajima's literary career spans not only the cultural realm of ancient China, but also the colonial and semi-colonial spaces where he spent foundational time in his life: Korea, Manchuria, and the South Pacific Islands. Nakajima's early works stood out to me as especially productive sites of research and analysis, given their tone of youthful vigor and their diverse and multicultural settings across Northeast Asia. While a handful of Japanese-language journal articles take Nakajima's early works as their object of study, and a select number of English-language scholarly works discuss them in connection to biographical details or as precursors to his more famous works published late in his life, this master's thesis project aims to be the first full-length investigation that takes Nakajima's early works as its principal subject matter. Indeed, the notion that these early works – for whatever reason, whether it be that Nakajima was a high school or university student at the time of writing, or that the stories are "practice stories[1]" (*shūsaku*) as the publisher Chikuma Shobō labels them – fail to attain the sufficient "literariness" to merit serious analysis is widespread. This project does not

[1] *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 3.

purport argue for such a notion of literariness, but rather argues that these stories are some of Nakajima's most dynamic literary works and provide a fuller context for the study of Nakajima's literary career. On a larger scale, this fuller understanding of Nakajima Atsushi will in turn contribute to the study of literature from the Japanese colonial empire and the study of global colonial literature. While translation is not the primary aim of the project, it is fair to say that translation has shaped the direction of the project, given translation's ability to make readers think about texts across cultural and linguistic boundaries. And since none of the texts (except one[2]) had been translated before, I undertook the project of translating the works into English, mostly while I was studying in Yokohama at the Stanford Inter-University Center during the summer of 2018, although I finished some of the translations while back in Colorado during the late summer season. The translation of these texts was a most worthwhile endeavor that allowed the themes of this project to emerge in the first place.

Reading through these early works, one cannot help but be fascinated by Nakajima's various representations of spaces, of gender and ethnic identities, and of illness and body image. Resolving to conduct my own research about these representations, I set out to look at the ways in which they relate to hegemonic narratives of the Japanese colonial regime: do they hesitantly condone them, do they offer points of contestation, or do they do both? And if both condonation and contestation are at play, how do such sentiments coexist within the texts? Such questions I wrestle with and aim to resolve in this project. After contextualizing the project with details

[2] "Junsa no iru fūkei" appears under the English title of "Landscape with an Officer" in Angela Yiu's edited volume *Three-Dimensional Reading: Stories of Time and Space in Japanese Modernist Fiction, 1911-1932.* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013). However, my translation of the story departs significantly from the 2013 translation (just one example is that I include Korean romanization of names so as to preserve the integrity of the characters' cultural representation) so as to warrant its inclusion in the appendix to this project.

about Nakajima Atsushi's biography and about the early works examined here, I will discuss certain theoretical viewpoints that will help elaborate on how the texts' condonation and contestation of colonial narratives exist together and interpellate one another.

**Biographical Details and Introduction of the Stories in Question**

Nakajima Atsushi was born in Yotsuya ward, Tokyo on May 5, 1909 as the son of his father Nakajima Tabito and birth mother Chiyo, with whom he likely had no real relationship after his parents' divorce[3]. Atsushi's father Tabito was a scholar of Chinese classics, as was his grandfather Nakajima Keitarō, who had established a Chinese studies school of his own and who went by the *nom de plume* Buzan[4]. Atsushi lived with his paternal grandparents in Saitama Prefecture until school age. His father remarried to Atsushi's first stepmother Katsu "before [his] fifth birthday in 1914, and in the wake of giving birth in 1923 to his half-sister Sumiko, Katsu died shortly after[5]. The following year, Tabito married Kō, Atsushi's second stepmother[6]. Tabito's teaching career caused the family to move several times within Japan (Nara Prefecture and Shizuoka Prefecture) and the colonies (Seoul/Keijō, Korea and Dalian/Dairen in the Kwantung Lease Territory in Manchuria). The lack of attachment to one locality and the tendency toward wandering and adventure is present throughout Nakajima's works; in a short segment in the *Gakuen* literary journal of Yokohama Girls' Higher School, which he later taught at, he states, "I don't understand the meaning of the word 'hometown,' or the people who use it"

[3] Nobuko Miyama Ochner. "Nakajima Atsushi: His Life and Work" (PhD diss., University of Hawaii, 1984), 9.
[4] Nobuko Miyama Ochner. "Nakajima Atsushi: His Life and Work" (PhD diss., University of Hawaii, 1984), 3.
[5] Ibid., 10.
[6] Ibid., 16.

(「故郷という言葉をもつ（と人々のいう）感じは一向わかりません。[7]」). Nakajima went to middle school in colonial Seoul from 1922 to 1925, and when his father took a teaching job in Dalian, Nakajima moved to Tokyo in 1926 to attend the prestigious First Higher School (Daiichi Kōtō Gakkō or Ichikō)[8].

Nakajima suffered with chronic lung disease throughout his life, and often bouts of asthma and pleurisy disrupted his day-to-day life. One such instance occurred between 1927 and 1928, when he was hospitalized after relapsing when he was visiting his family in Dalian during the summer[9]. However, he had a successful time at Ichikō, having published several short stories at the school's literary journal *Kōyūkai Zasshi* (School Friendship Association Magazine), and having graduated in the spring of 1930. After this, Nakajima attended Tokyo Imperial University from 1930 to 1933, where he majored in Japanese literature and wrote his bachelor's thesis on Tanbiha, the Japanese Aesthetic School[10]. It was at university where Nakajima also met his wife Hashimoto Taka, whom he would marry in either 1932 or 1933, despite protests on the part of both of their families[11]. The couple had three children: their eldest son Takeshi born in 1933[12], their daughter Masako who died only two days after her birth in 1937, and their second son Noboru who was born in 1940[13].

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[7] Nakajima Atsushi. "O-kunijiman." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū*. Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 364.
[8] Nobuko Miyama Ochner. "Nakajima Atsushi: His Life and Work" (PhD diss., University of Hawaii, 1984), 15.
[9] Ibid., 23.
[10] Nobuko Miyama Ochner. "Nakajima Atsushi: His Life and Work" (PhD diss., University of Hawaii, 1984), 29-31.
[11] Ibid., 37-38.
[12] Ibid., 38.
[13] Ibid., 59.

Nakajima Atsushi had an eight-year career as a teacher of Japanese and English at the Yokohama Girls' Higher School (Yokohama Joshi Kōtō Gakkō)[14]. During his teaching career, Nakajima also enrolled in graduate school at Tokyo Imperial University to study the literature of Mori Ōgai in 1933, but he quit the year after for unclear reasons[15]. After having garnered a favorable reputation as a teacher, he quit his position in 1940 after his health started to deteriorate[16]. Wanting to get time to focus on writing and also pursue his craving for adventure, Nakajima took up a stint working for the South Seas' Agency (Nanyōchō) as a textbook compiler in Palau, Micronesia, which was under Japanese colonial administration at the time[17]. Although his health worsened and he lived a solitary existence, Nakajima wrote a large number of works during this time, and in February 1942, he was published for the first time in an official literary journal – a feat that he learned only after returning to Japan the following month[18]. His poor health and the worsening tide of world war forced this return. While Nakajima was resolutely reticent to comment on politics, but he was extremely unenthusiastic about the Japanese Empire's war efforts. One day in December 1941, when there was issued an air-raid warning, his colleague frantically dug a shelter under the kitchen, while Nakajima sat calmly, reading. "I'll die with a book in my hand," he reportedly said[19]. From his return to Japan in March 1942 until his death in December, Nakajima continued to write prolifically and began to be published more. Although he was nominated for the 1942 Akutagawa Prize, neither of top-

[14] Ibid., 46-47.
[15] Ibid., 50.
[16] Ibid., 122-125.
[17] Ibid., 135-136.
[18] Nobuko Miyama Ochner. "Nakajima Atsushi: His Life and Work" (PhD diss., University of Hawaii, 1984), 191.
[19] Ibid., 180-181.

two finalists ended up winning that year's prize[20]. Following weeks of aggravated sickness, Nakajima passed away in his wife's arms the morning of December 4, 1942 at the young age of 33[21].

Most of Nakajima Atsushi's works were published posthumously. Chikuma Shobō published his collected works in 1949, and subsequently in 1976, 1993[22], and 2001. Among his various works, to this day Nakajima is best known for his China-based short story "Sangetsuki," the inclusion of which in most high school Japanese literature textbooks has marked Nakajima as occupying a small but firm position in the canon of modern Japanese literary canon. This project acknowledges the importance of "Sangetsuki" and Nakajima's other short works set in China, but offers balance to the study of Nakajima by looking into five works written while he was a high school student and one written while he was an undergraduate student. The following five stories were all published in the journal of Daiichi Kōtō Gakkō, *Kōyūkai Zasshi*: "The Girl from Shimoda" (下田の女, *Shimoda no onna*) in 1927, "Fight" (喧嘩, *Kenka*) in 1928, "A Life" (ある生活, *Aru seikatsu*) in 1928 as well, "A Policeman's Landscape" (巡査のいる風景, *Junsa no iru fūkei*) in 1929, and "A July Scene in D City (1)" (D 市七月叙景(一), *D-shi shichigatsu jokei (1)*) in 1930. Nakajima most likely wrote "By the Poolside" (プウルの傍で, *Pūru no soba de*) in 1932 while he was an undergraduate at Tokyo Imperial University, and the story was published posthumously in his collected works. This project looks at these stories – collectively and individually – as works informed by Nakajima's biography but not entrapped by it; as works that merit consideration because of, not in spite of, their youthful perspectives; and ultimately as

[20] Ibid., 210.
[21] Ibid., 219.
[22] This project uses the 1993 collected works for its source material.

dynamic sites that condonation and contestation of colonial narratives of space, identity, and body. The following section details this project's theoretical approach to allowing for complex and contradictory readings of these works, and elucidates its general findings.

**Theoretical Approach and General Findings**

The six aforementioned early works of Nakajima Atsushi undoubtedly express polysemous and at times contradictory sentiments. Part of the reason stems from the fact that for every act of reading a piece of literature, meaning has to be negotiated and re-negotiated based on the reader and the reader's context against the backdrop of the text. The crux of this project situates itself Roman Jakobson's speech act model, as well as the theoretical models of Mikhail Bakhtin and Homi Bhabha, as evidence for this dynamic understanding of reading. Jakobson's speech act model presents the speech act as a conglomeration of its functions:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | CONTEXT | |
| ADDRESSER | MESSAGE | ADDRESSEE |
| | CONTACT | |
| | CODE[23] | |

In *Linguistics and Poetics*, the essay in which this model arises, Jakobson strives to convince his readers of the interconnectivity of the so-called "formal" study of language and the "poetic" study of literature. Therefore, even though this model describes the speech act – which Jakobson sees as the basic unit of language – Jakobson goes on to address each of these linguistic functions as they occur in examples from literature, making the model a practical tool for this

[23] Roman Jakobson. "From *Linguistics and Poetics*." *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch. (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001), 1261.

project. As for the linguistic functions in Nakajima's works, the addresser is the author, Nakajima himself; the message is his literary works; the addressee is an infinitely open category, including Nakajima himself as well as the many readers who have encountered his works or will encounter them in the future; the context is similarly complex, including the physical and theoretical setting in which Nakajima wrote his early works (Japan from the years 1927 to 1932) and the physical and theoretical points of view from which the readers approach his work (for myself, the United States and Japan from 2017 to 2019); the code includes the functional understanding of Nakajima's use of the Japanese language, and in the case of readers of the translations, that of my use of the English language; and the contact includes the physical or digital pages in which I or other readers encounter the works, as well as the "psychological connection" from author to text to reader. Although some of these factors are static (e.g. Nakajima will always be the author of the texts), many of them are subject to change, and with different factors at play, meaning will be negotiated in different ways every time. Therefore, as much as I acknowledge that this thesis project is a product of one student's inquiry at one particular institution at one point in time, I also stand behind the textual analyses that populate the chapters herein – as they are conclusions that have arisen as a result of reading, translating, negotiating with, and wrestling with the texts.

Mikhail Bakhtin and Homi Bhabha, for their parts, respectively offer the concepts of dialogization and hybridity as complicating factors in Jakobson's speech act model of language. Bakhtin especially looks at the modern prose novel as his principal subject, and makes the following claims about such prosaic writings:

> Style organically contains within itself indices that reach outside itself, a correspondence of its own elements and the elements of an alien context. The internal politics of style (how the elements are put together) is determined by its external politics (its relationship

> to alien discourse). Discourse lives, as it were, on the boundary between its own context and another, alien, context[24].

Discourse's "reach[ing] outside [of] itself" is characteristic of what Bakhtin calls the dialogization of prose writing. While Jakobson talks about context in terms of what it *references*, Bakhtin describes the complex constitution of a single context as well as its complex relationship to other contexts. Nakajima's works on the one hand situate him in relation to the *bundan* or Japanese literary establishment (although this relation was largely one of striving towards inclusion rather than situating himself within it). On the other hand, they also situate him within the context of the Gaichi, or Japanese colonial territories, where they define him as a disconnected Japanese settler, distant from both his homeland and from the traditions of the colonized people among whom he lived. Take, for instance, "A Life," which tells the lonely story of Masaki, a Japanese settler in northern Manchuria. While Masaki physically occupies the space of a desolate city in the winter time, the text "reach[es] outside [of] itself" by referencing Japan, the homeland Masaki yearns to return to, and Russia, the otherized culture that he yearns to understand vis-à-vis Sofia, Masaki's only real human contact in the story. Bhabha, in discussing the concept of hybridity in (post)colonial contexts, goes even further than Bakhtin in allowing for complex understanding of a story's context:

> The pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in itself' be conscious. What this unconscious relation introduces is an ambivalence in the act of interpretation…

[24] Mikhail Bakhtin. "From *Discourse in the Novel.*" *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch. (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001), 1209.

> It is only when we understand that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation, that we begin to understand why we resort to empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity[25].

From Bhabha's point of view, context, working without the explicit consciousness of language-users, connects the speech act to "performative and institutional strateg[ies]" of larger structures. A speaker can explicitly utter a speech act that marks them as resisting the structure, but because of the unfathomably large corpus of linguistic data in which all language-users are saturated, certain words or grammatical constructions or allusions trap the speech act within the context of the same structure. For Nakajima, the contexts of modernity, colonialism, empire, literature, academia, chronic illness situate his works. Readers may encounter his works in the twenty-first century in a country outside of Japan, but nothing will ever fully extricate them from their original structural and historical contexts. As such, instances of resistance to and contestation of hegemonic colonial narratives emanating from Japan's imperial government of the early- to mid-Shōwa Period must be read with Bhabha's notion of hybridity in mind – that is to say, must be read acknowledging that such contestations will always situate themselves within a larger structure of condonation. Similarly, instances of condonation of the structure may also exist within an ideological structure that craves sympathy with the oppressed. For example, in "A Policeman's Landscape," Nakajima presents a Seoul scene of an older Japanese settler woman arguing with a young Korean male student on the train, wherein the woman defends her calling the young man a "*yeobo*" – an insulting term used toward Koreans during the Japanese colonial regime. Here, the *text* clearly lends sympathy and credibility toward the young man, a victim of casual racism, but the larger *con*-text still inscribes the young man within this inequitable

[25] Homi K. Bhabha. "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences." *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader.* Bill Ashcroft et al., eds. (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 208.

colonial system, subject to beratement in the colonizing language. Similarly, the text of "A Policeman's Landscape" presents the main protagonist, who experiences many racist encounters, as a figure to whom the author and reader should feel sympathy toward. However, within this inescapable context of colonial inequity, one can read sympathy as a form of condescension. These are just some examples of hybridity between condonation and contestation in the texts, and the body of the project will provide a much closer look at the hybridity of condonation and contestation in the texts – particularly as it pertains to colonial narratives of colonial space, gender and ethnic identity, and illness and the body.

The chapters that make up the body of this project will not necessarily cite these theorists explicitly. Rather, the use of the theoretical outlooks of Jakobson, Bakhtin, and Bhabha underpin this project's understanding of these six early works, and will serve to explicate instances of dynamism, dialogue, and hybridity as such notions pertain to the political positions of collusion and resistance to hegemonic narratives. Further, each chapter will use other separate theoretical tools in order to explain the way in which the texts dialogue with the colonial narratives of space and landscape, of gender and ethnic identity, and of illness and the body. Chapter One's use of theories (for example, that found in Karatani Kōjin's "The Discovery of Landscape") traces the subjective constructions of modern Japanese space and then applies his work to the colonial setting. The tension between subjective reality and objective intent consequently informs the tension between condonation and contestation of colonial narratives of space, landscape, geography, and urbanity. Chapter Two takes general theories of gendered and ethnicized colonial hierarchy as important background information, and then takes theories of the male gaze and the "colonial gaze" as desirous scopic mechanisms that hold together such hierarchy. The chapter examines the ways in which the texts purport to be sympathetic to the plight of colonized peoples

and in which, by virtue of their construction vis-à-vis Japanese male settler desire and gaze, the texts fail to fully contest narratives of gendered and ethnicized inequities. Chapter Three looks at discourses of hegemonic narratives that required a certain kind of "healthy" male settler body in order to expand and develop a "strong" modern nation. The chapter examines passages that complicate such narratives by presenting sick settler characters but that still collude with narratives of colonial modernity by privileging the subject position of Japanese male settlers over characters of all other gendered and ethnic identities.

Nakajima famously wrote in his essay "Under the Screw Pine" (章魚木の下で, *Takonoki no shita de*), "War is war, literature is literature[26]" (「戦争は戦争、文学は文学」). Nakajima may have scrupulously tried to separate his literature from dialogue with the political situations around them, but this project challenges this simplistic and untenable notion of authorial self-isolation. Ultimately, the project aims to show that by looking at these texts as dynamic spaces of multiple linguistic functions, inter-contextual dialogue, and cultural hybridity, one has a fuller and more truthful idea of Nakajima and his texts.

[26] Nakajima Atsushi. "Takonoki no shita de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 126.

## CHAPTER ONE: Condoning and Contesting Hegemonic Narratives of Colonial Space

### Introduction and Aims

The story of colonialism can be told as a story of space – this is to say, a historical process in which a foreign power dominates a sovereign political entity by means of invading, militarizing, regulating, segregating, developing, and inhabiting physical space. The processes in which Japan achieved the *de jure* and *de facto* colonization of Korea and Manchuria were quite different, the former having been annexed as a formal colony and the latter having been gradually turned into a puppet state of the Empire. Consequently, Nakajima Atsushi's representation of these colonized landscapes in his early works manifest in different ways – the Korea-based stories reflecting a more entrenched system of Japanese hegemony in Seoul, and the Manchuria-based stories reflecting Japanese desire for a not-yet-conceived colonization. As such, the focus of this chapter is bifurcated. This separate consideration of the spaces of Korea and Manchuria will allow for a more productive analysis of the ways in which Nakajima represents them.

To aid in the analysis of Nakajima's treatment of the colonial spaces of Korea and Manchuria in a selection of his early works, I will discuss some historical modes in which Japanese literature engaged with landscape and space that carried over into – and transformed with – the modern era. Then, I will move onto my theoretical framework for analyzing colonial space in the modern Japanese context. Finally, I will discuss the ways in which Nakajima presents the spaces of Korea and Manchuria in his early stories, providing historical background on the colonial narratives and spatial frameworks that permeate each of the two contexts.

**Duplicitous Landscapes: Uncovering the Subjective Constructions of Space in Modern and Colonial Japanese Literature**

Albeit banal to say, literary practices around the globe have always (re)presented landscape and space, with human experience within space, and the multifold interactions between human and environment. This world experience is inevitably informed by the inhabitation of physical space – even representations of extraterrestrial settings extrapolate from an author's knowledge of earthly space. Pre-modern Japanese writers, for their part, had many methods of conceptualizing and representing space, and during the Meiji Period, these methods transformed and became solidified as bounded literary forms.

One primary mode of Japanese artistic engagement with space is *jokeibun* (叙景文), which could be translated as something like scene-depicting literature. Combining aspects of lyrical writing (*jojōbun* 叙情文), which conveys human emotions, and descriptive writing (*kijitsubun* 記実文), which focuses on factual representation of reality, *jokeibun* focuses on the objective portrayal of landscape and emotion rather than on purely subjective experience[27]. According to Fujimura 1950, a perfect example of *jokeibun* is the poem "Takeshima" (武島) by Shimazaki Tōson (島崎藤村). I present the poem and its translation below:

> 利根川のほとりに出づれば、楊柳の花さき満ちたり。高き岸にのぼりて眺るに、遠き山々、近き村々、いづれも一眸のうちにをさまりて、携へ來りし雙眼鏡に入る桃の花のけしき得もいはれず。蠶養川は小貝川とも書けり。流れて利根にはいるほとりは、左には戸田井の柳もえ出でたるを見渡し、右に羽村の漁家を眺め、菜の花水に映りて、物洗ふ女のさまも風情を添へたり[28]。

[27] Fujimura Tsukuru 藤村作, ed., *Nihon Bungaku Daijiten* [Great Dictionary of Japanese Literature], Vol. 4, (Tōkyō: Shinchōsha, 1950), 102.
[28] Shimazaki Tōson, quoted in Fujimura Tsukuru 藤村作, ed., *Nihon Bungaku Daijiten* [Great Dictionary of Japanese Literature], Vol. 4, (Tōkyō: Shinchōsha, 1950), 102.

> On the banks of the Tone River, willow flowers abound. I climb up the tall bank and look down at the faraway mountains, the nearby villages. Everything fits into the unbroken view of the binoculars I have brought with me – needless to say, the landscape of peach blossoms too. The Kogai River, written as Silkworm-Raising River, is rendered as Little-Seashell River as well. The Tone River flows on, and I gaze over at the willows of Totai on its left-hand bank. Over in Hamura, I watch fishermen at work; with light reflecting off the grasses' dew, women washing their things also fall into view. [translation mine]

Shimazaki, a modern poet and novelist who lived from 1872 to 1943, was known for the new style poetry known as *shintaishi* (新体詩), which arose in the Meiji Period and incorporated structural elements from Western poetry. Avoiding direct mention of the subject figure, "Takeshima" blends the beauty of lyrical verse together with a seemingly objective representation of landscape. The scene is laid out rather matter-of-factly (e.g. willow trees stand on the left side of the river, while men and women engaged in their daily work over in Hamura); beauty, admiration, and other subjective experiences are written to be evoked from the reader rather than represented explicitly in the poem. The narrator's binoculars also purports to contribute to this sense of objectivity: "[E]verything fits into [their] unbroken view." The view of the landscape is unbroken – that is, without the clunky mediation of emotions and metaphorical language. However, the image of the binoculars also underlines the major paradox of modernity that Karatani Kōjin explores: that "objective" landscapes, made of up coordinates and formal visual qualities such as color and shape, are necessarily products created by one particular *subjective* viewpoint (in "Takeshima," this viewpoint is the binoculars).

Another important mode in which Japanese littérateurs have engaged with landscape is through the literary form of *shaseibun* (写生文), which later came to be known as *suketchi* (from the English "sketch") or *dessan* (from the French "dessin"). Originally used in discourse on Chinese painting or *kaiga* (絵画), the term *shasei* was eventually appropriated in the Meiji era to

describe a prosaic literary form that aimed to portrays landscapes and scenes exactly as they are. Although *jokeibun* and *shaseibun* appear somewhat difficult to distinguish from one another, *Shinchōsha Nihon Bungaku Jiten* considers *shaseibun* to be a subset of the former.

Karatani Kōjin describes this process of Meiji Japanese writers' cooptation of the art-centered theoretical category of *shasei* in his essay "The Discovery of Landscape[29]," particularly attributing it to the modern *tanka* poet and novelist Masaoka Shiki[30]. "Going out into nature with notebooks," Karatani tells us, Masaoka would "mak[e] 'sketches' which were actually haiku poems." These *shasei* poems were "monotonously realistic[31]," but they (along with modern Japanese literature as a whole are striking in their tendency) invert the premodern Japanese mode of spatial perspective, which is at its core "transcendental." Whereas the transcendental mode of premodern aesthetics concerned itself with depicting the *concept* of an artistic subject, the modern mode of sketching aimed to represent an *actual* object as it appears in the artist's field of vision. Additionally, the "modern visual sensibility" relies on position – that is to say, on "the totality of what can be apprehended by a single person with a fixed point of vision[32]." Because of this shift in perspective towards one individual who meticulously maps out a given landscape as if it consists of various points on a grid, Karatani argues that the individual modern writer presents their *jokeibun* or *shaseibun* as a "discovery of landscape." Only an "inner man," who is

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[29] Karatani Kōjin, "The Discovery of Landscape," *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. Brett de Bary (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 26.
[30] Besides the modern *tanka* poetry of Masaoka Shiki, other classic literary examples of *shaseibun* include Shimazaki Tōson's "Chikumagawa 千曲川" as well as Kunikida Doppo's "Musashino 武蔵野."
[31] Ibid., "The Discovery of Landscape," *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. Brett de Bary (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 26.
[32] Usami Keiji, qtd. in Karatani Kōjin, "The Discovery of Landscape," *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. Brett de Bary (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 20-21.

deeply aware of his own positionality and "appears to be indifferent to his external surroundings," is able to produce this allegedly objective discovery[33]. But it is crucial to note that this relational dialectic between viewer and viewed, embraced by modern writers within the literary forms of *jokeibun* and *shaseibun*, presents a false sense of objectivity. Landscape, contained within the limiting bounds of three-dimensional perspective, is at the mercy of its viewer, who now wields a considerable amount of power in presenting their particular perspective, which naturally contains exaggerations of some features and subjugations of others. Karatani cites critic Etō Jun, saying that far from presenting an objective description (*byōsha*) of a thing, Meiji writers were in the business of *producing* the thing itself[34]. Accepting this knowledge of description-as-production, this paper therefore considers Nakajima's protagonists not merely as mediators but also as producers.

Combined with the inequitable and violent context of colonialism, the agency of the writer or narrator to "produce" a colonized landscape becomes all the more critical to consider. Given that Meiji writers created a discursive environment in which they dubiously aimed to provide objective descriptions of the spaces they encountered, these writers had a much greater potential to harmfully construct images and scenes of landscapes which were not their own. Sara Mills, in her monograph *Gender and Colonial Space*, acknowledges the ways that space is socially constructed and furthers Karatani's admonition that scholars question the objectivity of any spatial representation. "[S]pace," Mills writes, "is a question of relations: perceptions of and actual relations between the individual, the group, institutions and architecture, with forces being

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[33] Karatani Kōjin, "The Discovery of Landscape," *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. Brett de Bary (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 25.
[34] Karatani Kōjin, "The Discovery of Landscape," *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. Brett de Bary (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993) [Ibid.?], 30-31.

perceived as restricting or enabling movement or access[35]." Gregory and Urry push this point further, asserting that "[s]patial structure is now seen not merely as an arena in which social life unfolds, but rather as a medium through which social relations are produced and reproduced[36]." As such, one can never accept that the modern presentation of objective landscape at face value, but rather must contend with the various social bodies that populate the space, whose *subjective* experience produces it.

Keeping Karatani's and Mills' focus on the subjective constructions of modern and colonial landscapes in mind, it is also useful to look at Martin Jay's concept of scopic regimes. Jay by and large concurs with Karatani's and Mills' suppositions, stating that modernity "radically differe[d] from what had preceded it, at least in terms of the domination of representational enframing and the primacy of the subject over the object[37]." Nevertheless, Jay asserts that these subject-privileging scopic regimes are *not* totalizing. In fact, Jay originally created the concept of scopic regimes in order to "pluralize [Heidegger's] monolithic argument" about "one dominant visual culture" defining the modern era[38]. With this argument of "multiple competing scopic regimes[39]," this project rejects an analysis of Nakajima's viewing subjects as either evil and distorting or benevolent and truthful. Rather, because all Nakajima's literary characters exist within complicated layers of discourse – discourse that may include support for

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[35] Sara Mills, *Gender and Colonial Space*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 23.
[36] Derek Gregory and John Urry, qtd. in Sara Mills, *Gender and Colonial Space*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 24.
[37] Martin Jay. *Essays from the Edge: Parerga and Paralipomena*. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 54.
[38] Ibid., 55.
[39] Ibid., 62.

or suspicion of the Japanese colonial regime – it is important to recognize their various methods of and purposes for the act of viewing.

This chapter concerns itself with four of Nakajima's early short stories that take place in colonial settings: "By the Poolside [Pūru no soba de]," "A Life [Aru Seikatsu]," "A July Scene in D City (1) [D-shi shichigatsu jokei (1)]," and "A Policeman's Landscape: A Sketch of 1923 [Junsa no iru fūkei: 1923-nen no hitotsu no suketchi]." Notably, "A July Scene in D City" and "A Policeman's Landscape" use the terms *jokeibun* and *shaseibun*; while this usage by no means implies an unquestionable relationship between the stories and the abovementioned early-Meiji genres, the dialogic nature of discourse suggests that these titles are informed and influenced by them. Despite the duplicitous backdrop of objectivity lent from these generic traditions, this chapter illustrates how the subjective positionalities of Nakajima's protagonists and characters, settler and indigenous alike, shape the space around them and produce complicated or problematic political representations thereof.

**Complicating Nakajima's Textual Constructions of Keijō/Seoul**

Two of the four aforementioned works – "By the Poolside," and "A Policeman's Landscape: A Sketch of 1923" – take place, entirely or partially, in colonial Korea, over which the Japanese Empire gained basic control as a protectorate in the wake of the First Sino-Japanese War from 1895 and as an officially annexed colony from 1910, ruling until Japan's defeat in World War II in 1945. The former is a longer work told from the point of view of a Japanese male settler, who reflects upon his past and present in Keijō (from here on out, colonial Seoul or

simply Seoul) and its diverse landscapes and spaces. "A Policeman's Landscape" is a slightly shorter work, whose "sketch" is drawn from the perspective of a Korean man who works as a policeman within the colonized space of Japanese-occupied Seoul. Within the colonial system, privileged identities tend not to be explicitly marked, and those with such identities (in this case, able-bodied Japanese settler men) tend to be presented as mediators of objective truth. On the other hand, subaltern identities, such as those of Korean men, tend to be explicitly marked, and the objectivity of their experiences comes into question within the system of Japanese colonial hegemony. Although Nakajima necessarily participates in this unequal system of marked and unmarked identities, the stark difference in perspective among these two pieces subverts Meiji writers' idealized notion that *jokeibun* and *shaseibun* could be written in a kind of empirical or objective fashion. In this way, Nakajima may already be challenging Japanese colonial narratives of Korea simply by putting forth multiple perspectives and truths about the same space.

Although "By the Poolside" was published after Nakajima's death, the short story was likely written in 1932, as a manuscript of the work contains a crossed-out reference to the summer Olympics that took place that year. Compared to many of his other works, "By the Poolside" reflects many more aspects of his biography[40] and presents a wide array of landscapes, making it an especially rich work in which to analyze instances of space. It tells the story of Sanzō, a twenty-something Japanese man who, coming back from travels in Manchuria, returns to the middle school in colonial Seoul he once attended eight years ago. Essentially a plotless short story, "By the Poolside" finds its strength in its vivid description of Sanzō's present surroundings and memories of his youthful adventures, showing the reader his field trip in

[40] Nakajima Atsushi. "Kaidai." In *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 482.

Manchuria, his trip to a Korean brothel, his struggle with family dynamics, and so much more. Because Sanzō's third-person narrative alternates between recounting the past and the present over a dozen times, it is a work that especially lends itself to analysis via the literary device of memory.

Because memory is such an important literary device in this piece, analyzing the function of space alone is insufficient. As such, I look to Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope to account for the representations of intermingled space and time. He writes:

> In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history.[41]

Understanding Bakhtin's chronotope as a unit of literary analysis on its own, the Seoul of eight years ago diverges from the Seoul of today; likewise, the Fengtian[42] of Sanzō's middle school years becomes an entirely separate chronotope from the Fengtian of the day before yesterday. It seems obvious that through the invasion, disruption, segregation, and regulation of land, colonialism inherently produces transformation. However, Sanzō's narration creates a spatiotemporal juxtaposition that reveals how little has changed from one colonial chronotope to the other. Nakajima's narrative production of colonial landscape reveals the colonial power's desire to preserve the new spatial order for as long as possible – to hold its inhabitants (including

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[41] Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays.* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 84-85.

[42] Fengtian was the Chinese rendering of the Manchu name (Mukden) for this city. The name Mukden was used not only by Manchu speakers but also by the English-speaking world in the 1930s. Nakajima's writes the name with the Chinese characters that correspond to Fengtian, but to Japanese readers it would have been pronounced as Hōten. The city is known today as Shenyang.

both indigenous and settler) hostage to a kind of staticity that legitimizes perpetual colonial control. Soja 1984 succinctly lays out the colonial power's goals regarding space: "We must be insistently aware of how space can be made to hide consequences from us, how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life."[43] Nakajima's story, though not necessarily complicit with the colonial project, reflects this façade of static innocence.

Let us start our investigation into spatial representations in "By the Poolside" by looking at the titular pool itself. The narrator juxtaposes the two chronotopes that emerge from this singular space across time:

> 三造が此の中学校の生徒だった頃、そこは確か葱畑であった。教練を済ませて、鉄砲の油と革の交った匂をかぎながら、銃器庫の方へ帰って行くとき、彼はいつも、その場所に、細い青い葱が植わっているのを見たようであった。それが今はプウルになっている。ごく最近出来たものにちがいなかった。二十五米に十米の小さなプウルであった。周囲にはずっと丸い石が敷かれていた。水はあまり澄んでいなかった。コオスの浮標はみんな上げられて、石の上に長々と伸びていた[44]。
>
> When Sanzō was a student at the middle school, this area was just a field full of spring onions. It seemed that he would always see those thin green onions planted in the area after he finished up with drills, smelling like a mixture of gun lubricant and leather, going back toward the firearm safe. All that had now become a pool – surely quite a recent development. It was a small pool, ten by twenty-five meters. Along its perimeter, round pebbles lay strewn about. The water was not very clear. Buoys used for swimming classes were lined up, raised up and stretched out above the pebbles. [translation mine]

The first thing to note is that the pool is a new space constructed within the past eight years. Although it had still been subject to colonial control due to its containment within the settler school's boundaries, the space was an undeveloped "field full of spring onions." Eight years later

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[43] Soja 1984, cited in Sara Mills. *Gender and Colonial Space.* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), 25.
[44] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 271-272.

(or perhaps sometime earlier) the space is transformed into a utilitarian item to be filled with chemically sterilized water and the athletic, masculine bodies of adolescents who represent the colonial state's strong and promising future. However, despite functioning as a site of change and symbol of colonial progress, the pool brings up old feelings and memories for Sanzō and cannot be fully divorced from the patch that once existed within its ten-by-twenty-five perimeters. Within the memory-laden narrative, the field of spring onions is a point through which young Sanzō traveled between the place where compulsory military drills were held and the firearm safe. From his adolescence to his adulthood, Sanzō is described as "[l]acking physical strength"[45] and struggling with feelings of inadequacy with regard to his body image. In this scene where Sanzō first discovers the pool, he encounters a middle school boy who informs him that "water polo practice just ended" and that Sanzō should "feel free to swim."[46] Sanzō ends up agreeing to this suggestion and jumps in the pool, but he cannot help but feel "[e]mbarrased at his pallid, skinny body, compared with that of the middle schooler[47]." Therefore, both the past and present of the space where the pool now lies retain this power to shame Sanzō for his inability to present or construct a strong body, and therefore, the boundary between these two chronotopes blurs. Despite the verifiable passing of time, the text's blurring of chronotopes creates the illusion of staticity – that is to say, the illusion that colonial subjects (settlers included) cannot escape the ideological limitations and expectations placed on them

[45] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 296.
[46] Ibid. "Pūru no soba de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 272.
[47] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 271-272.

within colonial space. This concept of colonial staticity persists throughout the remainder of the story.

The school swimming pool, in which Sanzō wades and floats, also functions as a landing point to go from one memory, return to the present, then transport the reader to yet another memory. Though the narrator takes the reader between past and present spaces at least twelve times, here is but one instance in which the pool brings the reader back from the past and prepares them to enter yet another memory:

> 水の上に軽く浮いていた彼の気持を、回想が静かに快くゆすった。彼は眼をうすくあけて真上に拡る夕方の空を見た。少年の日の青空は、今見上げる空よりも、もっと匂やかな艶がありはしなかったか？　空気の中にも、もっと、華やかな軽い匂いがあったのではなかったか？　思出したように吹いてくる風は、時々、濡れた顔を心地よく撫でて行った。三造は、旅の疲れのものうさと、帰郷の心に似た情緒との交った甘ずっぱい気持で、長々と水の上に伸びをするのであった[48]。
>
> Floating lightly on top of the water, Sanzō's reminiscences quietly, pleasantly stirred his emotions. He lightly opened his eyes and saw the wide night sky. The blue sky from the days of his youth were, compared to the sky he was looking up at now, had more lustrous quality, didn't it? And the air somehow had a lighter, more gorgeous scent. The wind, just as he remembered it, would travel, gently caressing his wetted face. Sanzō, filled with the bittersweet emotions of a traveler's tired melancholy and the joy of returning home, stretched his body out long over the surface of the water. [translation mine]

Sanzō's action of physically floating across the surface of the water parallels the way in which memories of his youth (in this instance, pleasant ones in particular) float across his mind. The pool – and in turn, Seoul itself – is not only a past-present intermediary, but it also allows reflections on the past and imaginings of the future to coexist in the same space. The text tells us that Sanzō is simultaneously experiences "a traveler's tired melancholy and the joy of returning home." In other words, Sanzō's fatigue lingering on from his recent (i.e. past) travels through Manchuria coexists with his excitement at the prospect (i.e. future) of going back home to Japan.

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[48] Ibid. "Pūru no soba de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 282.

Sanzō' remembers the Seoul sky of his youth to be more "lustrous" and the air to have a "lighter, more gorgeous scent," thereby emphasizing the chasm between past and present, and presenting an exception to what I see as the short story's general tendency toward the collapse of chronotopic difference.

Beyond the pool and beyond the school walls, the narrator details Sanzō's and his friends' adolescent escapades through the urban spaces of Seoul:

> 午後の授業をなまけて、彼等は屡々活動小舎に行った…あくどい色彩の絵看板を仰いだりする気持が、少年らしい、かすかな冒険心をそそるのである。が、それにもまして、たまらなく彼の気持をそそり立てたのは、夜の街の灯であった。夜になって、街に灯がはいり出すと、どうにも彼はじっとしてはいられなかった。彼は顔の面皰を気にしながら、こっそりと継母の美顔水をつけたりして、ふらふらと街へ出て行った。何か空気の中に胸のふくらむものがはいってでもいるかのようであった。飾窓の装飾も、広告燈も、朝鮮人の夜店も、灯の光の下では、すべてが美しく見えた。そういう夜、若い女とすれちがった時の、甘い白粉の香は、少年の三造を途方もない空想に駆立てた[49]。
>
> In the afternoon, they'd skip out of class and head to the theater…Looking up at the movie posters, with their excessive colors, excited their subtle sense of youthful adventure. But more than that, what excited Sanzō beyond containment was the street lights at night. When night fell and the lamps lit up, he couldn't help but stare…There was something about the air that made him feel as if something were swelling up in his chest. The decorations in window displays, billboards, Korean night shops – under the light of the street lamps, everything looked beautiful. On nights like that, he would sometimes meet eyes with a young girl, and her scent, like sweet white powder, would spur on endless fantasies. [translation mine]

In this passage, the vivid and lively streets of Seoul are inextricably imbued with the buzzing excitement of Sanzō's subjectivity. Movie posters are not simply colorful advertisements but are stimuli that reflect and incite a sense of adventure in the protagonist and his friends. Streetlamps as well stray from their most basic function and become symbolic of the freedom Sanzō feels in his nighttime escapades; no longer a child who dares not venture out at night, middle-school-age

[49] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 281-282.

Sanzō is at the point where he can make his own decisions and forge his own path. As well as its symbolic power, the street lamps' literal power to illuminate the storefronts allows Sanzō to see and engage with the various commercial and social spaces of this urban Seoul neighborhood in the first place. The urban space in this narrative is also imbued with such a sense of subjectivity that it is even charged with bodily sensations. The narrator tells us that the air in the space makes Sanzō's chest experience a strange, soaring feeling. Within the same paragraph, the reader also learns that Sanzō becomes aware of his acne in the midst of his stumbling down the store-lined street and puts on some of his step-mother's lotion[50]. And of course, Sanzō has gone through his puberty at this point, and with his passing by a beautiful girl and noticing her scent, the space becomes undeniably charged with sexual energy. All three of these representations of space in terms of the physical sensations of excitement showcase the power of subjectivity in shaping (or even producing) landscape. As an adolescent Japanese male settler living in colonial Seoul, Sanzō experiences the exciting newness of sexuality and unsupervised escapades. But this typical adolescent excitement is compounded with the excitement of cultural "discovery." As Sanzō is usually stuck within the neatly bounded confines of his school and *naichijin-machi* (or settlers' neighborhood), the landscapes beyond these boundaries become an exotic cultural Other that promises adventure, discovery, and newness.

While the narrator's propensity to filter the landscape of urban Seoul with Sanzō's youthful, giddy subjectivity, some spatial representations in "By the Poolside" reveal a more insidious aspect of the colonial system. The text reveals that "[t]he campus stood on the foot of a Korean palace from former times," and that when students would sneak away to the movie

[50] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 282.

theater, they would "walk[…] around the old ivy-covered palace walls under the strong midday light of summer[51]." The school occupying the grounds of a Korean palace and undoubtedly standing as the most prominent structure in its vicinity, Nakajima details the palimpsestic[52] nature of the settlers' school and of the colonial project in general. In the invasion and settlement of space, the settler-colonial state ignores the political, social, religious, cultural, and economic values that such space holds for indigenous people and instead builds and curates its own developments according to its own needs and interests. In the penultimate paragraph of the short story, the narrator describes the spatiality of this place in detail, as Sanzō encounters it eight years later as an adult traveler:

> 日はすでに落ちて、旧ふらんす領事館と、その森の、黒い影絵がくっきりと黄色い空を染抜いていた。外の電車通りと運動場とを隔てる囲いには、昔の城壁が利用されていた。遠い運動場の隅の入口も、やはり、朱と黄とで塗った、古い朝鮮の宮殿の門であった。その門から朝鮮人が長い煙管をくわえながら、水桶をさげてはいって来た。門の内側に泉が湧いていて、彼等はその水を汲みに来るのであった。何年か前、夏の教練に疲れた三造は、よく其処の水を手ですくって飲んだものであった[53]。
>
> The sun had already fallen, and the black silhouette cast by the old French consulate and its surrounding forest had left the yellow sky yet unstained. Beyond this, ruins of a palace from olden times were used as an enclosure between the train tracks and the athletic field. Indeed, in the far corner of the sports ground was the door of the old Korean palace, lacquered in red and yellow. By the door, some Koreans, resting pipes in their mouths, were lowering pails of water. Behind the door a spring was gushing water; they had come to ladle it up. Many years before, tired from summer drills, Sanzō would often scoop up that water with his hands and drink. [translation mine]

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[51] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 281.
[52] Originally referring to ancient manuscripts whose base texts had been scraped off and which had new writing overlaying the old surface. From the Greek words "again scraped" (*palimpsestos*). Information from "palimpsest (n.)," *Online Etymological Dictionary*, 2001-2019.
[53] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 297.

The reference to the French consulate is not insignificant, as in the beginning of the story the narrator informs the reader that the red building "used to be the French consulate in the days of Korean sovereignty[54]." The building, along with the narrator's labeling of it as the "old French consulate," serve as a visual reminder of colonialism's transformation of the physical layout and sociopolitical utility of space. By textually undoing the space's purpose of representing the French government's official positions with Korea, Nakajima shows the Japanese Empire's desire to undo Korean sovereignty and (however successfully) stamp out geographical memories thereof. Further, adult-age Sanzō is visually reminded of the Korean palace ruins upon which his middle school was constructed. The palace's red and green lacquer recalls indigenous Korean aesthetics and contrasts with what one can assume to be the modern, Western-informed aesthetics of the Japanese settler middle school. This palimpsestic overlaying of a colonial structure upon native space found in "By the Poolside" makes one recall the Japanese colonial government's construction of Korea Shrine, a state-sponsored Shintō shrine, atop Namsam, the mountain which had historically "marked the southern edge of Hanyang, the former capital of the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392-1910)."[55] But despite the state's goals of assimilating Korean space into Japanese aesthetics and values, Koreans still populate the palace ruins in the text, they smoke, they fetch pails of water. Sanzō, always a passive observer, refuses to interact with them, and instead simply watches this slightly melancholy scene of displaced people holding on to pre-colonial tradition. Noting that he used to visit the ruined palace grounds in his middle school days, Sanzō's memories again project an image of timelessness across the chronotopes he

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[54] Ibid. "Pūru no soba de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 271.
[55] Todd Henry. *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945.* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014), 1.

invokes. Although everything (including indigenous landscapes) has already been changed to fit the needs of the colonial system's needs, the text creates a rhetorical system that aims to preserve its palimpsestic and inequitable landscapes and hold its subjects (both settler and indigenous) in a state of melancholic staticity in order to maintain control.

For its part, "A Policeman's Landscape: A Sketch of 1923" follows the story of a Korean male police officer named Cho Kyo-young, the focus on whom forces one to consider the ways in which landscape is presented differently than in "By the Poolside." One cannot consider the spaces presented in the text to be solely imbued with Korean subjectivity, values, and aesthetics. While I hesitate to overemphasize the importance of authorial intentions in literary analysis, it seems inescapable that Japanese authorship would combine with a Korean protagonist's subjectivity in complicated ways. Exhibiting wide-ranging inequalities that permeate the society of colonial Seoul as well as Kyo-young's life experiences, whether at work, at home, or on the street, "A Policeman's Landscape" can be vaguely characterized as a literary work attuned to and sympathetic toward the plight of colonized Koreans in the Japanese Empire. Despite Nakajima's insistently apolitical attitude toward literature, some of his early works such as "A Policeman's Landscape" displays what may perhaps be called a youthful resentment toward the sociopolitical status quo.

What is first most striking about the physical landscapes represented in the text is the bitter cold of winter. The story's first sentence says it most strikingly: "The frozen corpse of a cat clung like an oyster to the pavement."[56] A passage further within the narrative expands on this image:

[56] Nakajima Atsushi. "Junsa no iru fūkei: 1923-nen no hitotsu no suketchi." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 324.

一九二三年。冬が汚なく凍って居た。
凡てが汚なかった。そして汚ない儘に凍りついて居た。殊にＳ門外の横町ではそれが甚しかった。
支那人の阿片と蒜の匂い、朝鮮人の安煙草と唐辛子の交ったにおい、南京虫やしらみのつぶれたにおい、街上に捨てられた豚の臓腑と猫の生皮のにおい、それ等がその臭気を保ったまま、此のあたりに凍りついて了って居る様に見えた[57]。

1923. The street was frozen, filthy.
Everything was dirty. And everything dirty was frozen over. This was especially the case on the alleyways outside of S. Gate. The smell of Chinese opium and garlic, the smell of cheap Korean tobacco mixed with red chili powder, the smell of stomped-on bedbugs and lice, the smell of a pig's entrails and a cat's hide disposed of on the street – all of this looked frozen over, even while the stench remained intact.

If this short story is a "sketch of 1923," then this passage is a condensed version of such a sketch. The mingling of images in the passage – of rancid animal corpses and organs, of strong-smelling food and drugs – contributes to the harsh aesthetics that the narrator associates with urban colonial Seoul. Moreover, these textual images come together as one solidified mass, "frozen over" in the gruesome cold of winter. "A Policeman's Landscape" (like all of early works by Nakajima that I analyze in this project) is narrated in the third person, thus giving off a sense of objectivity. After all, the existence of frozen animal parts or of certain smells on the street should be incontrovertible regardless of the identity of the story's protagonist. In the above passage, this sentiment may be justifiable, but the text as a whole is indubitably infused with the subjective perspective of its Korean male protagonist, the harshness of winter and colonial urbanity compounding with the realities of racism and discrimination. The reader sees this subjectivity-laden landscape in a later scene after Kyo-young has learned that he has been fired from his position at the police station. Nakajima writes the following:

彼は慄然として首を縮めると、あわてて硝子越に街々の揺れる灯と、其中を泳ぐ雑沓とを眺めた。夕刊の鈴。自働車の警笛。凍った、鋪道に映る明るい灯。その

[57] Ibid. "Junsa no iru fūkei: 1923-nen no hitotsu no suketchi." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 331.

> 上を滑る毛皮の群。暗い町角に佇んだ赤鬚の担手、牛のついて居ない肥料車、塵埃車……[58]。
>
> Terrified, he [Kyo-young] bowed his head and, through the glass window, observed lamps lining the busy streets as well as the throng of people swimming about. The evening bell. The honking of cars. The bright lamps reflecting over the frozen pavement. Fur-shrouded folks gliding over top. On the dim streetcorner, a red-bearded worker loitering, manure plows without their bovines, garbage trucks…. [translation mine]

In the passage above, the narrator provides a very clear list of images (both sights and sounds) not unlike the so-called "objective" lines from *jokeibun* writers such at poet Shimazaki Tōson. The bell, the honking, the lamps, the pedestrians, the workers, the plows and the trucks are all points on the geometric grid of the modern colonial Korean metropolis. Nonetheless, we cannot ignore the position of the viewer, Kyo-young, within this spatial grid. The protagonist's sense of terror precedes – and in turn, colors – all of the images that follow it. No longer simply spatial coordinates on an objective plane, the scene's images become points between which the narrator's frantic eyes glance. The fragmented sentence style reflects Kyo-young's frenetic emotional experience, and thereby informs his choppy, non-committal visual experience of the Seoul street.

One particular scene in the story, which describes the many footprints that have trailed over one another in the icy walkway, points to the notion of cosmopolitanism as a major feature of Seoul's cityscape:

> 朝鮮人の船の様な木履。日本のお嬢さんのピカピカした草履。支那人の熊の足の様な毛靴。今にも転びそうな日本の書生の朴歯。磨き上げた朝鮮貴族学生の靴。元山から逃げて来た白色ロシヤ人の踵の高い赤靴。それから足も大分出かかった担手―荷物を背にのせて運搬する朝鮮人―のぼろ靴[59]。

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[58] Nakajima Atsushi. "Junsa no iru fūkei: 1923-nen no hitotsu no suketchi." In *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 328.
[59] Nakajima Atsushi. "Junsa no iru fūkei: 1923-nen no hitotsu no suketchi." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 331.

> A Korean's boat-like wooden sandals. A young Japanese girl's glittering *zori* sandals[60]. A Chinese man's fur slippers, like bear paws. The magnolia-wood sandals of a Japanese student, the kind who performs housework in exchange for room and board. An aristocratic Korean student's newly polished shoes. The red high heels of a white Russian who had escaped from Wonsan[61]. The tracks of ragged shoes, probably recently imprinted by a Korean laborer who was hauling materials over his shoulders. [translation mine]

In this passage, cosmopolitanism is manifested by the intercrossing of diverse cultural figures. The footprints inscribed in the ice function as signifiers for the social identities belonging to the people who produced them: an ordinary Korean, a well-to-do Japanese girl, a Chinese man, a working Japanese student, a young Korean of the now-defunct *yangban*[62] class, a Russian female immigrant, and a weary Korean laborer. Though these characters have likely never met one another before, they converge across time, their tracks overlaying one another's, in this one space. Although Nakajima explicitly notes the different socio-economic levels of these footprint-makers, in this multi-layered spatial "text" we do not see an organized hierarchy of gendered and ethnicized identities. We know that the colonial regime in Korea is one of extreme inequity, but in this particular space, Nakajima emphasizes the notion of *literal* common ground: despite their different social statuses, all of these people have no choice but to communicate with and coexist one another.

**Complicating Nakajima's Textual Constructions of Manchuria**

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[60] Flat thonged Japanese sandals made of rice straw, leather, or other materials

[61] Formerly known by the Russian name Port Lazarev and by the colonial Japanese name Gensan (元山, the same characters from which the Sino-Korean pronunciation arises), this town's port opened in 1880. The city lies on the eastern coast of current-day North Korea.

[62] *Yangban* was the ruling aristocratic class during Korea's Chosŏn Dynasty (1392-1897). The Japanese colonial government overthrew this traditional Korean class system.

While Korea had been a formally annexed colony for two decades by the time Nakajima got to writing "A Policeman's Landscape" and "By the Poolside," Japan's colonial authority encroached rather gradually into what it called Manmō – literally "Manchuria and Mongolia," which included a vast region of Northeast China as well as a portion of Chinese-administered Inner Mongolia. Russia had gained control over the region in the wake of the Boxer Uprising of 1899-1901, but in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, Japan then "obtained the lease on the Kwantung Peninsula and took over the Russian-built South Manchuria Railway as a trophy[63]." Over time, Japan's claim over the territory grew stronger as Japanese capitalist desire for control over the region and its resources also increased. In June 1928, the Kwantung Army (one of the largest and most important groups within the Imperial Japanese Army) carried out the Huanggutun Incident, wherein it assassinated the Manchurian warlord Zhang Zuolin when he refused to unconditionally cooperate with Japanese capitalistic demands[64]. This assassination caused a great deal of tension and apprehension of Japan's rule in Manchuria, as we shall see manifests clearly in "A July Scene in D City." Later, in September 1931, the Imperial Japanese Army staged a bomb attack on a train station near Fengtian (an event later known as the Mukden Incident or the Manchurian Incident), later found to be a pretext for the Japanese invasion of the region within the same year[65]. In 1932, Japan founded the puppet state of Manchukuo (Japanese: Manshūkoku, 満州国; Traditional Chinese: Mǎnzhōuguó, 滿洲國), which was founded on principles of Chinese traditional and the multicultural coexistence of five ethnic groups but was

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[63] Ying Xiong. *Representing Empire: Japanese Colonial Literature in Taiwan and Manchuria.* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 2.
[64] W.G. Beasley. *Japanese Imperialism 1894-1945.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 182-184.
[65] Peter Duus and John Whitney Hall. *The Cambridge History of Japan: The Twentieth Century.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 294.

governed under the *de facto* control of the Japanese Empire[66] [67]. While Manchukuo had likely not yet been formally established at the time of Nakajima's three Manchuria-themed stories' writing, this historical context of the gradual imperial expansion into this contested region sets the stage for the works and their spatial representations.

Nakajima's 1928 story "A Life" is one of the shortest of his early works, and as he was nineteen years old when he published it in volume 319 of his high school literary journal, the *Kōyūkai Zasshi*[68]. While the infamous Mukden Incident of 1931 had not yet transpired, Japan's South Manchuria Railway had already long been extending its control over the continental territory, and it is also possible that the Huanggutun Incident of 1928 had occurred by the time of the story's writing. The incident, in which the Japanese Kwantung Army assassinated Fengtian warlord Zhang Zuolin at Huanggutun Railway Station, incited political chaos in both China and Japan. Nevertheless, "A Life" does not focus on such broad political developments, rather focusing inward on protagonist Masaki's severe illness and on the relationship between Masaki and a Russian woman named Sofia (also called Sonya). The story takes place in an unnamed northern Manchurian city – most likely Harbin, considering a reference to the Sungari River (now called the Songhua River in Chinese). The landscape is frigid, vast, and lonesome. Observe the following passage from Part II of the text:

> ズンガリーの氷の上では、橇にのったロシヤ人の赤髭に氷柱がさがり、北満洲の冬わ次第に光った針金の様に、尖って行きました。夜毎彼の部屋の窓の下を、支那の少女が下手な胡弓を鳴らして過ぎて行きました。それを聞いて居ると彼にも矢張り、放浪の旅先で病気になった誰でもが感ずるたえがたい郷愁が襲い出しました。彼の眼の前に青白く日本の風物が浮かんでくるのでした。だが、自分のま

[66] Ying Xiong. *Representing Empire: Japanese Colonial Literature in Taiwan and Manchuria.* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 2.
[67] "Manchukuo." *Encyclopedia Brittanica.* brittanica.com/place/Manchukuo,
[68] "Kaidai." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 485.

> ぢかく迫った死に就いて考える時、故郷の幻影も忽ち打ちこわされて了うのでした[69]。
>
> Over the ice of the Sungari[70], a Russian rode a sled, his red beard drooping with pointed icicles, which shone like wire in the Northern Manchurian winter.
> Every night under his window, a Chinese girl clumsily plucked the *kokyū*[71]. Listening to the music, he felt the unbearable homesickness of a wanderer who had fallen ill in a foreign destination. Before his eyes, the landscapes of Japan pallidly floated by. But when he thought about his impending death, these phantoms of his homeland were crushed in an instant. [translation mine]

The Northern Manchurian winter landscape takes its shape through the images of an iced-over river, as well as the diverse bodies who populate the space. The marked identities of the ruddy-bearded Russian man and the amateur-musician Chinese girl take on an air of exoticism and remind Masaki that he is indeed far away from his archipelagic homeland. At another point in the text, Masaki's Russian love interest Sofia describes the girls walking around Chinatown as "[l]ike goldfish swimming in ice."[72] This image of the girls' separation from the viewer by a layer of ice mirrors the inapproachability of the abovementioned Russian man and Chinese girl and exacerbates Masaki's feeling of "unbearable homesickness." He physically sees the landscapes in front of him but cannot accept them or feel fully part of them; instead, his mind's eye sees "the landscapes of Japan" float past him. These hoped-for spaces are quickly revealed to be "phantoms," and Masaki once again is forced to face imminent death in a foreign land. The landscape is, as always in Nakajima's works, inseparably charged with affect and subjectivity. Masaki's despair in turn produces a desperate landscape.

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[69] Nakajima Atsushi. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū*. Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 287.
[70] The Sungari River, flowing between contemporary China's Jilin and Heilongjiang Provinces. Called the Songhua River in Chinese.
[71] Three- or four-stringed Japanese instrument
[72] Nakajima Atsushi. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū*. Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 286.

As in "A Life," in "By the Poolside" Nakajima presents two scenes revealing space in northern Manchuria, namely the city of Fengtian. The first is the Sanzō's and his schoolmates' fieldtrip to Fengtian eight years prior – if we consider the year of writing to be the story's "present," then this fieldtrip scene would have taken place around 1924. Very likely, this scene mirrors Nakajima's own personal experience going on a fieldtrip to Fengtian with his middle school classmates in 1925[73]. At the beginning of the story, Sanzō has arrived at his old middle school in Keijō, having taken a train from Fengtian the day before yesterday. Nakajima describes the station:

> 一昨日の真昼、奉天駅の待合室は堪えがたく暑かった。暑い空気の中を銀蠅がうるさく飛んでいた。桃の木の下に、前髪を垂れた支那美人の立っているビラを、十四五の露西亜少年が見上げていた。彼の髪は美しい金色で半ズボンの下から見える脛がすなおに細かった…三造と並んで、赤いワンピースを着け黒い地の透いた帽子をかぶった十六七の少女が一人腰掛けていた。支那の金持らしい老人と、中年のロシヤの女が、三造と向い合った椅子に並んでいた…そこの壁には「小心爾的東西」の紙がうす汚れていた。ピストルのケースをさげた日本の憲兵が時々入口から中をのぞきに来た[74]。
>
> At midday the day before yesterday, the waiting room at Fengtian Station was unbearably hot. Large silver-colored flies flew noisily about the hot air. A Russian youth of fourteen or fifteen was looking up at a poster of a beautiful Chinese woman with bangs standing under a peach tree. His hair was a beautiful golden, and beneath his shorts, one could see his meek and slender legs…Next to Sanzō, a girl of sixteen or seventeen, wearing a red one-piece and a black lace hat, sat down. Across from Sanzō sat an elderly wealthy-looking Chinese man and a middle-aged Russian woman…On the wall, a poster with the admonishment "Keep track of your things" written in Chinese was lightly sullied. From time to time, a Japanese military policeman holding a pistol case would come in from the entrance and peer into the room. [translation mine]

In later paragraphs, Nakajima portrays the Manchurian field trip Sanzō and his classmates took eight years ago:

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[73] Ochner, Nobuko Miyama. *Nakajima Atsushi: His Life and Work.* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1984), 18.
[74] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." In *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 273-274.

> その修学旅行は、中学生の彼等にとって、かなりな小遣いを持たせられて、家から離れて自由に振舞うことの出来た殆ど最初の機会であった…旅行のさきざきには、彼等にくらべて見て、ほんの僅かの自分達の優越を、彼等に対して、常に示したがっている先輩達がいた。彼等は後輩の少年達を連れて、料理屋や酒場を歩きまわった…そしてその下で、黒い褐色の鬚の中に大きなパイプを突込んだ、亡命の白系露西亜人らしい赫ら顔の爺さんが灰色の上衣を着て立っている。そういう異国的な酒場の風景が、中学生の三造にはたまらない魅力であった。彼なんかとは話もしないで、先輩ばかり相手にしているロシア女の、黒く太い植え睫毛や、緑色に深くとった眼のくまや、腋臭くさい肩から、むき出しになっている女の腕の、銀緑色の生毛などを、如何に少年らしい興奮を以て、彼は眺めたことであったろう…駅からすぐに拡っている郊外の野原がだだっぴろく、空はまだ明るかった。教師の吹く集合の笛が、がらんとした駅前の広場に悲しげに響いた[75]。
>
> For most of the students, that middle school field trip had been their first opportunity to hold onto a considerable sum of pocket money and behave freely, away from their parents…Throughout the trip's destinations, some of the upperclassmen were constantly trying to show off their superiority toward the underclassmen. They walked their younger classmates along to restaurants, bars…And under these [bottles] stood a ruddy-faced, grey-shirted grandpa who looked as if he were a Russian defector, a black pipe pressed between his brown-bearded lips. For middle-school-aged Sanzō, the kind of international landscape found at bars like this presented an irresistible charm. He didn't even need to say a word, watching the scene unfold with boyish excitement: the Russian girl the upperclassman was talking to, with her large black eyelashes, the corners of her deep green eyes, the body odor emanating from her shoulders, and the girl's naked arms, with her silvery peach fuzz…[Describing the students' departure] From the station, the fields in the surrounding suburbs were sprawling, the sky still bright. The teachers' whistles, commanding the students to gather up, echoed somberly in the nearly-empty plaza in front of the station. [translation mine]

In the passages above, Nakajima describes dynamic social spaces in Fengtian, whose multicultural settings evoke wonder in both adolescent and young-adult Sanzō. This sense of multicultural space is amplified by the narrow confines of the train station and the bar; at the train station in particular, the image of heat and flies intensifies the closeness of the travelers. While the train station scene is punctuated with a traveler's loneliness and the bar scene, with a sense of students' camaraderie, both spaces emphasize points of Sanzō's desire. Sanzō, though

[75] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." In *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 275-276.

having lived in colonial Seoul for quite some time, is seeing the colonial frontier of Manchuria, and its diverse configurations of gender and ethnicity, for the first time, and his subjectivity (unmarked, though unmistakably Japanese and male) takes center stage in this web of identity. Notably, Sanzō's desire always seems to be indirect: in the train station, he gazes lustfully at the Russian youth, who in turn is gazing at the poster of the Chinese woman; in the bar, he gazes at the Russian girl who engages with one of his upperclassmen.

Despite the seemingly loose organization of this space of social desire, in both chronotopes, symbols of Japanese control preside. The train station is periodically surveilled by a "Japanese military policeman holding a pistol case." The body of this policeman, accented with a symbol of martial might, summons the attention of all the travelers, reminding them who holds the reigns of power in this space. In the eight-year-old memory, the image of the Japanese teachers functions similarly. The schoolboys' experience of the chaotic bar and the vast, sprawling suburbs comes under control upon hearing their teachers' whistles. Not only do the policeman's gun case and the teachers' whistles command authority, but they also put a lid on the excitement and desire that well up within travelers and locals alike. The image of the Japanese military policeman in the later memory (compared to that of the school teachers from the earlier memory) echoes the contemporary political situation, in which Japan had become much more aggressive in its approach to the Manmō region, with the Mukden Incident – along with the ensuing invasion – having occurred the same year in which the piece was published. Given the contextual world in which the piece was written, the chronotope of Fengtian Station in Sanzō's memory of the day before yesterday is marked more with the context of colonial violence, coercion. Though both chronotopes should therefore be considered separately, according to the narrator, "the Fengtian [Sanzō] passed through the day before yesterday and the

Fengtian he visited on a field trip eight years ago when he was a student at the middle school become mixed up with one another."[76] The narrative reveals a breakdown in the boundary between memory and present. For Sanzō, the space of Manchuria has remained the same, despite its undeniable political changes: as a space of desire and wonder, as a playground for settlers and travelers, and as a place to remain under the wing of colonial aims.

If "By the Poolside" has the most diverse landscapes among Nakajima's early works, then "A July Scene in D City" (1930) is replete with the most diverse *perspectives* of landscape. Taking place in Southern Manchuria's D. City (what almost has to be Dalian, or Dairen as called then by the Japanese) and likely mirroring landscapes that Nakajima would have seen personally, the text is divided into three sections: the first told from the perspective of a wealthy Japanese director-general of a Manchuria-based railway company, the second from the perspective of a middle-class Japanese settler family who owns a home near the beach, and the third from the perspective of homeless Chinese coolies looking for work in the city.

While the perspectives of the middle-class settler family and the Chinese coolies rounds out the piece and makes "A July Scene in D City" one of Nakajima's most striking and multi-faceted literary pieces, for the sake of space I will focus on the first part of the text, which follows Mr. Y, who has relatively recently assumed the position of director-general of M Corporation. Mr. Y. is troubled by the way a local newspaper is covering a certain "big incident," which the Chikuma Shobō text connects to the Huanggutun Incident of 1928. This local criticism of the Japanese government, compounded with a reference to a Sino-Soviet conflict that has erupted near Pogranichny and also to the quick swearing-in of a new interior

[76] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 274.

minister, causes Mr. Y. to regard these matters as undermining his business endeavors. It is unclear which straw broke the camel's back, but the reader learns that Mr. Y has decided to resign, and consequently, Mr. Y's secretary has ghost-written a speech for his boss in order for him to make this announcement and reassure his employees amidst the administrative chaos. Some of the first lines of the letter read: "*Colleagues. In light of Japan's recent economic deadlock and social unrest, it is clear that the quickest solution is by means of the industrial development of Manchuria and Mongolia*[77]." M Corporation, mirroring the actual South Manchuria Railway that played such an integral part in the colonization of Manchuria, has already entrenched itself in this process of extraterritorial development. As he desires for his company to reduce its costs "by upwards of six million yen"[78] while still retaining its lofty long-term goals, Mr. Y lays out some methods for his successor to follow. One particular plan involves the acquisition of shale oil by means of coal liquefaction, Mr. Y therefore urging his employees to "*regard the coal mines of Fushun as Heaven's blessing of natural resources upon our nation.*"[79] Within Mr. Y's capitalist and colonial worldview, the vast regions of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, along with the natural resources housed therein, become reduced to spaces to invade, develop, and exploit for the benefit of the Japanese metropole and the Japanese settlers who partake in this exploitative process. These regions, therefore, become easily equated to solutions to economic crises experienced by the metropole. Mr. Y's extolment of these resource-rich landscapes as "Heaven's blessing" (天恵の資源, *tenkei no shigen*) aims to deflect from

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[77]Ibid. "D-shi shichigatsu jokei (1)." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 349.
[78] Nakajima Atsushi. "D-shi shichigatsu jokei (1)." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 350.
[79] Ibid. "D-shi shichigatsu jokei (1)." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 350.

these explicitly harmful capitalist and colonialist ideologies, but it instead further embeds the company's position within them. His view of Fushun, a non-Japanese space, as a divine gift to the Japanese nation reflects the entitlement and greed of colonialism and mirrors the religious justifications used in the colonial conquest of territory in other parts of the world See, for example, the view of 19th century Americans who promoted "the fulfillment of [their] manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of [their] yearly multiplying millions."[80] Religious power represents one of the strongest images within the popular imagination, and with the rise and development of state-sponsored Shintō in the modern period, Japan did not hesitate to make use of such images in its expansionary project[81]. Whether religious in nature or otherwise, Mr. Y's metaphor of "Heaven's blessing" shows his unhesitating willingness to capitalize on the power of such rhetoric.

Mr. Y's resignation speech draft, continues to propagate these colonial ideologies in even more spatial terms. Observe the following lines:

> 今や、中国は国民革命進行の途上にあり、ソヴィエット・ロシヤの国情も全く安定したとは謂うことが出来ません。この不安なる両国の間に介在する満蒙の地は恰も大戦前のバルカン半島の如くに国際平和に対する脅威の中心地帯をなすという過言ではないのであります。現に両国は、東支鉄道の問題を中心として、今や危なく干戈を交えんとしつつあります。吾々は帝国のため、世界平和のため、進んで此の地の治安秩序維持の責に任ぜねばなりません[82]。
>
> *[W]e cannot definitively say that China with the advance of its Nationalist Revolution and Soviet Russia with its ardent nationalism are in a completely stable state of affairs. Seeing as the regions of Manchuria and Mongolia are caught between these two unstable powers, if a great war were to break out, it is no exaggeration to say that this strip of land could become the new Balkan peninsula and threaten the order of international peace. Right now, there is the potential for dangerous outbreak of fighting centered on*

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[80] "Annexation." *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review.* Vol. 17. (New York: J.L. O'Sullivan and O.C. Gardiner, 1845), 5.
[81] Helen Hardacre. *Shintō and the State: 1868-1988.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).
[82] Nakajima Atsushi. "D-shi shichigatsu jokei (1)." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 351.

> *the Dongzhi Railway issue. For the sake of the empire, and for the sake of world peace, we must stand up and take responsibility for the order and security of this land.* [translation mine; use of italics due to this being a speech]

In this passage, Mr. Y lays out Manmō (the designation itself originating in the rhetoric of colonial desire) as a coordinate on a geopolitical map. This rhetorical map carries the weight of political events and pressures: China with its overthrow of the Qing in 1911, its anti-imperialist May Fourth Movement in 1919, and its burgeoning Nationalist-Communist conflict beginning in 1927; and the new communist Soviet Union, which had only formed eleven years prior to Nakajima's penning of the story. These nations, bustling with conflict, circumscribe Japan's "strip" of interest with borders and elicit fear for Japanese imperialist and financial interests. Reducing the land of Manmō to spatial coordinates on a map aligns with the modernist idea of viewing and describing landscape "objectively," but Mr. Y's political perspective that Japan's position in the region is ostensibly neutral and peace-oriented reveals what a farce such a notion of "objectivity" really is.

Finally, this section addresses Mr. Y's more immediate surroundings: a privately-owned park in D City, which will be sold and turned over to governmental administration. Mr. Y laments this situation as he observes the scene adjacent to the park from his office window:

> その鋪道を片隅には、半裸体の帽子さえかぶらない苦力の黄色く力の無い顔が二つ、ころがって居る。此の眩しい七月の日光の直射の下で、一人は、完全にくたくたに眠って居るらしい。もう一人は、しきりに蠅を払いながら、黄色く熟れすぎたまくわ瓜を嚙って居る[83]。
>
> In the street corner lay two half-naked coolies, not even wearing hats, their faces yellow with haggardness. One of them seemed to be full-on sleeping, exhausted under the direct rays of the intense July sunlight. The other was biting into a yellow, overripe melon, constantly swatting away flies. [translation mine]

[83] Nakajima Atsushi. "D-shi shichigatsu jokei (1)." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 353.

Disgusted, Mr. Y complains that "[h]owever many times you turn over land to the common people, it's going to become occupied by guys like that. A sleeping ground for all these coolies. Not a place for the common people at all."[84] Hiding his discrimination towards these homeless workers under the guise of caring for "the common people," Mr. Y exemplifies the social stratification of space in this southern Manchurian city. This not-so-implicit wish that homeless people and migrants exist out of sight of the "common people" reflects aspects of the Japanese colonial administration's social regulation of space on the basis on hygiene. Robert John Perrins describes Japan's history of investment in creating hygienic modernity in the city of Dalian as a process in which "two cities were being built.[85]" This is to say, while Japanese authorities poured large resources into building what American journalist R.O. Matheson in 1926 called a "clean, healthy, and up-to-date" city[86], the Chinese community of Dalian was forced "to live in the shanty town that had grown up south of the port's wharves, or in Xiaogangzi – the growing Western neighborhood between the SMR [South Manchuria Railway]'s workshop in Shahekou and the city's downtown core[87]." What is cruel and ironic about the situation presented in Nakajima's text, as well as in the historical records in general, is that Japan simultaneously desired to profit off of cheap labor from its colonized ethnic Others and to keep these Others out of the public sphere. This contradictory phenomenon leads to displacement of colonized laborers

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[84] Ibid. "D-shi shichigatsu jokei (1)." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 354.
[85] Robert John Perrins. "Doctors, Disease, and Development: Colonial Public Health in Southern Manchuria, 1905-1926." In *Building a Modern Japan: Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Meiji Era and Beyond*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 123.
[86] R.O. Matheson. In Robert John Perrins. "Doctors, Disease, and Development: Colonial Public Health in Southern Manchuria, 1905-1926." In *Building a Modern Japan: Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Meiji Era and Beyond*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 123.
[87] Robert John Perrins. "Doctors, Disease, and Development: Colonial Public Health in Southern Manchuria, 1905-1926." In *Building a Modern Japan: Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Meiji Era and Beyond*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 123.

and results in increased homelessness and social inequity, pronounced especially in "A July Scene in D City." Mr. Y's view of D City, while at once parading as objective and scientific, embodies modernity's various oppressive ideologies: colonial exploitation, capitalist desire for resources, and settler desire for hygienic and homogenous spaces.

**Conclusions**

Through this investigation into ideologies present in modern and colonial literature, this chapter has overturned the notion that writers, narrators, and characters are able to achieve an objective viewership of landscape. Rather, within the modernist framework, every landscape is sketched out from one particular perspective of one particular grid of coordinates. In the colonial context, this modernist notion of space becomes dangerous; if settler-colonial figures are able to reduce indigenous landscapes to one particular scene based on one particular viewpoint, it becomes easy to manipulate narratives of colonial space. Louis Althusser defines ideology as a "lived relation"[88] between people and the circumstances that surround them; therefore, Nakajima had no choice but to exist within the ideology of this modernist framework, in which settler-

[88] "So ideology is a matter of the *lived* relation between men and their world. This relation, that only appears as '*conscious*' on condition that it is *unconscious*, in the same way only seems to be simple on condition that it is complex, that it is not a simple relation but a relation between relations, a second degree relation. In ideology men do indeed express, not the relation between them and their conditions of existence, but *the way* they live the relation between them and their conditions of existence: this presupposes both a real relation and an '*imaginary*', '*lived*' relation. Ideology, then, is the expression of the relation between men and their 'world', that is, the (overdetermined) unity of the real relation and the imaginary relation between them and their real conditions of existence. In ideology the real relation is inevitably invested in the imaginary relation, a relation that *expresses* a *will* (conservative, conformist, reformist or revolutionary), a hope or a nostalgia, rather than describing a reality." Louis Althusser. *For Marx.* (New York: Verso, 1996), 233-234.

colonial subjectivities are privileged and indigenous subjectivities are either made invisible or marked as Other. Nevertheless, this is not to say that Nakajima definitively *condoned* colonial narratives in his work. Oppositely, his works are productive *spaces* themselves, in which different narratives and perspectives coexist, sometimes harmoniously, and more often boisterously. The textual representations of Seoul in "By the Poolside" and "A Policeman's Landscape" show the same urban landscapes through the lens of vastly different perspectives. Sanzō's experience of Seoul, while plagued with his own adolescent troubles, is largely one of carefree adventure: skipping class to go to the movie theater, strolling down the evening street with friends, scooping up water at the Korean palace ruins. Kyo-young's hardship moving through the Seoul winter landscape is compounded with his subjective experience with discrimination and racism in the police station and in public spaces. The narratives put forth in both of these works sometimes provide descriptions of the injustices of colonial life, and at other times provide descriptions of settler privileges. The coexistent representations of these diverse experiences allow for readers to have a multifaceted view of colonial space in Seoul: as a juxtaposition of memories, as a place of adolescent wonder, as a place of reprehensible racism, as a palimpsestic space with layer after layer of culture and oppression. Representations of Manchuria (or Manmō) in "A Life," in "By the Poolside," and in "A July Scene in D City" likewise reflect the diverse positionalities of their characters: isolated and privileged Japanese settler men, a Japanese company leader, a middle-class settler family, and Chinese coolies. And of course, the vast, sometimes harsh spaces of northern Manchuria (Harbin and Fengtian) clash quite explicitly with the warm, coastal spaces of southern Manchuria (Dalian). These various subjectivities and geographies combine to produce multiple statements about the colonial project: the melancholy of settler isolation, the nostalgia for the adventures of one's youth, the

greed of corporate leaders, the comforts of the Japanese middle class, and the injustices facing indigenous and migrant workers. By allowing his readers to enter into these various spaces, Nakajima complicates simplistic notions of colonial experience – whether from the perspective of settlers or natives – and provides a window into the nature of colonial subjectivities for future scholarly investigation.

## CHAPTER TWO: Condoning and Contesting Narratives of Gendered and Ethnicized Hierarchy

### Introduction and Aims

Whereas the previous chapter has investigated representations of colonial space and uncovered their multifaceted and subjective constructions, this chapter examines the people who populate these textual spaces and the gendered and ethnic identities that inform their characterization. First, this chapter details the nature of colonial hierarchy and illustrates the way in which these hierarchical social relations are reproduced and interconnected through the lens of Japanese heterosexual male desire. Then, this chapter closely examines textual constructions of desire and hierarchy in three of Nakajima's early works: "The Girl from Shimoda" (1927), "A Life" (1928), and "By the Poolside" (1932). While gender is inextricable from the three other short stories featured in this thesis project's analysis, the three aforementioned works most clearly illustrate the sort of gendered and ethnicized hierarchy prescribed by the Japanese colonial regime and mediated by the desirous gaze of Japanese male settler protagonists.

### Colonial Hierarchy and the Male Gaze in the Japanese Empire

Geraldine Moane states that societies in general are composed of hierarchical strata, "with the more favoured at the top and the less privileged nearer the bottom…Gender, class, and minority group status are of key importance in influencing position in the hierarchy and the possibility for mobility[89]." Talking specifically about the social dimensions of colonial space, Mary Louise Pratt illustrates a messier theory, calling colonial society "a contact zone [in which]

[89] Geraldine Moane. *Gender and Colonialism: A Psychological Analysis of Oppression and Liberation.* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 27.

disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination[90]." In such a complicated contact zone, gender and ethnicity (as well as sexuality; class; able-bodiedness; and status as either settler, native, or migrant) become of key importance in the composition of this social hierarchy. The Japanese Empire was a vast network of territories and gendered/ethnicized identities, and its social policies and realties differed depending on the territory and on the time period that one considers. By the time of Nakajima's penning of "By the Poolside" in 1932, the Empire stretched from the Naichi (Japan proper) to its formally annexed colonies in Okinawa, Hokkaido, Karafuto (South Sakhalin), Korea, Taiwan, and the South Pacific Mandate (which included various Micronesian islands and archipelagos). By this time, Japan had also taken control over the Kwantung Lease on the Liaodong Peninsula in Southern Manchuria, had *de facto* control over territory adjoining its Southern Manchuria Railway, and was either on the brink of declaring or had already declared the independence of its puppet state in the region, Manchukuo. Ethnic groups in these wide-ranging territories included ethnic Japanese, Koreans, Han Chinese, Taiwanese indigenous peoples, Taiwanese, Ryukyuans (or Uninaanchu), Ainu, Manchus, Mongolians, Russians, Micronesians, among others. While each of the abovementioned territories certainly differed from one another in many ways, social hierarchy played an important role in their colonial constructions, with Japanese male subjectivity "discovering," mediating, and constructing the diverse social landscapes therein.

Laura Mulvey coined the term "male gaze" to describe not only the portrayal of women in media but also the nature of lived gender relations in social settings. She writes:

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[90] Mary Louise Pratt, qtd. in Tamara L. Hunt. "Introduction." *Women and the Colonial Gaze*, eds. Tamara L. Hunt and Micheline R. Lessard. (New York: New York University, 2002), 2.

> In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female form which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness. Woman displayed as sexual object is the leit-motif of erotic spectacle: from pin-ups to striptease, from Ziegfeld to Busby Berkeley, she holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire.[91]

Although Mulvey originally uses the concept of the male gaze in film criticism, the social phenomenon of heterosexual male voyeurism's "project[ion] [of] its phantasy on to the female form" is pervasive in society at large as well as in all forms of media, not the least of which is literature. Tamara L. Hunt builds on Mulvey's theory and brings it to the colonial context, writing:

> When colonial powers considered their subject peoples, they often employed what could be called the colonial gaze: that is, they saw the colonies through eyes that were blurred by misinformation, misconceptions, and stereotypes...Because imperialistic nations typically have patriarchal social structures, the fact that women in subject lands often did not conform to the gender constructs of the dominant imperial culture was used to explain the 'uncivilized' nature of their society. Similarly, conquering countries often attributed 'feminine' characteristics to all subject peoples as a means of explaining characteristics that from the colonial point of view were unfamiliar and undesirable. This tends to throw into high relief the notion that the 'masculine' characteristics of the conquering nation are naturally dominant, thereby legitimizing colonial rule as a reflection of male superiority which was seen as 'natural' in society.[92]

Here, the male gaze, which dishonestly projects desired traits on its subjects, combines with the colonial gaze, which blurs its subjects "with misinformation, misconceptions, and stereotypes." The identities of ethnic Japaneseness, cisgender maleness, heterosexuality, and settler status combine to produce a power-laden viewership of feminized and colonized subjects. As discussed in Chapter One, the Japanese male settler subject is far from an objective mediator of truth, but rather *produces* new landscapes that appeal to his sensibilities and to those of his imagined

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[91] Laura Mulvey. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16, no.3 (1975), 11.
[92] Tamara L. Hunt. "Introduction." *Women and the Colonial Gaze*, eds. Tamara L. Hunt and Micheline R. Lessard. (New York: New York University, 2002), 1.

readership. This chapter brings this theme further and investigates how, within the colonial system that operates on the hierarchy of gendered and ethnicized identities, privileged viewers' *desire* represents and constructs portraits of subaltern subjects. Desire involves a sort of one-sided relationality – between the colonizer and the colonized, and between the viewer and the viewed. The colonial state projects its desires for land and its resources, and one way it fulfills these political desires is by populating the land in question with privileged settler bodies. In turn, settlers continue this process of desire and fulfillment by viewing colonized subjects, producing inaccurate and harmful images of them, and acting in accordance with such images. The following sections in this chapter delve into Nakajima's texts in order to scrutinize the hierarchical social landscapes, uncover the desire of privileged male protagonists for subaltern characters, and reveal how the texts defy simple categorizations of condonation and contestation of colonial narratives of gender and ethnicity.

**Looking for 'Womanhood' in the Naichi: Desire and Gender in "The Girl from Shimoda"**

Published in November 1927 in the *Kōyūkai Zasshi* literary journal at his Tokyo secondary school Daiichi Kōtō Gakkō, "The Girl from Shimoda" is Nakajima's first published work. It tells the story of a young male college student who escapes the heartbreak and hustle of Tokyo and looks for peace and romance in the small coastal town of Shimoda, on the Izu Peninsula in Shizuoka Prefecture[93]. This textual investigation of hierarchy and desire as it relates

[93] It should not go unsaid that Kawabata Yasunari, one of Japan's foremost modern writers and the 1968 recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature, also wrote a story about a young male Tokyo student who encounters a young girl on the Izu Peninsula. Published a year before Nakajima's debut work in 1926, "The Dancing Girl of Izu" (「伊豆の踊り子」 or "Izu no odoriko") surely must have had some kind of influence on Nakajima. Additionally, his own personal experience traveling to the Izu Peninsula in the spring of 1927 must have informed the writing of "The Girl from Shimoda."

to identity markers such as gender and ethnicity begins with "The Girl from Shimoda" precisely because it does not venture beyond the Naichi – in fact, it does much venture much more than a hundred kilometers from Tokyo. Further, the text itself is an investigation into gender, asking the most basic questions of what it means to be a man or a woman. Beginning with this story allows for the examination of the constructions and idealizations of gender in monoethnic Japanese contexts. From here, one will be able to more thoroughly inspect Japanese colonial configurations of subaltern ethnicized and gendered identities.

"The Girl from Shimoda" starts with its nameless protagonist's recounting of his failed love affair in Tokyo to a new acquaintance he makes in town, the titular girl from Shimoda. "I found love in the city," he says. He continues his story:

> コレラの細菌にも似た線香花火の様な恋をしたのです。けれども、其結果はあまりに無残なものとなって了いました。私はあんまり鈍かった。女はあまりに鋭かった。私はコックテールを十杯飲みたかったんです。女はそれよりウィスキーの一杯を望んだのでした。そうして、女は、私を知ってから十日目には、もう外の男の頸に腕を投げかけて居ました。しかも私は……ああ此の可哀想な私は……そうです。とうとう神経衰弱になって了ったんです。そして都会の皮膚のあまりの青白さにたえかねて－都会が時に赤く見えるのは、其の皮膚のせいではなく、全く、其の上に出来た赤い吹出物の為なのです－私は遂に逃げ出して、此の南の国に来たのです[94]。
>
> It was a love affair like sparklers shaped like cholera cells. In the end, it turned out to be a cruel thing. I was so dull; she was so sharp. I wanted to drink ten cocktails; she wanted a glass of whisky. By the tenth day after she met me, she was already throwing her arms around another man's head. And I was…pitiful ol' me was…well, I had a nervous breakdown. And I was unable to bear the excessive paleness of the city's skin. (By the way, the reason the city sometimes appeared red had nothing to do with that skin, but completely to do with the red pimples that appeared over top of it.) Finally, I escaped and came down to this southern country. [translation mine]

[94] Nakajima Atsushi. "Shimoda no onna." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 270.

In this passage, the protagonist blames the failure of his relationship in Tokyo on the irreconcilable contrasts between his ex-lover (represented in the text as *onna*) and himself (*watashi*): he deprecates his own character as "dull" and praises her as "sharp," and he juxtaposes his desire for palatable cocktails with her taste for plain, strong liquor. This contrast, and by extension the romantic failure to which it gives birth, sets up an overarching problematic upon which the story is based: *watashi*, here used as a signifier for an unmarked Japanese heterosexual male subjectivity, is entirely separate from *onna*, a signifier for Japanese womanhood in general. Further, because of this separateness, there is a fundamental lack of understanding between the two parties, manifesting primarily in the text as *watashi*'s misunderstanding of *onna.* In the protagonist's escape from the "city" (Tokyo) and his travels to "this southern country" (Shimoda), his hopes are twofold: either to learn the fundamental nature of "womanhood," or to find a different, more agreeable kind of womanhood. While I posit that the story is about *watashi*'s exploration of womanhood as a whole, the text indeed presents some striking contrasts between the atmosphere of Tokyo and Shimoda, perhaps most poetically through the metaphor of biological exterior surfaces. Whereas Tokyo's "skin" is negatively characterized by an "excessive paleness" and by "red pimples," the text's narrator describes Shimoda as having "air…like a hummingbird's feathers – light and sweet and ever so ticklish[95]." Further, when the protagonist meets this new girl in a café in Shimoda, the latter is portrayed as possessing "rich and swollen skin [that] exuded a tepid dampness, bathed in purple light[96]." The physical presentation of the town of Shimoda and this new acquaintance literally glows with the

[95] Nakajima Atsushi. "Shimoda no onna." *Nakajima Atushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 271.
[96] Ibid. "Shimoda no onna." *Nakajima Atushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 271.

protagonist's excitement. Japanese heterosexual male subjectivity sensualizes the landscape with color, texture, weight, and humidity. This sensualized view of landscape in turn leads to the protagonist's sensualized view of womanhood in "this southern country" and womanhood at large.

At the end of the abovementioned café encounter, *watashi* and the girl from Shimoda decide to become friends. She invites him to her house and relates to him two stories of male-female interaction. The first story deals with a male university student from Tokyo who, having taken leave from school due to illness, meets a local Shimoda girl. The pair walks along the beach one night, and after the girl derides the boy for being overly sentimental, she leaves him behind. She writes him a letter explaining her positionality:

> 此の国は暖かいんです。此の国の女は、冷たいつまらない『心と心の恋』より、『からだとからだの恋』の方が好きなんです。あなたは白い華奢な顔立をしておいでですね。だけど私は、それより太いたくましい腕に抱かれたいのです。はち切れそうな、しっかりした胸に顔を埋めたいのです。
> それに、あなたは大層センチメンタルだわね。けれども、私もっと男らしい強い人が好きなの。私感傷的な男大嫌い。気の利かない男大嫌い。そして恋愛は性慾以上のものだなんて言う人も大嫌いなの[97]。
>
> *This country is warm. Instead of cold love between heart and heart, girls in this country prefer love between body and body. Your features are white and delicate. But as for me, I want thick, burly arms to hold me. I want to bury my face in a man's chest so tight that I feel as if I'm going to burst.*
> *You, you're too sentimental. I like guys who are more manly and strong. I hate men who are overly sensitive, hate men who aren't tasteful. And on top of that, I hate people who say that love is more than just sexual desire.* [translation mine]

The young woman from this first story-within-a-story lays out her reasoning for rejecting the Tokyo university student. His sick, feeble body, combined with his overly sensitive disposition,

[97] Nakajima Atsushi. "Shimoda no onna." *Nakajima Atushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 275.

renders him undesirable and desexualized according to her standards. As the protagonist earlier sensualizes his view of the coastal landscape of Shimoda, here the woman similarly essentializes the "cold" nature of the Tokyo metropolis and the protagonist's desire for "cold love between heart and heart." The woman's desire for physical and sexual intimacy – embodied by the image of a man's "thick burly arms" and strong chest – contrasts with the man's apparently desire for emotional connection.

The girl from Shimoda's second story-within-a-story reveals a young woman whose actions and values are the complete opposite of those of the first story's sex-focused, romance-averse female character. The narrative involves a forty-something-year-old Tokyo businessman, whose "face wore a radiance that reeked of rotten beef[98]." The man visits a certain saké bar, and full of "tenacious desire for the flesh[99]," harasses and grabs at a woman sitting in the inner parlor of the bar. The woman strikes the man's hand and retaliates against his boorish behavior with the following statements:

> 私はくやしい。あなたの様な男が居る事は女性にとって一つの侮辱です。あなたは一体女を何と思っていらっしゃるんです。女は男の性慾を充す器械ではないのです。女には心があるんです。男の人の持ってるよりずっと綺麗な暖かい心があるんです。だからこそ、私は恋はして居てもあなたの様な汚らわしい人は知らなかったのです…そうです。あなたは、恋なんか御存じないでしょう。あなたの濁った眼や、汚れた脣は、あなたが恋を知らない事を物語って居ます。あなたは肉慾は知って居ても恋は知らないのだ[100]。
>
> *I'm pissed. Men like you are an affront to women. What the hell do you take women for? Women are not machines to fulfill men's sexual desires. Women have hearts. Hearts that are lovelier and warmer than the ones you men have. That's why when it comes to love,*

[98] Nakajima Atsushi. "Shimoda no onna." *Nakajima Atushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 276.
[99] Ibid. "Shimoda no onna." *Nakajima Atushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 277.
[100] Ibid. "Shimoda no onna." *Nakajima Atushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 277-278.

> *I'll have nothing to do with dirty men like you…That's right. You don't know anything about love. Your cloudy eyes and your filthy lips just tell how much you don't know about love. Even if you know about physical desire, you don't know about love.* [translation mine]

Unlike the first story's female character, this woman rejects this older man's sexually forward advances and desires. The character affirms that women are their own autonomous beings, as opposed to being "machines to fulfill men's sexual desires." Strikingly, this female bar patron asserts that her gender possesses "hearts that are lovelier and **warmer** than the ones…men have [emphasis mine]," diametrically contrasting with the previous story's woman's claim that "love between heart and heart" is something cold.

Later, the titular girl from Shimoda reveals that the women from the two stories are actually one and the same person: they are the girl from Shimoda herself. She tells the main-frame story's protagonist that "both of those stories were my own stories" and that "both of those men are still lingering around in town.[101]" The woman writes the protagonist a letter explaining the contrasting personalities from the above stories and requesting that he meet her the following day:

> ー私はあなたが好き。あなたは私に恋をしないから。併し私もあなたに恋なんかしない。恋なんて自分に対する最大の冒瀆なんだもの。昨日の話みんなほんとよ。だけど別に不思議はないでしょう。女だって別に一つの型に鋳込んで作られた物じゃないんですもの。時に依ってはそれは強くもなるわ。でも又時々は、私はやっぱり女だってしみじみ思う事もあるのよ。二重人格なんてむずかしい言葉は私は知らない。ただ私は時と場合でカメレオン見たいに色を変えるだけなの。あなたの目には私の色、何う見えて？赤？黒？青？緑？それとも白？まさか桃色に見えた事はないでしょうネ。でも、明日はその桃色に見せて上げるかもしれないから屹度いらっしゃい。朝の十時。S 公園迄よ[102]。

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[101] Nakajima Atsushi. "Shimoda no onna." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 279.
[102] Ibid. "Shimoda no onna." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 279.

> *I like you. Because you don't love me. And I don't love you either. Love is the greatest blasphemy in life. Yesterday's stories were both true. But then again, neither of them were too far-fetched. Because all women aren't just molded into the same shape. There are times when I feel really strong. But of course, there are times when I feel deeply that I'm just a woman. I don't know if it's split personality or if there's some difficult term for it. It's just, depending on the time and place, I'm like a chameleon, and I change my colors. To your eyes, what color am I? Red? Black? Blue? Green? Or white? I'm sure you didn't see me as peach-colored. But since I might show you my peach color, come meet me. Ten in the morning. At S Park.* [translation mine]

The girl from Shimoda reconciles the two contrasting stories she has shared by asserting that they are two sides of her own truthful subjectivity. A veritable chameleon, she can change her color depending on the situation. In the first story-within-a-story, the woman rejects the frail, emotion-driven man for want of physicality, and in the second, she rejects the malodorous, womanizing man for want of emotional connection. Of course, as the girl from Shimoda states above, "neither of [the stories are] too far-fetched." The first male love interest has little psychological confidence or physical assertiveness, and the second man of interest continually sexually harassed her. But ultimately, Nakajima juxtaposes these two stories in order to illustrate the complexity and duality of women. In the end, the story boils down to the statement the girl from Shimoda makes in her letter: "[A]ll women aren't just molded into the same shape. There are times when I feel really strong. But of course, there are times when I feel deeply that I'm just a woman." In his story, Nakajima emphasizes his somewhat progressive understanding that one must not reduce womanhood to one simplistic notion. Womanhood can be, and is indeed, represented in literature through the lens of heterosexual male desire, but such representation ends up being irreducibly complex. Of course, one must also acknowledge the fact that although Nakajima affords a great deal of complexity to this Japanese female character, he does not necessarily follow suit when it comes to women of different ethnicities, whether migrants or indigenous to different territories in the Japanese Empire. We shall now see how Nakajima's

male protagonists construct representations of subaltern identities, apart from Japanese women, in his stories "A Life" and "By the Poolside."

**The White Woman as Exotic Mystery: Desire and Gender in "A Life"**

While his first published short story ventures only a little ways outside of the Japanese capital region, Nakajima's second published short story "A Life" (1928) takes place all the way over in northern Manchuria (as speculated in Chapter One, likely the city of Harbin). Masaki, the story's terminally ill Japanese male protagonist, finds his only joy in his isolating life as a settler in the character Sofia, a Russian woman who befriends him but refuses to share personal details of her past. Sonic sensation plays an important role in the construction of Masaki's desire: the protagonist's heart flutters at the sound of "the horses' bells…and the coachman's whip[103]" of Sofia's two-horse carriage and at Sofia's pronunciation of "the Russian word for [Chinatown][104]." Sofia's putting on a record – Tchaikovsky's "Sérénade Mélancolique" to be precise – elicits particularly poetic imagery in Masaki's imagination:

> それは、長い列をつくって、雪のシベリアの曠野をおびえながら、さまよって行く囚人達の跫音です。あからがおの老人がペチカの側で、粥をすすりながら語り出すおおまかな、併しどこが暗い蔭のあるささやきです。ふさぎ虫。スラヴ民族の憂鬱です[105]。
>
> It makes the sound of footsteps, of a long line of prisoners wandering forth, fearful of the snow-laden Siberian wilderness. It sketches out a scene of ruddy-faced old folks crouching by a *pechika* stove, sipping watery rice porridge and chatting. But somewhere under a dark shadow, whispering. A fit of the blues. The melancholy of the Slavic people. [translation mine]

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[103] Nakajima Atsushi. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 286.
[104] Ibid. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 286.
[105] Ibid. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 289.

The music is external to both Masaki and Sofia, and yet it moves Masaki to conjure up all sorts of lugubrious images of Slavic life: prisoners meandering through Siberian snow, elderly Slavs eating meagre gruel, and an intangible sense of Slavic melancholy. In turn, the images that the music summons within Masaki's mindscape melds with the image of Sofia herself. Masaki's desire to know this exotic land across national borders is thwarted by his inability to know it in any meaningful way. Parallel to this is Masaki's desire to know the woman in front of him, whose ethnicity marks her as an exotic Other, and his perpetual inability to know almost anything about her. Masaki inquires as to "what kind of person" Sofia is, "[w]hat kind of family" she has come from, and whether she was "born here[106]." In a later section, Masaki states, "Sometimes I think about things like this but, are you the daughter of one of the aristocratic families from before? Is that why you escaped your home country and ended up here?[107]" Despite these incessant questions and despite Masaki's admission that Sofia already knows everything about him, Sofia remains taciturn throughout the entire story. Therefore, like Masaki himself, the reader is left to only imagine what possibly tragic turn of events has brought Sofia to Manchuria. The most definitive statement Sofia produces on the matter is the following: "I'm just a girl who you met by chance during your travels. That's it[108]." This situation, in which a protagonist with a mostly privileged social identity has limited knowledge or power over one with a subaltern identity, diverges sharply from the kind of situation that has arisen in the majority of textual passages in this project thus far. Conversely, the less privileged character, who is marginalized due to her status as a woman, as a migrant, and perhaps also as a white

[106] Nakajima Atsushi. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 289.
[107] Ibid. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 293.
[108] Ibid. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 289.

person[109] in a Northeast Asian semi-colonial context, possesses a great deal of knowledge about the protagonist's life. Nonetheless, this situation allows for Masaki's romanticization and misunderstanding of his Russian female love interest. Speaking on this issue of viewership that is ill-equipped to understand its viewed subjects, Laura Mulvey asserts that an image "constitutes the matrix of the imaginary, of recognition/misrecognition and identification, and hence of the first articulation of the 'I' of subjectivity[110]." Observe the narrator's description of Masaki's growing disinterest toward life and his ever-strong fixation on Sofia:

> 彼は次第に凡てに興味を失いかけました。本を読まなくなり、外を眺めることも稀になり、宿の人と話をすることは、殆どなくなりました。ただ彼女－ソフィヤだけは－そう。彼の感情は今、ソフィヤに於て、最後のかすかな焔を揚ぐるかに見えました。だが、その焔といえども、彼の生活を－彼の病気迄も－燃すほどに強烈なものではありませんでした[111]。
>
> He began to lose interest in everything. He quit reading books, rarely looked outside, and all but stopped reciting poetry with his neighbors. The only one for whom he held out any interest was Sofia. To him, Sofia was the only one keeping his last faint flame from burning out. But that flame was not yet powerful enough, even with his illness, to rekindle his life. [translation mine]

Rather than knowing the facts and figures of her existence, Masaki's privileged subjective viewership produces its own *image* of Sofia in order to ameliorate his emotional and physical suffering. While all the other areas in his life that once gave him joy have ceased to do so, the

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[109] This suggestion is not to say that white people did not colonize or exert dominance over the majority of global spaces in the early twentieth century, but rather is to allow one to consider the role that race played in a space where Asian powers were vying for control and where such powers did not consider white people (such as Russians) to be a significant part of the population. This 1928 story pre-dates the 1932 establishment of Manchukuo, but the puppet state officially promoted the concept of *gozoku kyōwa* (五族協和) or Five Races Under One Union, which advocated for the cooperation of Japanese, Han Chinese, Manchus, Mongolians, and Koreans (sans Russians).

[110] Laura Mulvey. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16, no.3 (1975), 10.

[111] Nakajima Atsushi. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 292.

concept of Sofia remains as a sort of kindling tool for the flame that represents his life. Problematically, the protagonist's male gaze toward Sofia probes excessively far and intrudes on her privacy. Since the story is told from the perspective of the moribund Masaki, the reader is urged to sympathize with him and encouraged to meet Sofia's silence with dismay or apprehension. As tragic as "A Life" is presented, in order to undo the unassuming presence of the male gaze, the contemporary reader should consider Sofia's perspective –and her wishes to "drop [the] subject[112]" as to the details of her personal background. After all, her silence as to her backstory may be a result of traumatic experiences before or during her journey to Machuria.

The female character in "The Girl from Shimoda" is a somewhat misunderstood and misrepresented character, and her gender certainly leads to this misunderstanding and misrepresentation. Similarly, Sofia from "A Life" also suffers from a lack of agency and from a towering male gaze, and the marginalized ethnic and gender identities that she holds increase these problematics all the more. The next section of this chapter on "By the Poolside" will further the discussion of how normative Japanese women and "exotic" white women are represented and construed in the larger web of hierarchical colonial desire.

**Japanese Settler Male Subjectivity as Agent of Desire in "By the Poolside"**

As the previous chapter detailed the representation of space in "By the Poolside" at considerable length, this section will aim to refrain from repetition, except perhaps to reiterate

[112] Nakajima Atsushi. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 289.

that this story, among the other five early works considered in this project, presents the broadest array of landscapes and gendered/ethnicized bodies. It also presents perhaps the clearest illustration of Japanese male desire taking a central position in the colonial web of gendered and ethnicized hierarchy in Nakajima's texts. Taking place in both colonial Seoul, Korea and semi-colonial Fengtian, Manchuria, "By the Poolside" presents characters with no fewer than eight combinations of gender and ethnic identity: Japanese men and women, Korean men and women, Chinese men and women, and Russian men and women. Sanzō, the Japanese male protagonist whom the story follows, encounters characters with all of these identities across both time (eight years prior versus the time of narration) and space (Seoul and Fengtian). His passive viewership of and subtle desire for the subaltern Other permeates all of these chronotopes. Although we examined the Fengtian train station scene in Chapter One with regard to its presentation of space, observe Sanzō's interaction with the traveling Russian youth in particular:

> 一昨日の真昼、奉天駅の待合室は堪えがたく暑かった。暑い空気の中を銀蠅がうるさく飛んでいた。桃の木の下に、前髪を垂れた支那美人の立っているビラを、十四五の露西亜少年が見上げていた。彼の髪は美しい金色で半ズボンの下から見える脛がすなおに細かった。それは何かしら男色を思わせる美しさであった。そのビラに書かれてある支那文字が何を意味するかは、そのロシアの少年にも、三造にも解らなかった。ただ、その紙の一番下には大きく横文字で MUKDEN と記されていた。それだけは少年にも読めたと見えて、「ムクデン」「ムクデン」と誰にいうともなく少年は大きな声で繰返した。それから、ひょいと後を向いて、三造の視線にあうと、その独り言を咎められでもしたかのように、あわてて眼を転じた。美しい、乞食のような灰色の眼であった[113]。
>
> At midday the day before yesterday, the waiting room at Hōten[114] Station was unbearably hot. Large silver-colored flies flew noisily about the hot air. A Russian youth of fourteen

[113] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." In *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 273-274.

[114] Fengtian was the Chinese rendering of the Manchu name (Mukden) for this city. The name Mukden was used not only by Manchu speakers but also by the English-speaking world in the 1930s. Nakajima's writes the name with the Chinese characters that correspond to Fengtian, but

> or fifteen was looking up at a poster of a beautiful Chinese woman with bangs standing under a peach tree. His hair was a beautiful golden, and beneath his shorts, one could see his meek and slender legs. His was a beauty that made one recall, somehow or another, the ancient practice of *nanshoku*[115]. As for what the Chinese characters written on the poster meant, neither the Russian youth nor Sanzō knew. On the very bottom of the paper, "MUKDEN" was scrawled in huge Roman characters. That said, Sanzō observed the youth reading the word, repeating "Mukden, Mukden" in a loud voice, to no one in particular. Suddenly turning around and meeting Sanzō's gaze, the youth shifted his eyes away, as if he sensed judgment upon his mutterings. His eyes were beautiful, grey like a beggar's rags. [translation mine]

Though much of the passage consists of third person narration, it is heavily infused with Sanzō's subjective aesthetic judgments. In his "observ[ation] [of] the youth," Sanzō extolls the boy's "beautiful golden" hair, "meek and slender legs," and overall beauty. Using the pre-modern Japanese term *nanshoku*, with its romantic connotations of male homosexual relationships, rather than the modern term *dōseiai*, with its connotations of scientific inquiry and moralistic censure, Nakajima solidifies the centrality of desire in Sanzō's viewing of the youth. The only instance of homoeroticism in the texts considered in this project, this scene complicates simplistic notions of Nakajima's protagonists. While queer identity did not exist at that time in the manner that it does in contemporary society, it becomes irresponsible to view Sanzō as simply a heterosexual male agent of desire, even if he and the other Japanese male protagonists in the early works wields heterosexual desire to their advantage most often. Apart from the blond hair's signification of a kind of Western exotic trait, the text's presenting of the city name "Mukden" in romaji further exoticizes the Russian boy in Sanzō's eyes. While Sanzō experiences the city using the Sino-Japanese name "Hōten," he imagines the urban space of Mukden as something unique and different, a social space that is accessible and comprehensible to Europeans. Also important in

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to Japanese readers it would have been pronounced as Hōten. The city is known today as Shenyang.

[115] Also known as *danshoku*, this term refers to a codified practice of male-male sexual relations (oftentimes pederastic) which existed in pre-modern Japan.

this particular passage is the fact that Sanzō's desire is distanced: Sanzō gazes at the youth, who in turn gazes at the poster of a Chinese woman. This distance and indirectness protects Sanzō from having to actually engage his desire or break his fantasy of this exotic Other. Only when the boy notices that he is being watched does he turn to look at Sanzō, but this dangerous meeting of eye contact comes to an abrupt ending. Sanzō afterward continues to evaluate the youth's beauty, noting his eye color. This same phenomenon of exoticization and indirect desire occurs when Sanzō observes a Russian woman talking to one of his upperclassmen at a bar during their field trip from eight years previous:

> 彼なんかとは話もしないで、先輩ばかり相手にしているロシア女の、黒く太い植え睫毛や、緑色に深くとった眼のくまや、腋臭くさい肩から、むき出しになっている女の腕の、銀緑色の生毛などを、如何に少年らしい興奮を以て、彼は眺めたことであったろう[116]。
>
> He didn't even need to say a word, watching the scene unfold with boyish excitement: the Russian girl the upperclassman was talking to, with her large black eyelashes, the corners of her deep green eyes, the body odor emanating from her shoulders, and the girl's naked arms, with her silvery peach fuzz. [translation mine]

As a youth himself, Sanzō fixates on the Otherness of the Russian girl, on the traits relating to both her gender and her ethnic difference. The exotic traits of green eyes and silvery peach fuzz combine with feminine ones like "large black eyelashes" to instill an incurable sense of "boyish excitement" in Sanzō. And of course, Sanzō stands off at a distance "watching the scene unfold" without the pressure of actually participating. Sanzō participates in the colonial/modern system that links differently valued social identities together through the network of desire, but his inaction marks a unique positionality. Ultimately a possessor of social privilege, Sanzō aims to consume the fascination and Otherness of the semi-colonial setting with his gaze, but he rejects

[116] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 275.

the more direct, or even violent, kind of consumption that would entail direct communication and action.

While the Russian boy and girl, whom Sanzō observes desirously at different points in his life, bear the marks of cool exoticism, characters of other ethnicities are treated quite differently in "By the Poolside." Sanzō's subjective construction of social landscape still manages to exoticize Korean men and women indigenous to Seoul and Chinese men and women native to Fengtian in some way, but characters with these intersectional identities are portrayed as less desirable and more pitiable. Whereas Russian characters are both white people and migrants or travelers, Chinese and Koreans are Asian – closer to Japanese ethnic identity and therefore less exciting to Nakajima's protagonists. Moreover, Koreans represent formally colonized subjects and Chinese, *de facto* colonized subjects; this colonized subjectivity, and the hardship it carries with it, creates a sense of melancholy that Japanese male protagonists want to avoid.

One point in the text details Sanzō's middle-school-era escapades at a Korean brothel in colonial Seoul. Sanzō climbs a hill with his classmate through an urban area of Seoul to get to the brothel:

> 三造は急に動悸がはげしくなるのを感じた。こんな経験ははじめてではないということを示したい、お互いの見栄から、二人は黙って、いい加減に見当をつけて、暗い露地にはいった。低い土造の朝鮮家屋の門毎に、真白に塗立てた女達が四五人ずつ立っていた。彼女達はすべて朝鮮人であった。そこらあたりの軒燈は、みな、古風な青い瓦斯燈を使っていた。その白い光の下で、紅だの、緑だの、黄色だの、さまざまな彼女達の下袴の色が、ちらちらと目に映ってくるだけで、その一人一人の顔は、まるで、彼には弁別できなかった[117]。

[117] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 286-287.

> Sanzō could feel his heart start to pound violently. Trying to pretend to one another as though this weren't their first time doing something like this, the two of them went silent, and with the right amount of coolness entered the dark alleyway. In front of the short clay door of a traditional Korean-style building, stood four or five women, faces painted starkly white. They were all Korean. The lights in the building were all old-fashioned gas lamps, burning with blue flames. Staring at the women, standing in under the white light and dressed in red, and green, and yellow, and all sorts of colors, Sanzō could not distinguish one woman's face from another's. [translation mine]

This passage reveals Sanzō's sense of adventure toward not only colonial social space but also a space denoting sexual activity and adult behavior. The narrative is tinged with Sanzō's subjective (even physical) experiences: we feel the pounding of Sanzō's nervous heartbeat, we understand the two classmates' desire to impress one another with their pretense of nonchalance, and we understand the Korean women's appearance through the Sanzō's eyesight (rather than vice versa). Not only do the women possess little to no agency of their own in this text, but they also lose their individuality amidst Sanzō's subjective narrative. Identified by the color of their vestments alone, the women's facial features collapse into one form – simply bearing the identity mark of "Korean women." Sanzō's overt lack of desire for any of the women, or even for the woman whose room he ends up later visiting (and with whom he does *not* have sex), contrasts with desire for the exotic traits of the Russian boy and girl. Perhaps their status as oppressed women, who perhaps would not resort to sex work given other socioeconomic circumstances, detracts from the potential for erotic desire. Further, this scene is the closest Sanzō comes to taking "action" in "By the Poolside," and this proximity to potential sexual contact may be terrifying to Sanzō, who has only just started experiencing puberty. The shame that accompanies sexuality, along with the knowledge that he may be participating in an inequitable social system, may very well be factors that detract from desire in this passage. Nonetheless, even without the presence of strong desire, in this web of social relations, the Japanese male settler's perspective wins out as the central element holding the entire scene together.

Back to present times, while Sanzō is taking a break from swimming freestlye in the pool, Sanzō sees a young Korean girl. Though quite a different context from the brothel, Sanzō similarly describes the girl without showing any of her interiority as a character:

> 眼鏡の硝子に溜った雫をぬぐって、よく見ると、黄色い汚れた朝鮮服を着た女の子が、プウルの縁から一間ほど離れて、彼のばかばかしい泳ぎぶりを見ていた。年は十一、二位であろう。髪をおさげにして赤い細いリボンで結えていた。三造は口の中で、あやうく「キチベエ」といおうとした。キチベエというのは「女の子」という意味の朝鮮語であった。「まだ、これでも朝鮮語を少しは覚えているな」という考えが彼を微笑させた…黄色い服の少女は三造に見つめられて困ったように後を向き、何か彼に分らない言葉で呼びかけた[118]。
>
> Wiping off the water droplets that had accumulated on his glasses and looking properly, it was a girl wearing a ragged yellow Korean traditional dress, standing about two meters from the edge of the pool, watching Sanzō's ridiculous swimming style. She was around eleven or twelve, and her hair was neatly braided and tied with thin red ribbons. Sanzō almost called out to her saying, "Kichibe." Kichibe meant "girl" in Korean. "I still remember some Korean," Sanzō thought to himself, chuckling…Seeming bothered by the fact that she was now being looked at by Sanzō, the yellow-clad girl ran away behind where she was standing, shouting words that he couldn't understand. [translation mine]

Here, while Sanzō reveals little desire to communicate or interact with the girl, the passage reveals a general desire for connection to the land where he grew up and its indigenous culture, which the colonial apparatus has relegated to the social margins. However, Sanzō suffers from a lack of understanding of the colonial homeland of his adolescence; he prides himself on remembering a certain Korean word, but the chasm between the girl and himself is exacerbated when she rattles off words of her own that are unintelligible to him. Sanzō's imagination, informed by privileged settler subjectivity, attempts to make up for his lack of knowledge in the construction and representation of subaltern identities (such as that of Korean girls). But ultimately, both settler and native are trapped in a melancholic state of misunderstanding, and Sanzō, while benefiting from his privilege as a Japanese male settler, is isolated by such a state.

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[118] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 285.

**Conclusions**

This chapter has discussed the ways in which the diverse array of gendered and ethnic identities present in the Japanese colonial realm are presented by means of privileged subjectivity in Nakajima's texts. This privileged subjectivity informs a kind of *gazing* on the part of the Japanese male settler upon individuals with subaltern identity markers, in turn allowing for the latter's representation, which will always be skewed by the viewer's positionality. Further, this act of gazing is often imbued with desire (whether it be erotic, emotional, or something else), which proliferates unidirectional relations and connections between the viewer and the viewed, between the colonizer and the colonized, between the settler and the native, and between the man the woman. In "The Girl from Shimoda," the Japanese male protagonist learns about and accepts the complexities of (Japanese) womanhood. Amidst the multiethnic and colonial settings in "A Life" and "By the Poolside," Naichi monoethnic gender relations become complicated. While a sense of Otherness (whether erotic, exotic, or simply intriguing) pervades in the multiethnic contexts, the privileged Japanese male viewers' representations of young Russians (both male and female) as attractive and exotic contrast with their representations of native Koreans and Chinese as downtrodden and commonplace. Ultimately, all combinations of marginalized identities (and even privileged ones, in the case of Japanese women) are at the mercy of the privileged viewer, for the viewer has the power to imagine and represent them, and then act upon them according to their imagination and representations. More often than not, however,

Nakajima's protagonists choose not to act beyond their passive viewership, occupying a privileged, albeit nonviolent position. This intertwining of privilege and nonviolence is emblematic of the kind of hybridity that characterizes Nakajima's works in general in terms of how they relate to the condonation and contestation of hegemonic colonial narratives of gender and ethnic identity.

## CHAPTER THREE: Condoning and Contesting Narratives of Illness and Non-Hegemonic Bodily Experience

### Introduction: Language and the Subjectivity of Illness

Susan Sontag, the late American philosopher and essayist, writes that the thesis of her monograph *Illness as Metaphor* "is that illness is *not* metaphor, and that the most truthful way of regarding illness – and the healthiest way of being ill – is one most purified of, most resistant to, metaphoric thinking[119]." Having been a cancer patient and negatively experiencing the deluge of metaphoric constructions of cancer, Sontag attempts to "liberate" patients from such constructions[120]. Now, a vast number of linguists – most notably George Lakoff of Berkeley – have researched the metaphorical aspects of human language and concluded that metaphor is inseparable from even the most basic linguistic utterances. Lakoff asserts, "[M]etaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature[121]." In Sontag's approach, the medical apparatus of Western-originated modernity is something that exists *a priori*, fully to be trusted, and wholly outside of the prison-house of language. Karatani Kōjin, knowingly or otherwise, follows the work of George Lakoff in pointing out the ways in which language precedes illness: "We are considered to have an illness insofar as it has been diagnosed by a doctor[122]." Given these realities, Sontag's task to separate

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[119] Susan Sontag. *Illness as Metaphor.* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977 and 1978), 3.
[120] Ironically, Sontag herself uses an extensive metaphor for health and sickness in the very first paragraph of her monograph: "Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and in the kingdom of the sick." Susan Sontag. *Illness as Metaphor.* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977 and 1978), 3.
[121] George Lakoff. *Metaphors We Live By.* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3.
[122] Karatani Kōjin. "Sickness as Meaning." *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature.* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 107.

the ill person from metaphors of illness is futile unless she wishes to remove said person from the illness itself and from the linguistic bounds which shape the illness.

However, while he purports to keep Sontag at a skeptical arms' length in his tracing of the image of tuberculosis in Meiji Japanese literature, Karatani himself falls in the same trap of allowing the possibility for a "meaningless" illness. Karatani discusses the supposedly "straightforward" portrayal of tuberculosis in Masaoka Shiki's 1902 novel *A Six-Foot Sickbed* (in Japanese, *Byōshō Rokushaku*), in which a first-person protagonist agonizingly laments his fate upon his sickbed. Then, he brings forth Tokutomi Roka's 1898-1899 serialized novel *The Cuckoo* (*Hototogisu*), in which tuberculosis has become laden with romanticized meaning. Karatani links this modern shift toward the addition of "meaning" unto illness with his previous theory about the modern "discovery of landscape" in modern Japanese literature. From a Lakoffian perspective alone it is sufficient to diagnose this juxtaposition of Karatani's as overly simplistic; illness has *always* possessed meaning, because as a human experience it is constructed and mediated by language. However, if one wants to complicate Karatani's hypothesis with textual evidence, one can go to a Japanese literary work from any time period – say, the scene in *The Tale of the Heike*[123] wherein Kiyomori experiences a painful illness as a rhetorical retribution for his burning of Nara – and find examples of meaning-saturated representations of illness. What is useful in Karatani's assessment, however, is his illumination of yet another paradox of Japanese modernity. Previously, we saw how modern writers aimed to make "objective" sketches of the landscapes around them while imbuing the scene with subjective assessments. Here, we understand that while Japan began to import ostensibly "objective" Western science and medicine beginning from the Tokugawa Period and with

[123] a Japanese epic tale about the Genpei War (1180-185), compiled by the early 14th century

exponentially increased vigor into the Meiji Period, Japanese writers of the time also began to employ more subjective and romantic rhetorical devices in their representations of illness. However, as we shall see throughout this chapter, within the discourse of the Japanese Empire, this subjectivity of illness is usually afforded only to privileged subjects like Japanese men occupying colonial landscapes. Within the oppressive discourse of the colonial state, illness experienced by othered and colonized bodies is a symptom of cultural inferiority and a threat to the modern hygienic state that the Empire aimed to produce and maintain for the benefit of its ethnic Japanese citizens.

In Nakajima's short stories we see this difference between the representation of sick Japanese settler characters and sick indigenous and migrant characters, where the former possess greater agency and depth with regard to their sickness or bodily experience. Perhaps like the protagonist of Tokutomi's *The Cuckoo*, Nakajima's Japanese settler characters are allowed to give modern subjective "meaning" to their illnesses, even as this meaning is informed by Western medical understandings of the body. Conversely, the bodies of "unhygienic" homeless Korean and Chinese coolie characters are afforded less agency. In "A July Scene in D City," Nakajima perhaps goes beyond other Japanese writers and narrates coolies' experiences closely and with detail, but these characters' lack of modern colonial medical and hygienic amenities renders these experiences less legible than those of settler characters. The first and smaller part of this chapter analyzes the ways in which Nakajima's sick colonized characters parallel the Japanese state's policy of marginalizing and minimizing such bodies. The second part looks at the ways in which Nakajima portrays the bodily experiences of sick and non-hegemonic Japanese – first in the Naichi and then in the Gaichi, since bodily experience in the colonial metropole informs bodily experience in the colonies abroad. This chapter first contends that

Nakajima affords agency in different ways to sick individuals with diverging social identities. Then, given Nakajima's focus on the sick or non-hegemonic settler body, the chapter asserts that such representation contests the colonial narrative of *fukoku-kyōhei* ("rich nation, strong army"), which advocated for a prosperous imperialist nation bolstered by strong and normative Japanese male bodies.

**Illness and Non-Hegemonic Bodily Experience Among Colonized Characters**

With the rise of modern Japan came the rise of Western medicine and Western understandings of hygiene[124]. Similar to the notion of "objective" discovery that characterized Japanese modern understandings of space and landscape, Western medicine rendered the natural world of humans and their environs as entities that could be quantified, analyzed, and improved upon. The Meiji government created its Office of Medical Affairs (*Imu-ka*) in 1872, which later became known as the Bureau of Hygiene (*Eisei-kyoku*), as well as a national qualification system for doctors based on Western medicine with the 1874 Medical Act (*Isei*)[125]. Christian Oberländer posits that the Meiji slogan of *fukoku-kyōhei* ("rich nation, strong army") alluded to medical understandings of national strength, in which individual healthy bodies contribute to the national project of modernization and colonial expansion. While the second part of this chapter will discuss the implications of this slogan's ideology for ethnic Japanese citizens in the archipelago and in the colonies, this section looks at the ways in which this ideology marginalizes and damages colonized subjects, such as Chinese and Korean coolies.

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[124] Christian Oberländer. "The Rise of Western 'Scientific Medicine' in Japan: Bacteriology and Beriberi." *Building a Modern Japan: Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Meiji Era and Beyond*, ed. Morris Low. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 13.
[125] Ibid., 14.

Chapter One discussed in part this adoption of hygienic discourse in order to segregate and control colonial space – in order to separate the poor migrant or indigenous worker from the public or private spaces enjoyed by privileged colonial elites. Nakajima's "A July Scene in D City (1)" provides clear examples of this hygiene-rooted discrimination. In the story's first section, the oil company manager Mr. Y observes his immediate surroundings: a privately-owned park in D City, which will be sold and turned over to governmental administration. Mr. Y laments this situation as he observes the scene adjacent to the park from his office window:

> その鋪道を片隅には、半裸体の帽子さえかぶらない苦力の黄色く力の無い顔が二つ、ころがって居る。此の眩しい七月の日光の直射の下で、一人は、完全にくたくたに眠って居るらしい。もう一人は、しきりに蠅を払いながら、黄色く熟れすぎたまくわ瓜を噛って居る[126]。
>
> In the street corner lay two half-naked coolies, not even wearing hats, their faces yellow with haggardness. One of them seemed to be full-on sleeping, exhausted under the direct rays of the intense July sunlight. The other was biting into a yellow, overripe melon, constantly swatting away flies. [translation mine]

Disgusted, Mr. Y complains that "[h]owever many times you turn over land to the common people, it's going to become occupied by guys like that. A sleeping ground for all these coolies."[127] Space is inextricable from the scene, as Mr. Y speaks from his office building, distant from the dingy street corner that he derides. However, looking more closely at the bodies of these nameless coolies reveals the traits of colonized laborers that imperial discourse rejects: half-nakedness, the lack of a hat, a tired yellow face, daytime sleeping, the swarming of flies. The men's vestments (or lack thereof) offend Mr. Y's sartorial sensibilities rooted in oppressive colonial standards of professionalism, and they signify a sort of existence outside of hegemonic

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[126] Nakajima Atsushi. "D-shi shichigatsu jokei (1)." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 353.
[127] Ibid. "D-shi shichigatsu jokei (1)." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 354.

capitalistic expectations of work. Similarly, in Nakajima's short story "A Policeman's Landscape," the Korean coolies who populate the final section of the text are described as "sle[eping] like a rock tossed onto the ground," "reek[ing] of tobacco," and being infested with "white ringworms" around the mouth[128]. The coolies in both stories labor and give of their bodies for the Empire, yet homelessness, "unhygienic" traits, and illness mark them as "grotesque" Others. Mark Driscoll traces Japan's biopolitical process of "grotesqueing" colonized bodies, beginning from the modern Japanese philosopher Miki Kiyoshi (1897-1945), who stated, "[T]he truth of the state relies on the human body" – in other words, according to Driscoll, "on the world-making vitality of its human subjects[129]." This statement relates well to the slogan *fukoku-kyōhei*, but instead of putting the locus of the national body on individual Japanese citizens, it shifts towards the human power of oppressed, colonized laborers. Driscoll continues, saying that "the ongoing operations of vampirizing and grotesqueing biopolitical subjectivities quite literally *produced* Japan's imperialism[130]." While the Japanese Empire demands the coolies' labor, it segregates them from its regime of hygienic and medical modernity. Cruelly, the traits that stem from this lack of access to the hygienic and medical regime (i.e. their half-naked bodies, tired yellow faces, and so on) subsequently become points of ridicule. Perhaps the most striking irony about the derision of and obsession with subaltern colonial subjects' "grotesque" features comes in the same scene in which Mr. Y looks out the window, mocking the Chinese coolies. As soon as he laments that turning-over the park to the

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[128] Nakajima Atsushi. "Junsa no iru fūkei." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 341-342.
[129] Mark Driscoll. *Absolute Erotic, Absolute Grotesque: The Living, Dead, and Undead in Japan's Imperialism, 1895-1945*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 10.
[130] Ibid., 17.

public will make them full of "guys like that[131]," he has an uncontrollable bout of hiccups, which he had been struggling with since the beginning of the story and for which he has been drinking hot persimmon sepal tea. "Once again, the dreaded contractions of his diaphragm, and the memory of their accompanying terror, suddenly returned and caused his entire body to violently convulse[132]." On the one hand, Nakajima colludes with the colonial discourse which afforded greater subjectivity and insight into the lives of sick settlers rather than sick colonized workers. However, on the other hand, the inclusion of these violent hiccups at this exact moment in the text highlights Nakajima's willingness to satirize this company director's prestige and power. While the director has the money and resources[133] to combat his ailment, his rhetorical ability to assert power over the coolies is shaken – just as his body is literally shaken by the hiccups. This satirization of the power of Japanese settler bodies – certainly a contestation of the hegemonic colonial narrative – leads us towards this next section, which continues to discuss the intersections of sickness (or non-hegemonic bodily experience) and Japanese bodies within the colonial system.

**The Sick/Non-Hegemonic Japanese Body in the Naichi and Gaichi**

Nakajima Atsushi was nineteen years old when he published "Fight" (*Kenka*) in his school journal in 1928. The story deals with a chronically ill Japanese man, Sadakichi, who lives

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[131] Nakajima Atsushi. "D-shi shichigatsu jokei (1)." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 354.
[132] Nakajima Atsushi. "D-shi shichigatsu jokei (1)." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 354.
[133] Perhaps notably, drinking tea made from dried and boiled persimmon sepals appears to be a traditional remedy separate from the repertoire of Western medicine. This doesn't disqualify the value of this medicine, even though it fails to produce the desired result in the text. Mr. Y still possesses vastly more resources than do the coolies, no doubt as a result of the economic inequity that is inseparable from the colonial project.

with his family somewhere unnamed in Chiba Prefecture. Nevertheless, the story's principal subject is not Sadakichi, but rather his mother Okane, who constantly questions Sadakichi's chronic illness and nags him to leave his sickbed to go work. While this project aims to look principally at the sick character, part of the investigation into his representation must include Okane's dismayed perspective. While Okane is certainly oppressed for being a woman, a widow, and someone from outside of the Tokyo metropole, in this text, she reproduces modern Japan's patriarchal and capitalistic expectations for men to be the sole or primary breadwinner in his family. This expectation also rests on the assumption of bodily normativity – what we might today call able-bodiedness – that underscores the political structure enforced by *fukoku-kyōhei*.

The story begins with a general characterization of Okane as perpetually annoyed at her son:

> おかねにとっては息子（せな）の貞吉が腹膜炎とかで、始終ぶらぶらして居るのがはがゆかった。事実ねながら談笑して居る顔や言葉つきには少しも病人らしい所がなかったからだ[134]。
>
> [I]t was irritating to see her son Sadakichi lounging around doing nothing due to his peritonitis or whatever his sickness was called. This was because while was lying down, his happy-go-lucky face and words bore none of the characteristics of an ill person. [translation mine]

The invisibility or illegibility of Sadakichi's illness compounds the pain inflicted by the modern nationalistic standard of health and masculinity. If Okane was able to read her son as ill, it might be easier for her to reconcile herself to his inability to work and provide for the family in the normative sense. However, because Sadakichi never bears "the characteristics of an ill person," Okane fails to exempt him from this oppressive social expectation for male family members,

[134] Nakajima Atsushi. "Kenka." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 295.

describing his ailment as "laziness, plain and simple[135]. This misinterpretation often leads her to erupt into anger and instigate quarrels with her son, daughter-in-law, and other family members. This very short story centers on one very bad fight, which causes Okane to leave the house the next day and simmer, thinking of how she could "win" the fight. She stumbles along to a local shrine, walks through a forest, contemplates going to Tokyo (for which she does not have a train fare), and takes an unexpected evening nap, ending up alone, hungry and weak. Defeated, she returns home to her gloating family members, which she regards as a kind of caving in, an official loss in this "fight." It is unclear what rules Okane has drafted with regards to this fight, but her loss (symbolized in the last scene, where she begins "stuffing her cheeks with rice" and "munching on the mackerel[136]" which her family has prepared for her) underscores the power of filial piety and family obligation in all aspects of the story. Initially in the story, Okane faults Sadakichi for his invisible illness and for his inability to fulfill certain familial expectations, but later, Okane's own defiance of her family becomes the issue that needs resolving. In providing this narrative arc, Nakajima's text contests hegemonic expectations of gender, able-bodiedness, and labor, and presents a sort of reformed discourse on filial piety.

Nakajima's "A Life," published in the same year as "Fight," takes the reader across the Sea of Japan and into the chronotope of northern Manchuria a mere four years before the establishment of Manchukuo. This story is perhaps Nakajima's bleakest take on illness – not only because its protagonist Masaki presents a large amount of anguished inner dialogue but also

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[135] Ibid., 297.
[136] Nakajima Atsushi. "Kenka." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 303.

because Masaki's illness is terminal, leading him to a disturbing and explosive death at the story's end.

"A Life" opens with Masaki's incredulous thoughts as he looks at an x-ray of his lungs: "*Are these my lungs? My rotten, worm-eaten lungs, crumbling without a sound?*[137]" He then likens his respiratory organs to "a pine tree with white moss covering its bark" and "a decomposing sea cucumber[138]." The image of decay, propelled by the grim data and measurements of Western-originated scientific medicine, permeates Masaki's understanding of his own body. Although the Japanese imperial state has intended to use Western medicine as a means to ensure a healthy national corpus, for Masaki, the reduction of his body to isolatable parts and black-and-white images only intensifies his pain. Moreover, this diagnosis constructs Masaki's experience of and response toward his own illness, since, as I have previously quoted Karatani as saying, subjects within the discourse of Western empiricism are "considered to have an illness insofar as it has been diagnosed by a doctor[139]." In "A Life," the language of medicine not only precedes the illness but also precedes its symptoms (most notably, death), essentially creating a time bomb that paces one through the process of reading the brief and tragic story. "A Life" also defies Sontag's censure against using metaphor in the conceptualization of illness. The story's abundance of poetic language and metaphorical representation mark it as rather romantic, perhaps in the same vein of Tokutomi's *The Cuckoo* as described by Karatani. Not only does Masaki invoke a connection of worms, moss, and sea cucumbers to his afflicted lungs, but he

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[137] Nakajima Atsushi. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 284.
[138] Ibid., 284.
[139] Karatani Kōjin. "Sickness as Meaning." *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature.* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 107.

also describes his state of consciousness as "a vast waveless ocean, quiet and frigidly white…which was as soundless as death[140]." Given these and many more examples of linguistic beautification in the text, subjective romanticism cannot be viewed separately from the purportedly objective discourse of hygiene and medicine; they inform Masaki's experiences with his ill body in one unified existence. The discourse of medicine diagnoses death, and the discourse of romanticism describes the kind of death that corresponds with Masaki's subjective experience – a quiet, empty, lonely kind, emblematic of his unhappy residence in the settler-colony.

Importantly, although the work is largely bleak and pessimistic, it would be overly simplistic to characterize medical discourse as a diagnosis of despair; at times, it also diagnoses hope. Nakajima describes Masaki as he undergoes a calcium inhalation as a treatment for his lung disease:

> 霧の様な白い粉末が入って行く度に、思いなしか彼の胸はいたたまれない、痒さを感じました。
> 彼はもう、とっくにあきらめて了って居る筈でした。もう決して、医療なんかしまいと決心をした筈でした。だのに、そんな決心にも拘わらず、時として彼は、なおカルシュームの吸入に縋ろうとするのでした[141]。
>
> When the frostlike white powder entered his lungs, they became unbearably itchy.
> He should have already given up long ago. He should have already resolved not to seek medical treatment. But in spite of this hopelessness, sometimes he clung to the idea calcium inhalation treatment. [translation mine]

As seen in the text, Masaki's hope in the medical complex is undeniably unstable. In the face of impending death, this spark of hope embodied in his calcium treatment seems to Masaki to be a

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[140] Nakajima Atsushi. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 285.
[141] Ibid., 291.

gimmick of sorts. He participates in treatment in order to preserve his life, but also possibly in order to partake in the prescribed course of action so that he is not rendered non-normative by the medical complex. The simultaneity of Masaki's inhalation of calcium and his self-directed question of "*Why do I have to die young?*" adds to his discursive reality of medical diagnosis and prescription: prescribed treatment is simply another certain pathway –palliative or not – to diagnosed death. On the day of his death at the end of the story, Masaki lies on his bed and gazes at the ceiling. Nakajima narrates his death as follows:

> ふと気がつくと、風が吹き出した様です。硝子ががたがた音を立て、カーテンの前の瓶にさした造花の影が少し揺れて居ました。彼は何気なく、身を起して枕頭の牛乳の瓶をとろうとしました。と其の瞬間です。急に頭がぐらぐらし、眼の前が一時に白く光り出したかと思うと、忽ち、胸の奥に不快なむずがゆさとなまぐささとを感じて、どうと倒れながら、真赤な塊りを吐き出しました[142]。
>
> He suddenly noticed that the wind was starting to blow. The glass clattered, and the shadow cast by the vase of artificial flowers in front of the curtain trembled. Without thinking, he got himself up and went to reach for the milk bottle at his bedside. And that was the moment. His head suddenly went dizzy, and before his eyes flashed a white light. Inside his chest, he felt a strange sensation of uneasiness and suspicion, when he rolled to the floor and coughed up bright red clumps. [translation mine]

Nakajima's description of the death scene involves not only descriptions of body but also of environment, the latter seeming to foreshadow the former. The somatosensory blowing of wind, auditory clattering of glass, and visual trembling of shadows come together to create a multisensory chorus of eeriness and terror. And the description of Masaki's death – a spell of dizziness and uneasiness followed by a "flash[ing]…white light" – fulfills the empty and white imagery of Masaki's mental state from earlier in the story. But the story does not end with the

[142] Nakajima Atsushi. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 294.

romantic imagery of "a vast waveless ocean[143]," but is instead grotesqued by the ugly minutiae of medical discourse, by the "bright red clumps" that Masaki coughs up.

Further, the story's Gaichi setting amplifies Masaki's pain, as it isolates him from any meaningful community and links his illness with loneliness. Though Sadakichi has a far-from-perfect family situation, he at least is surrounded by family members who care for him, even if one of them does so begrudgingly. Aside from his landlady, housekeeper, and unnamed neighbors, the only person Masaki ever interacts with in the story is a Russian woman named Sofia (and nicknamed Sonya). Chapter Two has already discussed the exoticization of Sofia vis-à-vis her ethnic identity, and clearly her ethnic and culture differences draw Masaki in. Arguably, this exoticization of Sofia parallels Japanese writers' exoticization of colonized or semi-colonized landscapes like Korea and Manchuria. Masaki seeks to make meaning with his moribund life by trying to understand Sofia, her culture, and her identity, but she is in impermeably opaque. Observe the following exchange, which characterizes these two figures' relationship at large.

> ーソーニャ、君は一体どういう人なの、君の家は何なの？君はやはり此処で生まれたの？
> すると彼女の答はいつもこれです。
> ーどうでもいいじゃありませんか。そんな事は。私はただ、あなたの旅先に偶然とび出して来た女じゃないの。それでたくさんよ[144]。
>
> "Sonya, what kind of person are you? What kind of family do you have? Were you born here?"
> And her answer was always the same.
> "It's all the same, isn't it? That kind of stuff. I'm just a girl who you met by chance during your travels. That's it." [translation mine]

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[143] Nakajima Atsushi. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 285.
[144] Ibid., 289.

While his body suffers, Sofia causes Masaki to exercise his mind: he listens to records of Russian classical music with her, ponders "the melancholy of the Slavic people[145]," and imagines whether Sofia might have come from an aristocratic Russian family that escaped the somewhat newly formed communist regime. But Masaki is always left with mere imagination, since "[i]t's all the same, isn't it?" This interest in Sofia – his one true connection to meaningful community let alone romantic passion – keeps life worth living for Masaki, perhaps even more so than medical treatment and its prospects do. The following passage sums up this existential obsession well:

> 彼は次第に凡てに興味を失いかけました。本を読まなくなり、外を眺めることも稀になり、宿の人と話をすることは、殆どなくなりました。ただ彼女－ソフィヤだけは－そう。彼の感情は今、ソフィヤに於て、最後のかすかな焔を揚ぐるかに見えました。だが、其の焔といえども、彼の全生活を－彼の病気迄も－燃やすほどに強烈なものではありませんでした[146]。
>
> He began to lose interest in everything. He quit reading books, rarely looked outside, and all but stopped reciting poetry with his neighbors. The only one for whom he held out any interest was Sofia. To him, Sofia was the only one keeping his last faint flame from burning out. But that flame was not yet powerful enough, even with his illness, to rekindle his life. [translation mine]

While everything crumbles in his life, the only person or idea that keeps Masaki want to continue living is Sofia. The narrator romantically compares Masaki's life to a fire that is being slowly extinguished and compares Sofia to that which kindles the fire. But as has been previously uncovered, the opening lines of the story, wherein Masaki looks at the x-ray of his lungs, has already established a lethal deadline. And perhaps because Sofia cannot offer anything of herself

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[145] Nakajima Atsushi. "Aru seikatsu." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 289.
[146] Ibid., 292.

– any information about who she is and why she is in Manchuria, for example – Masaki's connection with her cannot continue to sustain the last flame of his existence.

"A Life," one of Nakajima's shorter teenage-era works, is perhaps most emblematic of contestation of colonial narratives of strong and vigorous Japanese settler bodies. While the reader does not know what has brought Masaki to northern Manchuria in the first place, given the somewhat exclusive opportunity for Japanese citizens to emigrate to Manchuria at this point in time, perhaps it is in order to work in an environment that requires skilled labor and that would support the Japanese Empire's burgeoning capitalistic claims to an increasingly large tract of land in Northeast China. However, Masaki's career is never represented in the text; I posit that this is because of the severe and incapacitating effects of Masaki's lung disease, which prevents him from fulfilling his duties well. Nakajima's story challenges the notion of *fukoku-kyōhei* as hegemonic colonial discourse, presenting a new narrative formula. Far from unwriting the harmful legacy of colonial and capitalistic expansion, Nakajima's text instead presents a new kind of Japanese male settler body, which is disabled and socially isolated – a kind of settler who is himself harmed by the ableist constructions of Japanese settler-colonialism. Despite this claim that "A Life" is especially strong in contesting the ideology of *fukoku-kyōhei*, this is by no means to say that Nakajima's portrayal of Masaki is wholly unproblematic: first of all, as a Japanese settler, he is afforded a huge amount of complicated interiority, and second, the tragedy of Masaki's story at times reads almost as melodramatic and gaudy. Nevertheless, Nakajima himself grew up in settler-colonies and suffered with a chronic lung disease, autobiographical details which almost certainly helped inform his work. And in most of his other early works, Nakajima refrains from spilling over into melodrama, presenting more mundane and intimate portraits of ill and non-hegemonic bodies.

One such example of another early story wherein non-hegemonic bodies are presented less tragically is "The Girl from Shimoda," a story that takes place once again in the Naichi. In particular, Nakajima brings to the page two undergraduate-age men who differ from the hegemonic norm of modern Japanese masculine ideology. The first Japanese male character is the protagonist of the outer-frame narrative. He has come to the coastal town of Shimoda from Tokyo after a too-intense love affair fizzled out like cholera-shaped[147] *senkō hanabi* (a type of Japanese sparklers). After his ex-lover found another man after ten days of being with him, he "became psychologically feeble" and "unable to bear the excessive paleness of the city's skin," therefore coming "down to this southern country[148]" to heal his heart and mind. Nakajima here links the external pathological feature of "excessive paleness" to this protagonist's psychological struggles, an internal feature. The protagonist's psychological feebleness, whether diagnosed or not, exists within medical discourse and informs his vulnerability with the titular girl from Shimoda, with whom he becomes friends. Still, compared to other instances in Nakajima's works, no grand contestation of hegemonic narratives is at stake, other than Nakajima's narration of the story from the largely subjective point of view of this protagonist. Still, as a heterosexual Japanese man in the Naichi, this endowment of subjectivity is hardly surprising.

Slightly more interesting in the story is the case of the young man who appears in the first of the girl from Shimoda's two stories that she recounts to the protagonist. This young man is

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[147] In further research, it would be fascinating to point out some of the ways in which modern Japanese writers link romance and love to notions of disease and pathology, as Nakajima does here. Surely this image-heavy metaphor is commenting on the unhealthiness and intensity of the protagonist's relationship. Nakajima Atsushi. "Shimoda no onna." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 270.

[148] Nakajima Atsushi. "Shimoda no onna." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 270.

also a student from Tokyo, and "[b]ecause he was sick" in some unspecified way, "he quit school, and decided to rest here [in Shimoda] for a month[149]." As the young Tokyo man and the young woman from Shimoda walk down the seashore, he continually tries to express his affection whether it be trying unsuccessfully to hold her hand or say things like, "When I'm reading a book, instead of seeing characters on the page, I see your pupils appear like black quartz in front of me[150]." The young woman ends up rejecting him and leaving him alone on the beach, and the next day leaves him a note. She tells him: "Your features are white and delicate. But as for me, I want thick, burly arms to hold me. I want to bury my face in a man's chest so tight that I feel as if I'm going to burst[151]." The woman does not necessarily reject the man because of his illness, but it is not far-fetched to posit that illness is a factor in his "white and delicate[152]" features, a factor that distances him from the ideal image of hegemonic masculinity. The dejected college man and the fastidious local woman both play into this ideal and are affected (harmfully or otherwise) because of it.

Similar to these young men in "The Girl from Shimoda," in the 1932 short story "By the Poolside," protagonist Sanzō isn't specified as suffering with such an affliction bur rather possesses a thin, weak-looking body, excelling at academics over athletics, and struggling with body image issues. Sabine Frühstück, in her 2005 essay "Male Anxieties: Nerve Force, Nation, and the Power of Sexual Knowledge" connects Japan's concept ideal masculinity to an importation of global/Western gender ideologies:

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[149] Nakajima Atsushi. "Shimoda no onna." *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 1. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 273.
[150] Ibid., 273.
[151] Ibid., 275.
[152] These features also no doubt connect to the frame-narrative protagonist's experience with the "excessive paleness" of Tokyo.

> In Japan…the nationalism around the turn of the nineteenth century provided a powerful base for a manly ideal, imagined and represented in its most perfected form in military academies and the battlefields of Japan's many wars. The kind of men at the center of attention indicate a major shift from a primarily soldierly mode of a masculinity to the masculinity of the white-collar worker…whose expertise is no longer in war-making but in the pursuits of a capitalist market economy.[153]

While Frühstück describes Japan's transition from militaristic notions of masculinity to capitalistic ones, in the colonial context, it seems that these elements grew hand-in-hand, since colonialism existed both to exploit extraterritorial wealth and to protect its regimes martially. Military might and police power were central elements in Japan's control over its colonies, and Sanzō's participation in militaristic drills as a middle schooler ("he would finish up with drills, smelling like a mixture of gun lubricant and leather, and go back toward the firearm safe"[154]) exemplifies this dynamic. This connection of masculinity to militarism and capitalism requires a strong, muscular, pain-tolerant physique for men, an oppressive standard that does not overlap with Sanzō's experiences.

Towards the end of the story, the narrator tells us that word traveled about Sanzō's sexual experiences (or lack thereof) in the Korean brothel, and consequently some fifth-year boys dragged him out to the hill behind the campus and beat him up. After the violence comes to an end, the narrator describes Sanzō's thoughts as he lay on the grass face-down:

> 俺は意気地のない男だ、と彼は考えていた。せめて、自分から進んで眼鏡をとらなかったことだけが、わずかに彼の自尊心を慰めた。ふと、自分が何か神通力でも得て、散々に今の二人を苛める場面を、彼は頭の中で空想して見た。その空想の中で、彼は孫悟空のように色々な妖術をつかって、さんざんに彼等を悩ますのであった。空想はしばらく続いた。それから覚めると、また新しい憤りが湧いて来た。腕力がないということが、現在の彼にとって如何に致命的なことであるか

[153] Sabine Frühstück, "Male Anxieties: Nerve Force, Nation, and the Power of Sexual Knowledge," in *Building a Modern Japan*, ed. Morris Low (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 40.
[154] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." In *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 271-272. Translation mine.

を、彼は考えて見た。その前には、学校の成績の如きものは、何等の価値もないのであった。それは、どうにも口惜しいことであった。しかも、それは彼にとって、どうにもならないことであった[155]。

*I'm a man without any courage.* At least he hadn't taken off his glasses on his own free will, he thought, assuaging his self-reproach. All at once, by some bout of supernatural power, he daydreamed a scene in which he enacted revenge against the two boys. In his fantasy, he was like Son Gokū from *Journey to the West*, using black magic to inflict maximum punishment. This daydream continued for several moments. Then, waking back up, Sanzō felt a new surge of indignation well up within him. Lacking physical strength – to him, it was a fatal flaw. Before this, he felt no value in things like his grades. Grades were awful and vexing. But to him, it was something he couldn't rebel against.

In this memory, Sanzō intensely internalizes the modern colonial masculine ideal that values physical strength over intellect[156]. In his vengeful daydream, Sanzō resorts to the ancient Chinese tale *Journey to the West* for his inspiration. Even in the desire to attain the masculine ideal of strength and the shame he feels about his scholarly excellence, he looks to the wisdom of literature and scholarship to imagine attaining such strength. The rationale for the fifth-years' act of violence could be one of two possibilities: either the boys found out that Sanzō may have had sex with a Korean prostitute, in which case they might have felt offended that a boy skinnier and weaker than they had attained sex; or they found out that Sanzō went to a brothel but failed to attain sex, in which case they sought to malign Sanzō for his masculine, heterosexual failure. Regardless of the rationale for the beating and regardless of his wistful desire to enact revenge, middle-school-age Sanzō suffers damaging bodily consequences from this modern masculine ideal.

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[155] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." In *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 296.

[156] This is not to say that knowledge was not used to maintain colonial control, but that in Sanzō's experience of this Japanese settler middle school context, physical strength formed a more significant part of the masculine ideal than intellectual strength.

In the very short Part Three of the text, the narrator returns to the present day once more. Sanzō has already gotten out of the pool and toweled himself off, but he remains close to the pool so that it is in his line of sight. Nakajima writes in his final scene:

> プウルでは、三人の中学生が並んで泳いでいた。競泳の選手ででもあるらしく、いずれも、鮮やかな泳ぎぶりであった。彼等は全く良い体格をしていた。その真黒な身体を、素直に伸びた足を、筋肉の盛上った肩つきを、三造は此の上なく羨ましいものに思った。彼は自分の生っ白い腕を眺め、彼等に対して、ひけめを感じない訳にはいかなかった。丁度何年か前、上級生に打たれた時に感じた、あの「肉体への屈服」と、「精神への蔑視」とを、彼は再び事新しく感じるのであった[157]。
>
> In the pool, three middle school students, were swimming alongside one another in rows. They seemed to be competitive swimmers given their adroit swimming style and perfect physiques. Looking at these shadowed bodies, legs docilely stretched out, shoulders bulging with muscle, Sanzō felt intensely envious. Seeing his own pallid arms, comparing them to those of the swimmers, he couldn't help but feel a sense of inferiority. "Submission to the flesh" and "contempt for the mind" – those feelings brought about when he'd been beaten up by upperclassmen so many years ago – again, he felt it anew.

Though it has been almost a decade since Sanzō attended the middle school, Nakajima ends the story by asserting the tenacity of past memories to infiltrate Sanzō's subjective experience. Sanzō still struggles with his body image and although an adult man in his twenties, still feels inferior to some of the athletic adolescent boys at the school. Sanzō recognizes that his strength lies in his intellect, but the colonial masculine ideal causes him to have contempt for his own mind (神性への蔑視, *shinsei e no besshi*) and to submit to the physical demands of the settler-colonial male body (肉体への屈服, *nikutai e no kuppuku*). Regardless of age or time, Sanzō is trapped in this system that requires a body that he does not and cannot possess. This Japanese settler character's bodily insufficiency continues to complicate hegemonic narratives of the types of settlers in the Korean colony that the Japanese regime demanded.

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[157] Nakajima Atsushi. "Pūru no soba de." In *Nakajima Atsushi zenshū.* Vol. 3. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), 297.

**Conclusions**

All of the stories examined in this chapter point to the complexities of the representation of illness and the body in Nakajima's text – and in many other modern and/or colonial texts from the corpus of Japanese literature. Because of the metaphorical nature of language, illness is also imbued with meaning, sometimes leaning more toward condonation of or towards contestation of the hegemonic status quo of colonial life in the Japanese Empire. Nakajima's description of coolies in "A July Scene in D City" and "A Policeman's Landscape" at once provide insight social inequalities of the colonial regime but also sometimes rob such characters of the complex subjectivity afforded to ill Japanese and settler characters. The ill body of Sadakichi from "Fight," who resides in Japan proper, brings attention to the Japanese state's expectation of men to labor for the empire and to provide for their heteronormative families – an expectation rooted in the assumption of able-bodiedness and typical health. The non-hegemonic bodies and/or psychologies of the young men in "The Girl from Shimoda" likewise reveals expectations of gendered and bodily norms for Japanese men, from the perspective of a shrewd and fastidious Japanese woman. "A Life" and "By the Poolside" reveal these expectations of Japanese men who settle in the colonies, and show Nakajima's willingness to complicate these expectations in accordance with his own experiences growing up as a chronically ill person in the colonies. "A Life" presents the harshest portrait of illness, compounded by the loneliness of settler status, which results in death, whereas "By the Poolside" reveals the more emotional (albeit no less real) pain that the ideology of Japanese modern masculinity inflicts upon settler subjects like Sanzō. In nearly all of these cases, the privilege attached to Japanese ethnic or settler identity allows for greater freedom in the telling of ill characters' stories, but on the other hand, each of these texts

points out or even challenges the hegemonic narratives of expectations for the bodies of Japanese imperial citizens and subjects.

## CONCLUSION

The literary scholar Shimizu Masahiro describes Nakajima Atsushi as a *gudōsha* (an "investigator" or a "searcher of the way") who embarked on spiritual/psychological wanderings (精神放浪, *seishin-hōrō*)[158]. For many familiar with Nakajima's more famous works set in ancient China (such as "Sangetsuki" or "Ri Ryō") or with his South Pacific tales (such as his fictionalized autobiography of Robert Louis Stevenson, *Hikari to kaze to yume* or *Light, Wind, and Dreams*), this idea of Nakajima's texts wandering beyond the borders of the supposedly neatly bound Japanese archipelago is not cause for any great surprise. In many ways, his birth into a family line of Sinologists inscribes Nakajima into a kind of dialogization between nations, and a kind of hybridity of cultures. Given that the critical work of Jakobson, Bakhtin, and Bhabha addresses the potential for meaning in any speech act or piece of literature, it is easy to find Nakajima's hybrid life unworthy of special consideration. The value of studying the works of Nakajima is in their contextual details, their revelations about cultural practices in the height of Japanese imperialism, and their contribution to knowledge of East Asian literary history and global colonial literatures. And the pleasure in researching Nakajima's early works, besides helping to rounding out knowledge of this author's full collection of works, is in their characters' emotional range: high on the spirit of adventure, calmly nostalgic for the days of one's youth, indignant at social injustice, pessimistic about the value of living without meaningful community, lovesick and looking for new relationships. Nakajima's early works possess a candor that works written later in his career sometimes lack, drawing from the raw experiences of growing up as a bookish, adventure-oriented, and chronically ill boy, of being a colonial

[158] Shimizu Masahiro. *Gudōsha no bungaku: Nakajima Atsushi-ron.* (Tokyo: Bungeisha, 2002), 223.

expatriate middle schooler in Seoul and a lonesome teenager and young adult at a Tokyo high school. But despite his authorial assertions of distance from politics, this project has revealed the ways in which all of his works are deeply embedded in political structure – due to their inextricable position within language. In his works, dialogues erupt between racism and anti-colonial movements, between sympathetic intentions and harmful realities, between validation of imperial Japan's ableist tropes and searing commentary thereon. These dialogues are out of the direct control of the author, but depend on the many functions of language that lead to the negotiation of meaning. And to repeat what has become obvious out of this project, condonation and contestation of hegemonic Japanese colonial narratives undoubtedly coexist: they dialogue with one another, sometimes one lean more heavily to one side than the other, and sometimes are so fused that they are nearly inseparable at the analytical level.

Chapter One examined Nakajima's representations of colonized space, showing the ways in which the texts reproduce the hierarchical ideals of the colonizing state and question the infallibility of the colonial spatial order. Emblematic of this political hybridity is the image of the former French embassy in Seoul, which frames the larger narrative in "By the Poolside" at the beginning and end of the story. On the one hand, the text emphasizes that the space, defined by a large red building, and its erstwhile use during the days of Korean autonomy, is a symbol of the *past.* Although the story is told primarily through the memory of chronotopes – Korea of the past and the present, Manchuria of the past and the present – Sanzō's memory is always contained within colonial experience. The space of the red building presents a pre-colonial, non-colonial chronotope that Sanzō himself has not experienced, yet knows all the same. Whereas the Japanese settler middle school sits atop the ruins of a beautiful Korean palace and imposes upon the indigenous space with its spaces of modernity, hygiene, and militarism, the old French

consulate is not asphyxiated by this palimpsestic arrangement of space. It represents an impossible-to-reach past, yet also represents the idea of life untouched by the colonial administration.

Chapter Two similarly presents the ambiguity of the texts with regard to hegemonic narratives of gendered and ethnicized hierarchy. Again in "By the Poolside," the young Korean girl who runs by the swimming pool causes Sanzō to want to speak to her in Korean. Despite the willingness and enthusiasm to open the channel of communication (which, given the power differential between Sanzō and this girl, should be questioned anyway), the colonial state's structural disregard for the language indigenous to the peninsula upon which they all stand manifests in the breaking of this channel – or more accurately, its nonexistence, its state of never having existed.

And certainly, Chapter Three's foray into the textual dialogue between and hybridity of narratives on illness and the body produces similarly complex results. Masaki's illness in "A Life" on the one hand challenges the hegemonic ideal that Japanese settlers be unequivocally strong and healthy but on the other, adds to the discourse of Japanese settlement into "exotic" territories in the first place. Further, the poetic psychological portrait the reader gains from the story is symbolic of the subjectivity afforded to characters of privileged social identities (such as Japanese men) and withheld from those of less privileged identities.

This dynamic understanding of meaning – that meaning is reproduced during each instance of reading and that within one given reading, a multiplicity of political positionalities emerge – can help inform and expand critical analysis of Nakajima's later works as well. Given their complex and detail-driven array of characters and settings, his South Pacific tales and

Sinitic stories are fecund sites for analyzing the political polysemy that populates the texts. In addition, analysis of other stories by Nakajima that take place in colonial Korea and Manchuria that were beyond the scope of this project – such as "Toragari" ("Tiger Hunting") and the unfinished, posthumously published "Hoppōkō" ("Travels to the North") – will be particularly useful to bridge the gap in knowledge between the earlier works considered in this project and the later works for which Nakajima is more well-known. Despite his short life, there are no "ifs" when it comes to his career, which produced a rich, diverse, and multifaceted array of literary works. And despite – or because of – the dynamic hybridity of political positions that exist within the texts, Nakajima Atsushi is an important and formidable figure whose texts scholars need to continue to examine and re-examine in order to push the field of Japanese imperial literary studies on toward an even more robust and well-informed future.

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**APPENDIX**: **TRANSLATIONS**

## "The Girl from Shimoda" (1927 or Showa 2; age 18)
## Nakajima Atsushi

I.

"I found love in the city. It was a love affair like sparklers[159] shaped like cholera cells. In the end, it turned out to be a cruel thing. I was so dull; she was so sharp. I wanted to drink ten cocktails; she wanted a glass of whisky. By the tenth day after she met me, she was already throwing her arms around another man's head. And I was….pitiful ol' me was….well, I had a nervous breakdown. And I was unable to bear the excessive paleness of the city's skin. (By the way, the reason the city sometimes appeared red had nothing to do with that skin, but completely to do with the red pimples that appeared over top of it.) Finally, I escaped and came down to this southern country."

I told this story to the first girl I met here.

This country's air was like a hummingbird's feathers – light and sweet and ever so ticklish. In the only café in town, the woman's rich and swollen skin exuded a tepid dampness, bathed in purple light. She faced downwards.

Then, with the cheerfulness of the plains on a summer morning, she started to laugh.

"Hahahahahaha."

I went silent and looked at the girl's face.

She then suddenly spoke.

[159] *senko hanabi*, a Japanese firework whose sparks are a little more reserved than those of a North American sparkler

“Say, why don’t we become friends? Closer friends.”

“Friends?”

“Yeah, of course! Friends, just friends.”

Her smiling eyes melted my own right away. This time I replied without hesitation.

“Let’s. Let’s be friends.”

We clinked cups together. Even into the clear green liquid inside, the purple light poured like rain. And at that, we became friends.

II.

The next afternoon, I found myself walking along the town’s harbor. Under the peach sky, the port town shimmered with brilliant white sunlight. In that white sunlight, the girl’s round face was laughing like a rose. Her petal-like lips, finding me, began chatting away.

“Wow, we finally found it.”

Her eyes peered into mine.

And her velvet-smooth mouth spoke again.

“You hate me, don’t you? I know it. But that’s not an excuse for you to not come by my house.”

I didn’t understand what was going on, or why.

“And well, if that is the reason, then isn’t that a good thing? Why is that? You told me stories from the city. So I want to tell you about a woman from this town. It’s an interesting story, this one. We have to go to my house right now. To. My. House. Right. Now.”

So she took my bewildered self to her house, and proceeded to tell me a story about a woman from this town.

*In this port town, a local girl and a student from Tokyo fell in love.*

*The girl had long hair.*

*The boy had a pale face. Because he was sick, he quit school and decided to rest here for a month.*

*One night, he and the girl were walking together along the coast.*

*The girl's eyes resembled those of a girl who appeared in the afternoon news he'd read earlier. It was a sentimental night. The white frost made the scents of the April sea and of flowers mix together and float through the air. Feeling the chilly frost on his cheeks, the boy's face began to flush red. As they were walking, the girl's corpulent body emitted a strong odor, and the boy could hardly stand it. He would time to time pluck out hairs. Unable to drink, he recklessly pulled out a cigarette. And he started talking as if to himself.*

*"Ahh, why don't I have any self-respect?"*

*"Well, why're you smoking?" she asked, her pigeon-like eyes looking up, pretending to be surprised.*

*"Well, I…I, uh…"*

*The boy quickly knelt in the sand.*

*"Ever since I met you in that store a month ago, I haven't been able to get any work done. When I'm reading a book, instead of seeing characters on the page, I see your pupils appear like black quartz in front of me. When I look up at the sky, I see your peach-colored face, laughing away. And until now, for almost a whole month, I haven't been able to sleep at night. And then…"*

*The boy had probably seen love scenes unfold like this in the moving pictures shown in Tokyo. But it was as if he were completely immersed in a dream.*

*His lips trembled.*

*His eyes begged for pity as they looked up at her. He reached out his hand toward her. His heart danced like a baby chick.*

*The girl flitted the boy's hand away with her fingertips, and laughed coldly.*

*"Hahahaha, what nonsense."*

*"You…you…"*

*The boy started to throw himself down.*

*"I love you, don't I? So…so…why are you saying this awful…?"*

*"Ah, I see.... And you're even bowing. But I can't help but feel like you handsome academic types are out of my league."*

*The boy's pupils shimmered like a fish's scales in the morning light.*

*"Huh, so you really feel that way?"*

*The boy stifled his dangerously joyful tears.*

*But interestingly, the girl laughed again.*

*"Okay, but anyway…How much money do you plan on spending?"*

*The girl left the boy behind, lying overturned on top of the sand, and quietly disappeared like a slide on a projector.*

*The next morning the girl wrote the boy a letter.*

*My dear,*

*I'm so sorry about last night. I hope you have a quick return to Tokyo.*

*This country is warm. Instead of cold love between heart and heart, girls in this country prefer love between body and body. Your features are white and delicate. But as for me, I want*

*thick, burly arms to hold me. I want to bury my face in a man's chest so tight that I feel as if I'm going to burst.*

*You, you're too sentimental. I like guys who are more manly and strong. I hate men who are overly sensitive, hate men who aren't tasteful. And on top of that, I hate people who say that love is more than just sexual desire.*

*You asked me my name first. But why would you do something like that? You don't need a name, or anything like that, when it comes to love. I was really disappointed in you for that.*

*And then last night, I teased you about how much money you had, and you toppled over acting like you were gonna cry. Why did I laugh then? Why didn't I hold and comfort you? Why didn't I kiss your lips? It was because at that time, I didn't want to become something that belonged to you. So I didn't have any pity for you. It was stupid of me…I'm sorry…*

*So, my dear – no, pitiful – boy. Goodbye. Go back to Tokyo and look for a new lover there. But you have to always have courage. Love takes the courage of a dog, and the perseverance of a pig. Oh, and one more thing – it takes money.*

When the story ended, she spoke.

"It isn't that interesting of a story. But the girl from the story sounds a lot like your ex-lover, huh?"

I silently nodded.

She immediately began to tell a second story.

*The man's face wore a radiance that reeked of rotten beef.*

*He was, after all, a Tokyo businessman.*

*He had just visited Y onsen, and he decided to stop by at this pleasant port town.*

*Love, to the forty-year-old man, smelled of red pork.*

*The man's tenacious desire for the flesh led him to a certain woman, sitting in the inner parlor of one of the town's little saké bars. In the raucous parlor, the man became red in the face with tipsiness, letting out an unpleasant laugh.*

*The woman pretended not to see him.*

*The man started to fidget with his wallet. His hands became sloppy, and he grabbed hold of the woman's hands.*

*"Thank you."*

*While she was avoiding the piggish man's gaze, a sarcastic laugh escaped from the woman's mouth.*

*"Just so you know, I'm not the kind of woman who sells her body."*

*But he wouldn't stop. His eyes were bloodshot like those of a dog in heat. He reached out his hands to grab hold of the woman's neck.*

*"Please stop."*

*The woman resolutely stood up and struck the man's hand with one blow.*

*"I'm pissed. Men like you are an affront to women. What the hell do you take women for? Women are not machines to fulfill men's sexual desires. Women have hearts. Hearts that are lovelier and warmer than the ones you men have. That's why when it comes to love, I'll have nothing to do with dirty men like you."*

*Upon this, the woman returned to a cold quiet.*

*"That's right. You don't know anything about love. Your cloudy eyes and your filthy lips just tell how much you don't know about love. Even if you know about physical desire, you don't*

*know about love. One woman loves one man. Really loves him from the bottom of her heart. Ahh, something like that, wouldn't it be wonderful?"*

*Like any sentimental woman would, she then placed her hand to her chest, and looking up, continued to speak. The man, overtaken by shock, listened.*

*"I hate shameless old men like you. A younger, more handsome guy would be better. Someone who doesn't know anything about the world yet – I want to have a love with someone like that. You're way older than me. But there's one thing that I will tell you. Try to find a love – one time out of your whole life – a love that is serious. If you do that, then you'll really understand the point of living life. Because men like you, who only know fleshly desire, don't understand what true happiness is."*

*After tossing these words at him, the woman hurriedly up and left the room.*

After relaying this exceedingly ordinary story, the girl said to me.

"Compared to the last one, this story was a lot more boring, right? But, well, if only…"

After taking a little breath, she continued.

"If I told you that the girl from the first story and the girl from the second story were the same person, what would you think?"

Looking at my surprised face, she started to speak rapid-fire.

"And well, what if I were to tell you now that these two women are *me*? What would you think?"

I stared at the girl's face.

"Hahahahaha, you don't have to look so surprised. Anyway, both of those stories were my own stories. But both of those men are still lingering around in town."

III.

*I like you. Because you don't love me. And I don't love you either. Love is the greatest blasphemy in life. Yesterday's stories were both true. But then again, neither of them were too far-fetched. Because all women aren't just molded into the same shape. There are times when I feel really strong. But of course, there are times when I feel deeply that I'm just a woman. I don't know if it's split personality or if there's some difficult term for it. It's just, depending on the time and place, I'm like a chameleon, and I change my colors. To your eyes, what color am I? Red? Black? Blue? Green? Or white? I'm sure you didn't see me as peach-colored. But since I might show you my peach color, come meet me. Ten in the morning. At S Park.*

Ten o'clock, as promised. It was at this park, where it's easy to see the harbor, that I fell for the woman.

It was bright. Excessively bright. Worst of all, the sky was clouded in a white haze. And the ocean was also shining bright. Under the clear silver sky of April, mumblings of gossip loitered around.

"Hey, you're going back to Tokyo tomorrow, right?" the girl asked me as she stared at the rims of my eyeglasses. I nodded silently.

In an instant, they both became quiet.

Then, the girl started laughing, as if she had just thought of something.

"Hahahahahaha, I was about to say something that was very unlike me. Ha… Hey, why don't we go up to a higher place?"

At this, the two of them climbed up to the foot of an old fort. On the stone wall, a lizard's tail basked in purple light danced in bright sunlight, in a boisterous fashion characteristic of the

southern country. Raising her hands above her hand, she looked out toward the ocean and suddenly called out.

"Hey, that ship! Yes, it has to be that one."

"What is it?"

"The ship that the two of them are returning on."

"*Those* two people?"

"Yeah."

"Both of them are returning today?"

"Yep. They told me they were going back today on the *M Maru*[160]."

The two people were the ones she'd told the stories about: the businessman and the student.

Then, she had the feeling to say something unbearably amusing.

"It'd be interesting if both of them tell their secret stories to each other. The strange faces they'd make at one another."

The lizard tail stopped its rambunctious dance, then fell soft and limp against the stone. As the sun approached noon, its rays fell upon the edges of the trees, whose leaves strongly reflected yellow up to the sky. Then she muttered.

"You know, I'm fine with how I treated that business guy, but I'm starting to realize that I feel bad for how I spoke to the student….Eh, it's just a little bit of pity."

Then I suddenly fell into a bit of a daydream, caught in the lightness of the spring air…Thinking about how if the student and businessman were father and son, or if I were friends

[160] Japanese ship names often end with the word *Maru.*

with one of them, that I would bring the girl to Tokyo to show her off to them. Then, what kind of face would the father and son make towards each other? How would they greet me?....

But, these daydreams faded away in the mystery of the soft touch of the girl's hand on my shoulder. In an instant, that feeling broke me.

"Hey, what kind of feelings do you have for me now?"

Her pupils widened like a those of Persian cat as she looked at me.

"Hmm…You've been awfully gentle today….Well… I can see your peach color, just like you said in the letter, huh?"

"Oh? Really?" She jumped up like a shepherd's lamb in the springtime.

"Yes, so…" I said, my thoughts getting cut short.

"So, what's there to do?"

"Doing this."

I suddenly embraced her in my arms.

"No."

She suddenly shook my arms off of her and broke into a run toward down below. Finally, I heard her exhilarating laughter from down there.

"Hahahahaha."

It was a refreshing laughter, like the rustling of poplar leaves. Listening to her, I even cheered up somehow or another.

"Ahahahaha."

Our sonorous laughter rose up and became entangled together, in turn disappearing in the white spring air.

* * *

What I've written about above is the story of one girl I meet while traveling some time ago. Because it's exceedingly strange when I think about it again, I wonder whether or not I had dreamed her up. But she was not a dream, and the proof is in the letter I carried back with me to Tokyo three days ago. But in that letter, all that's written are things like, "How is the spring in Tokyo?" and "Are you in good health?" and "This has all seemed like a dream, hasn't it?" – all things that she would never say. So naturally I was a little bewildered, but thinking about it carefully, I realized that she also has this feeble side to her.

But, if someone asked me to explain, I would first have to quote a line from the letter she wrote me:

"Because all women aren't just molded into the same shape. There are times when I feel really strong. But of course, there are times when I feel deeply that I'm just a woman."

# "Fight" (1928 or Shōwa 3; age 19)
# Nakajima Atsushi

Part One

For Okane, it was irritating to see her son Sadakichi lounging around doing nothing due to his peritonitis or whatever his sickness was called. This was because while was lying down, his happy-go-lucky face and words bore none of the characteristics of an ill person.

In fact, Sadakichi often caused quarrels to break out among his family. There was the fact that he was born as the eldest son in a family of fishermen, but since Sadakichi was always lounging around, the family could not properly sustain itself. At this point, his father, Okane's late husband, had already passed away and was no longer with them. And so, Okane was always saying "sorry" – over and over again – to her late husband on behalf of Sadakichi.

Upon hearing these apologetic mutterings, Sadakichi's wife Tori – rather than Sadakichi himself – would get angry.

Sadakichi couldn't help the fact that he was ill, so every day, his wife couldn't see any other way but to go out and work somewhere on his behalf. If you nag a sick person about things such as this, you only make the illness worse.

But Okane, stubborn as ever, took great offense at her daughter-in-law's words, Tori having given off the impression that she demanded Okane's gratitude for her work.

Though Sadakichi was ill, from what she'd seen, Okane didn't understand what part of him was hurt or what was wrong with him. Just letting him lounge around, surely it was a waste of potential. Tori was extremely proud of her ability to go out and work, to Okane, it was nothing but ordinary maid's work.

Because of this dynamic, Okane often flared up at her daughter-in-law. At times like these, Sadakichi's grandmother would enter the room, taking sides with Tori and chiding Okane,

who became all the more enraged. Then, Sadakichi's youngest sister Sato would return home and make a feisty display of sympathy with her brother. Okane, furious, would strike Sato. Tori would put a stop to it, but Sato would begin to cry…These types of quarrels broke out again and again in this household.

And today was no different.

That day, Okane went out to her day-job – piling firewood into steamships – and came home a little late. After finishing dinner, she lay down and stretched out on the tatami floor, and almost instinctively started to grumble about the hardship of the day's work, complaining how she was no longer able to work the way she once was, and then moving onto Sadakichi and her disappointment in him. At these abuses, Sadakichi, usually so silent, mustered up the strength to lift up his black-and-blue face, swollen with sadness, and said angrily, "It's not as if I'm just sleeping away on a bed of luxury!"

Okane was taken aback, staring at Sadakichi's face with vexation. She fell into a state of silence, unable to move.

"What are you talking about? You think this isn't luxurious? This is luxury! Being sick like this."

Unbeknownst to Sadakichi, his wife was standing by his side.

"Working while you're sick," Tori said, "it's impossible. When we visited the doctor, he said so. That he has to stay put."

"What does the doctor know? If all doctors really said that, then there'd be no one around that works. This is just laziness, plain and simple."

At this, the grandmother unsuspectedly entered the room and spoke her mind.

"As a parent, shouldn't you feel just an ounce of pity for Sadakichi? Tori's working, and it's not as if they don't have anything to eat, so why can't you just leave him be?"

"That's just because you're too soft, Mom. Someone sick like this goes out to the seashore, they'd get better right away. Lazing around is only making things worse."

After saying all this, Okane suddenly noticed young Sato enter the room, standing in the corner. Looking at her mother's enraged demeanor, Sato's face seemed to ask "Again?" A mean, cold laugh welled up out of her, as she stared blankly into the center of the room. Okane flared up upon seeing her expression, and glared at Sato with formidable eyes. Sato shrank down and looked away toward her side.

Next to sleeping Sadakichi, this row between mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, and grandmother continued on. Okane's face turned red as she scolded the two. Sato and her grandmother-in-law called Okane heartless.

"Letting him just dilly-dally around like this, y'all are destroying this household! You have no shame for my dead husband, going on like this!"

"Well, for your part, you'd have no shame even if you up and killed Sadakichi! You'd be fine if your son died."

"Well…well…" Okane continued to stammer violently, looking as if she were about to cry. "You all can drop dead! I'm always worrying about him, and y'all are ganging up on me…"

After silence lingered for a while, Tori, tears rising up in her eyes, spoke.

"Okkā[161], you're jealous, aren't you? Of me and Sadakichi, of how we get along together….you're jealous. If you're not jealous, then it wouldn't make sense that you're always saying things like this. You should know better, at your age…."

[161] dialectal term for mother-in-law

Hearing this, Okane stopped speaking. Then, holding back tears, the daughter- and mother-in-law glared at one another.

That evening, Okane was unable to fall asleep. She thought of the lover she had found since the losing her husband, and of how he was snatched earlier this spring by some younger woman. It wasn't as if no one in the town knew about the affair. Or at least, Okane thought her daughter-in-law seemed to insinuate as much.

"What a detestable daughter-in-law you are," Okane wanted to say, but there was only Sadakichi and the grandmother to hear her. *I really wanna beat her dead.*

So she thought, as she lay in bed, grinding her teeth.

Part Two

The next morning, Okane got up before anyone else. Immediately, she remembered the fight from the previous evening. She considered herself not to be a bad person at her core, and after all, her violent anger from last night had mostly receded. However, frustration was frustration. Having become so angry last night, she felt like she couldn't lose face by appearing to have fizzled out. She felt like she had to do something about this predicament. Shivering, she left the house, careful to avoid being noticed. Then, she worried about where to hide.

The surface of the ocean was still dim. Neither had people yet crowed the beach. Taking the trail running from the bay toward the mountains, she once again pondered about what to try and do. Things were still vexing at home, so she resolved not to go back, resolved to find somewhere else. Then, still trying to avoid being seen, she went into the pine forest up in the mountains. In the middle of the woods, she spent about an hour, mulling over the events from the

previous night, when finally the sun began to rise. Looking down between the pines, she saw a dewy path illuminated with sunlight, becoming more and more verdant. It was the railway to Tokyo. The woman who she raised since she was small was in Tokyo. Okane thought about perhaps going there and surprising the family members, staying for two or three days. But thinking about it more carefully, she remembered she had gone out without even carrying a single coin on her. She was in no position to go to Tokyo. Since her family had no doubt already woken up by now, she couldn't just go back to get money.

Seeing no other way, Okane continued walking northward through the pine forest. At one point, she came to a Hoke[162] temple called Daigyoji. The morning service must have just ended, as the main hall was lamp-lit, empty, and spacious. She stood in the corner of the temple garden for a time. All around the temple's new stone monument, hydrangeas had already begun to grow rampant. Around an old stupa[163] stood five or six lofty zelkovas, through whose treetops flickering lines of sunlight and shadow leaked out. She suddenly thought about working as a maid for a Tokyo family, as she had done so before. Pacing back and forth in her thoughts, she pondered borrowing the money from the temple donation area. With that money, she could probably get to Tokyo.

But upon leaving the temple and arrived at the gate of the house, the maid there came out and said with a wry smile on her face, "Mrs. Okane, you had a fight last night, huh? Your mother came over and told me about it earlier this morning. She thought you had maybe come here, and then she told me that if you came to borrow our car to not lend you the money."

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[162] Referring to a form of Japanese Buddhism that bases itself on the text of the Lotus Sutra
[163] Buddisht mound-like structure that countains relics and can be used as a place for meditation. Sometimes people use the Christian word "reliquary" to translate this Buddhist term.

Okane quickly dashed out of the house. *What kind of cowardly person…Coming all the way over here.* Okane fumed, and without any destination in particular, she walked through the nearby field. The smell of grass was overwhelmingly pungent. All over, the small leaves of sorghum shone brilliantly in the nearly-June sunlight. Time elapsed at a crawl. Okane turned around toward the path she had come, going back again and again. Traversing the path five or six times, she started to feel her stomach to be unbearable empty. Going around to and fro for so long, and it was finally noon. Since the morning, she hadn't eaten anything. The fact that she hadn't brought any money pained her. But at this point, she couldn't just go back home. She thought of galloping off to the home of an acquaintance. But going back toward the seaside and risking being seen and laughed at by her family – she couldn't do that. Then, she remembered the family she used to be employed by, and decided to go there. However, when she got there, the family was already having lunch. But she was accustomed to entering and leaving without enjoying meals together with the household, so in the end, she was unable to have lunch. She was deeply disappointed, but there was nothing she could do. Then, it seemed as if someone was returning to the house.

To make the time pass, she chatted there for a long while. Then, out of nowhere, a salty rice cracker appeared. Okane grabbed at it quickly and ripped at it with big bites, surprising the mistress of the household.

"You must like it," said the woman teasingly, unable to full-on laugh at Okane. Once she finished the rice cracker, the two moved on to talk about the town's new mayor, about the many summer visitors this year, about the upcoming festival. By the time they exhausted all possible topics, so much time had passed that it was almost five o'clock when Okane left the house.

She thought of going home already. But one small part of her was not feeling up to it. No matter how hungry she was, she still felt a pang of resentment toward the idea of going home. But hunger was making her weaker and weaker. And accordingly, thinking of the fight from last night, Okane had to strain to make her anger flare up anew. Returning home would mean losing to them. Thinking of this, Okane headed towards the mountain she had climbed in the morning. Once inside the pine forest, she lay down overtop the grass. Her stomach was, of course, severely empty by now. But she remained obstinate, despite this important problem…From between last night's sleep deprivation to the many hours she spent running around today, she began to doze off.

When she opened her eyes, it was around eight o'clock. The first thing she felt then was a dull ache in her lower abdomen – the same strange feeling anyone feels in their stomach when at the point of extreme hunger. Truly, she could not keep on stubbornly keeping on. Suddenly getting up to her feet, she started to hurriedly descend the mountain. Her feet teetered and tottered a little. The path was dark. Along the ocean, she could see many fires lined up, used for luring fish. After stumbling over the roots of pine trees and tumbling over rocks, it was nearly nine o'clock by the time she finally returned home. Peering through an inch-wide opening in the simple fence made of dried bamboo, she saw under the dim lamp Tori and the grandmother talking and sewing with one another.

"I'm home now. My stomach is empty, so I guess there's nothing I can do. I guess I've already lost to my mother and daughter-in-law, haven't I?" muttered Okane beneath her breath, as she quietly entered the house through the back door. Hearing the clank of her wooden sandals, the two of them turned and stared toward Okane. The daughter-in-law and grandmother were silent. Under the light of the lamp hanging in the weathered chimney, their four eyes were aglow

with the cold expression of triumph. Pretending not to see them, Okane rushed into the kitchen and suddenly went to take the lid off the pot. Inside lay three or four steamed horse mackerels. A rice bowl as well lay there, full of her portion.

"They must have done all this for me because they knew I was going to come back. Shit, I lost."

This thought made Okane a little unsettled. Now, there was no way for her to bring this up to them. With her left hand, she began stuffing her cheeks with the rice, and in her right, began munching on the mackerel from its head.

# "A Life" (1928 or Shōwa 3; age 19)
## Nakajima Atsushi

I.

*Are these my lungs? My rotten, worm-eaten lungs, crumbling without a sound?*

Under the dim light of the lamp, he was looking at his own lungs, projected onto the x-ray. They were collapsing, like a pine tree with white moss covering its bark, like a decomposing sea cucumber.

*These are my lungs. This is my life. This is my day-to-day.*

Suddenly, he took the photograph and tossed it into the fireplace. Like phosphorous, his lungs emitted a blue flame, burning out quickly before they became silent like black glass. Then, for no particular reason, he suddenly recalled some poem he had read earlier that afternoon:

*right now, in the nighttime somewhere, laughing.*

*for no reason, the person laughing*
*is laughing at me in the nighttime.*

*right now, somewhere in the world, someone is walking.*
*for no reason, the person walking*
*is walking toward me.*

*right now, somewhere in the world, someone is dying.*

*for no reason, the person in the world dying*

*is looking at me.*

Suddenly, he felt as if before his eyes lay a vast waveless ocean, quiet and frigidly white. And then beyond this scene flowed this whiteness, which was soundless as death. Without thinking, he shuddered.

*What horror…In times like this, I wish she would come.*

While thinking this, he moved his gaze toward the window and looked out, far beneath him under the cold evening light, at the mischievous streets flashing with red.

The woman always rode in her carriage until she reached the top of the hill. Even on a snowy night, without fail she took her two-horse carriage to his place. Over this northern town, snowflakes fell and fluttered, while the horses' bells rang out and the coachman's whip resounded metallically. Soon, the sound of an opening door surprised the quieted house, and then, after making her hasty, stair-climbing footsteps heard, a woman wrapped in a brown fur coat and a hat of the same color entered the room.

"You must've been lonely, huh, Masaki?"

As she said this, the woman stooped down toward the bed a little, and kissed him.

"You can't. The illness is spreading."

At this, the woman made no reply. And as usual, she looked out the window, and started to talk about the outside scene.

"It's so chilly. Out there. But so many girls are walking around Chinatown." She pronounced the Russian word for the place. "Like goldfish swimming in ice."

II.

His life was clearly divided into two parts. One part was when he was by himself, the other, when he was with her. When he slept by himself, the fire of his light became completely extinguished. Thinking about his sea-cucumber lungs and about his withered death, he became anxious and afraid. When she was by his side, the remnants of the fire of his life were revived with crackling sparks, burning again. The only time he was able to forget about his coming death was in moments like these.

While he was able to keep these two parts of himself from attacking one another, he pressed on under the sky of this grey December.

Over the ice of the Sungari[164], a Russian rode a sled, his red beard drooping with pointed icicles, which shone like wire in the Northern Manchurian winter.

Every night under his window, a Chinese girl clumsily plucked the *kokyū*[165]. Listening to the music, he felt the unbearable homesickness of a wanderer who had fallen ill in a foreign destination. Before his eyes, the landscapes of Japan pallidly floated by. But when he thought about his impending death, these phantoms of his homeland were crushed in an instant.

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[164] The Sungari River, flowing between contemporary China's Jilin and Heilongjiang Provinces. Called the Songhua River in Chinese.
[165] Three- or four-stringed Japanese instrument

While sleeping, he overheard the sound of a snowplow.

*That sound it's making…My lungs are crumbling….*

He heard the sound, like gas gushing forth from an old ditch, echo from the pit of his chest along with the sound of his deep, labored breathing.

ZZ ZU……ZZ U ZZ……

As he listened to the sound, the creaking of hands upon a wheel continuing to get louder, he was spurred on to the desperate desire to bite and shred his lung cavities, one by one.

*What should I do? Just stand by as I watch my body wither and die?*

Plucking out hair, he tossed and turned on top of the bed.

But every night, Sofia would take her carriage there, her face red from the cold. Then, he could finally relieve his anxiety.

"How are you? The town's cold, isn't it?"

"Yeah, very cold. Like your ears are gonna be torn off."

Then she proceeded to report to him events happening around town.

"The other day at this café in town, a Japanese guy and a Russian guy were fighting. They were both drunk of course. And in frigid weather like this, they were both wearing worn-out coats. I don't know which of them was in the wrong, but I anyhow, I felt bad for the both of them."

Then, when she stopped speaking, he would ask about her. In truth, he didn't really know much about her at all. She had decidedly avoided talking about herself.

"Sonya, what kind of person are you? What kind of family do you have? Were you born here?"

And her answer was always the same.

"It's all the same, isn't it? That kind of stuff. I'm just a girl who you met by chance during your travels. That's it."

At this, he asked her all the more persistently.

"But I want to know about you, regardless. Haven't I already told you everything about me?"

She knitted her brows slightly.

"Let's just drop this subject already. Okay? Let's play something on the phonograph."

She then stands to go get a record. Tchaikovsky's "Serenade Melancholic[166]."

It makes the sound of footsteps, of a long line of prisoners wandering forth, fearful of the snow-laden Siberian wilderness. It sketches out a scene of ruddy-faced old folks crouching by a *pechika* stove, sipping watery rice porridge and chatting. But somewhere under a dark shadow, whispering. A fit of the blues[167]. The melancholy of the Slavic people.

Then she chooses a work by the same composer – his "1812 Prelude."[168]

Listening to this, he suddenly recalled a scene from last summer at a café in Chinatown. An old Russian woman, together with the crowd, was listening to this same record. When the end of the song went to the melody of the national anthem of the former Russian Empire, everyone kept shouting "Oorah!"

"Yeah, that old woman was Russian…And Sonya, after all, aren't you as well? Just like that woman who loved that record so much."

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[166] Reproduced from the original text, although technically the French title is "Sérénade Mélancolique."
[167] In the original text, *fusagi no mushi* – literally "sad bugs."
[168] Reproduced from the original, but it seems that this work doesn't exist. It may be referring to Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture."

He recalled this. It had hurt his heart terribly.

He exclaimed suddenly, “Sonya. Isn’t there anything else?”

“Oh, I see,” she said, seeming to understand what he was feeling. And then she stopped the record. “It was bad, really. I had a feeling. I’m sorry…Poor thing.”

III.

*Before my lungs become filled with powder, they’ll stop these dull movements.*

While thinking this, he was by himself undergoing a calcium inhalation. When the frostlike white powder entered his lungs, they became unbearably itchy.

He should have already given up long ago. He should have already resolved not to seek medical treatment. But in spite of this hopelessness, sometimes he clung to the idea calcium inhalation treatment.

Hearing the sound of the snowplow, he thought, *Why do I have to die young?*

In the night, when he drew back the curtains, seeing the bright streetlamps outside the window, he thought, *It’s awful. No matter what, dying is awful.*

Lately, he had been having a strange recurring dream. In the dream, he had become a meteor, tumbling through infinite space. In these times, he shouted with a raised voice, looking for someone to cling to. But there was no one whose hand he could grab hold of. Flying at a dizzying speed, he could do nothing but burn white and continue this infinite falling.

The winter’s cold began to intensify, like a blue blade. The wind blew from Siberia with a terrible strength, making the grove of withered acacia trees hiss. The windows of people’s

houses were shaken and rattled to their breaking point, glass flying through the northern Manchurian sky.

He began to lose interest in everything. He quit reading books, rarely looked outside, and all but stopped reciting poetry with his neighbors. The only one for whom he held out any interest was Sofia. To him, Sofia was the only one keeping his last faint flame from burning out. But that flame was not yet powerful enough, even with his illness, to rekindle his life.

One night, he asked her, as he always did.

"Will you really not tell me? About your life from before?"

"Again? No, not this same old stuff."

"But just this once? I promise I won't ask again."

"Oh, stop it, Masaki. Otherwise I'll stop liking you. Anyway, you should look outside. The moon's out."

He lifted his head and looked out. Through the glass, above the hill that stood across from the town, he saw a Russian church that stood like a black sheet of ice in the pallid, frozen twilight. Above that quivered a slender crescent moon, dark red like tea.

"Isn't it something?" he said, proceeding to tell her, as he always did, what he imagined her high-class appearance suggested.

"Sometimes I think about things like this but, are you the daughter of one of the aristocratic families from before? Is that why you escaped your home country and ended up here? I just can't help but having this hunch…"

The moment turned quiet, and as she looked out the window, he looked for movements of emotion over the profile of her face.

IV.

After that night, for some reason she stopped coming to his place. And after a while, he stopped thinking of that as such a terribly lonely thing. On the other hand, the thing he found *most* lonely was the fact that he stopped thinking of this turn of events as lonely. The flame that once burned for her had become extinguished.

*No, it's not just her. It's the landlady and the maid, the window and the fireplace – everything in this world has lost all connection with me. Even if I die, all of those things will just keep on existing. Thinking about this became so intolerable that the other day, I wanted to beat up, knock out all of that – everything. But now, even that kind of anguished energy I had is gone as well. After all that anxiety, all that is left of my life is black, sordid sludge. All of the feelings I've ever had seem to have become fossilized….*

Staring vaguely up at the ceiling, he thought these things as if he were thinking about someone else's life.

He suddenly noticed that the wind was starting to blow. The glass clattered, and the shadow cast by the vase of artificial flowers in front of the curtain trembled. Without thinking, he got himself up and went to reach for the milk bottle at his bedside. And that was the moment. His head suddenly went dizzy, and before his eyes flashed a white light. Inside his chest, he felt a strange sensation of uneasiness and suspicion, when he rolled to the floor and coughed up bright red clumps.

# "A Policeman's Landscape: A Sketch of 1923"
# (Written in 1929 or Shōwa 4, at age 20)
# Nakajima Atsushi

Part One

A cat's frozen corpse stuck like an oyster to the pavement. Above it, a poster advertising red, sweet broiled chestnuts got torn off by the wind and disorderly flew away.

On the street corner stood five or six food stalls, white steam actively rising up from them. A woman, one of whose dark-colored hardened nipples poked through her sullied *chima jeogori*[169], stood in front of a stand and, blowing away the steam, slurped udon freckled red with togarashi.

Returning from the station, policeman Cho Kyo-young[170] stared vaguely at this scene as he waited for the train. In front of him, two Chinese men wearing light-yellow work clothes walked across shouldering a long pole. On the pole they carried buckets of yet-unsold daikon, shining white. Slowly, it was becoming the time when the crowd of people swelled like the tide. Beneath the evening sky, calm like thin ice, the bell from a French church resounded coldly.

Sniffling and lowering his head in the cold air, Kyo-young straightened out the collar of his uniform and looked up to see pale sparks emitting from the train tracks. After the train passed through, a tall man started walking in big strides toward him alongside the tracks. It was the

[169] A traditional Korean garment consisting of a *chima* (skirt) plus a *jeogori* (top). Although the original text uses the Japanese word *tsurumaki*, because Nakajima uses this term to refer to a long traditional Korean women's outfit, I defer to the Korean term.
[170] The Chinese characters for this name are 趙教英. To Japanese readers, this would be pronounced as Chō Kyōei, but since this is a Korean protagonist, I have presented the Korean pronunciation as default. [Nonetheless, is there a better way to romanize the Korean name?]

section chief from the police station. Kyo-young offered a respectful bow, and the chief, in return, gave a placid wave before slipping back into the crowd.

Upon getting into the train, he would stand by the conductor's space (where he could ride for free while in uniform), leaning up against the glass and shoving both hands into his pants pockets. Whenever he got into the train, he would without fail remember a time involving a Japanese middle school student. It was a summer's morning. While Kyo-young was was standing by the conductor's space after leaving the police station, the student boarded the train, on his way to school. Probably wanting to feel the cool breeze, the student would stand by the conductor, rather than standing in the center of the car. But he was not standing in the designated standing area and was imposing into the conductor's space. When the conductor asked would he kindly stand in the center, the student lashed out haughtily.

"Hey, look at that guy!" he said, pointing at the policeman. "That guy's not standing in the middle, and neither will I!" (Of course, this lashing out was likely due to the fact that the conductor was also Korean.) And he remained standing there, as the bewildered conductor and policeman exchanged amused looks at one another. Even now, Kyo-young uneasily remembered the middle school student's expression.

The train car was packed. A student dangling skates on either side of him. A man with a big red nose who looked like a company worker, a housewife holding shopping bags. *Eomeoni*[171] propping their children up by the rear, and *yangban*[172] with thick fur lining their collars.

[171] the Korean term for mother
[172] the pre-colonial Korean landed aristocracy

Suddenly from among the crowd, an abrasive voice could be heard. The passengers altogether looked over in the same direction. Seated there was a poor-looking Japanese woman, and in front of her stood a youth was holding the white handle, wearing Korean clothes and giving off the appearance of a student. The two were shouting at one another.

"I said politely, 'please sit, you've waited a long time for it,'" the woman said, grumbling.

"But you called me a *yeobo.* What the hell did you mean by that?"

"I called you *yeobo*-san[173]!"

"They're the same thing! *Yeobo*…"

"I didn't say *yeobo*, I said *yeobo*-san!"

The woman wasn't understanding. She looked around the car, as if soliciting sympathy from the other passengers.

"I told you politely, '*Yeobo-san*, the seat's empty, please sit down,' so what are you so mad about?"

Scornful laughter belted out all around the train car. The youth gave up and silently glared at the ignorant woman. Again, Kyo-young became depressed. Why was that youth making such a fuss? This amateur protestor – why was it so glorious for him to become someone else? Why was it so embarrassing for him to be himself? … In this way, Kyo-young remembered the events of that day.

That same afternoon, he showed up at a local preschool, along with policeman from the same station – a Japanese officer named Takaki[174] – to attend a speech for the prefectural council

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[173] *san* being the polite gender-neutral suffix attached to names, functionally equivalent to Mr., Ms., or Mrs.
[174] These kanji (高木) could alternatively be read as Takagi.

members' election. Following several speeches by candidates from the Naichi[175], a single Korean candidate went up to start his speech. Having served as the head of the chamber of commerce and industry and gaining the popularity even of the Naichi police officers, this candidate laid out, in polished Japanese, his aspirations. But in the middle of his speech, an audience member sitting up at the front stood up.

"Be quiet, you *yeobo*!" he shouted angrily. He was a youngster, barely twenty, who had made such a foul remark. Without hesitation, Takaki grabbed the kid by his collar and dragged him outside. In that moment, the candidate continued to speak, raising his voice all the more.

"Just now, we heard some regrettable language. But I am, and all of us are, glorious Japanese, and I will believe that until the end."

At this, every corner of the hall erupted into vigorous applause….

Kyo-young remembered this now. And he compared the candidate to the youth on the train. And he thought again about this country called Japan. He thought about the people known as Koreans. And he thought about himself. Further, he thought about his career, and then about his wife and child whom he was returning to now.

Lately, he was experiencing that feeling people have when they forget something, an attitude he could not tame. Hovering weightily over his head was the oppressive feeling that some responsibility of his had not been carried out. But as for where this overwhelming pressure was coming from, he tried not to find out. Or rather, he feared finding out. Waking up to one's own senses was a terrifying prospect. Stimulating his sense of self was frightening.

But why was this so dread-inducing? Why?

[175] Name for the Japanese colonial metropole. Literally "inside-land."

Perhaps it was because of his pale-faced wife and child. If he were to tell them that he lost his job, how would they react? Would they say, "I see, that makes sense. But is that it? That's the root of your fear?"

Terrified, he bowed his head and, through the glass window, observed lamps lining the busy streets as well as the throng of people swimming about. The evening bell. The honking of cars. The bright lamps reflecting over the frozen pavement. Fur-shrouded folks gliding over top. A red-bearded worker loitering on the dim street corner, manure plows without their bovines, garbage trucks….

The train stopped in front of Changgyeong[176] Palace.

In the darkness of the bystreet, the face of the fortune-teller who suffered with chronic pulmonary disease was lit under the strong light of an acetylene lamp. In the front of a used bookstore, an old man with trembling hands read aloud from a book written in *hangul.*

Turning a corner, a man coming his direction bowed and greeted him. Dipping his head and parroting his greeting, Kyo-young could see that it was a fashionable gentleman, decked in a collared sea-otter-fur coat.

"Excuse me, sir, I was wondering whether you could help me," the man said in exceedingly polite language. He was asking about the residence of Mr. X, an official at the government-general. If this gentleman was going to Mr. X's office, then perhaps he was a government official himself. Kyo-young, flustered and never having been addressed so formally

[176] Chinese characters for this name are 昌慶苑; to Japanese readers they would have been pronounced as Shōkei'en.

by a stranger, told the man about the office. Listening to his response, the man politely nodded his head and went in the direction Kyo-young had told him.

And it was then that he made a great discovery, his mouth agape in astonishment.

"I…Did I just become overjoyed talking to that stranger?" he asked himself, startled. "Receiving such polite treatment from that Japanese gentleman, I really celebrated that, even though it's no big deal. Completely like a child getting excited when an adult takes him seriously, I got overjoyed. I really got overjoyed." But he couldn't laugh about the youth from the train; he couldn't talk about the prefectural council candidate.

"This isn't just my problem. Our nation has historically been trained to keep this quality."

Suddenly looking to his side, he saw a man squatting at the roadside, relieving himself. Inadvertently, he thought about the custom of "standing while peeing" of which the people on this peninsula had no knowledge.

"Maybe even this minor custom shows a sense of servitude lurking in our people's psyche," he thought aimlessly.

Part Two

The bronze sun reflected over the frozen December railway, falling, red and trembling, over the bare mountains. Bukhan Mountain stood frozen, jutting out pale like a razor-sharp tooth into the grey sky. Wind blew, quick as light, and sharply swiped at the cheeks of passersby. It was cold enough to shatter bones.

Every morning, herds of people coming and going could be seen under the Namdaemun Gate. Evergreen velvet bean[177] vines crawled like withered hands on the walls and gate, dying.

Purple-speckled faces looked up, then sleepily fell back down.

Over the frozen Han River, old men opened up holes in the ice and, as they smoked tobacco out of long pipes, fished for koi. From the trees alongside the bank, poor folks were collecting wood to burn in their *ondol*[178]. Off the chins of the heavy-burdened cows, icicles of drool hung like light-blue mountains.

It wasn't snowing much. The road had frozen rock-hard. So many kinds of feet had walked, sliding and tumbling, across it.

A Korean's boat-like wooden sandals. A young Japanese girl's glittering *zōri* sandals[179]. A Chinese man's fur slippers, like bear paws. The magnolia-wood sandals of a Japanese student, the kind who performs housework in exchange for room and board. An aristocratic Korean student's newly polished shoes. The red high heels of a white Russian who had escaped from Wonsan[180]. The tracks of ragged shoes, probably recently imprinted by a Korean laborer who was hauling materials over his shoulders. And the rare prints of a beggar crawling on hands and knees, leaving marks from his legs which were severed at the thigh. Those legs must have been swollen, red, on account of the coldness of the street.

1923. The street was frozen, filthy.

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[177] 鳶の蔓 (*tobi no zuru*), an evergreen vine with the scientific name *Mucuna sempervirens.* Also called 飛蔓 or トビカズラ (*tobikazura*) in Japanese.

[178] Traditional underground heating system used in Korean homes

[179] Flat thonged Japanese sandals made of rice straw, leather, or other materials

[180] Formerly known by the Russian name Port Lazarev and by the colonial Japanese name Gensan (元山, the same characters from which the Sino-Korean pronunciation arises), this town's port opened in 1880. The city lies on the eastern coast of current-day North Korea.

Everything was dirty. And everything dirty was frozen over. This was especially the case on the alleyways outside of S. Gate. The smell of Chinese opium and garlic, the smell of cheap Korean tobacco mixed with red chili powder, the smell of stomped-on bedbugs[181] and lice, the smell of a pig's entrails and a cat's hide disposed of on the street – all of this looked frozen over, even while the stench remained intact.

But in the early morning, the air was clear, as one would expect. When the night brightened away and a magpie, seated on the branch of a withered acacia, began its cry, one could finally breathe a pure breath of air. Whenever the dim, cold dawn arrived, several men would head home, rubbing their hands against one another.

All kinds of women were gathered there. Kim Dong-ryeon was one such woman. A newcomer, she hadn't any friends there yet. She had somewhat gotten to know one woman named Pong-mi. She didn't know her family name. Pong-mi had a terribly pale face – all the women there had as well, but hers was especially pronounced. "That girl is a rising star," an older woman said about Pong-mi, talking to the other women. But no one knew exactly how or why she was great, and the older woman would never say. Every morning around four o'clock, she would invariably roll up her sleeve and give herself an injection.

Dong-ryeon thought it puzzling why this woman would have so much money. One time, she went ahead and asked. Laughing, Pong-mi said somberly,

"You're still just a newcomer, so it's not like we're doing the same kind of work."

Part Three

[181] In the original Japanese text, written as "Nanjing bugs"

Over the Han River's pedestrian bridge, guns fired off with a vigorous bang. Atop the sand at Yeongdeungpo, the swords of soldiers from the Yongsan Division reflected cold over the blue ice, shining with the light of a winter's day. Every night a campsite was erected on the sand, campfires burning red.

A group of students carrying a deer walked, sliding across the road. Through a show window peered a clay figurine of a Korean female deity, whose red face gave a dignified chuckle. From a half-completed Korean shrine, the sound of a hammer strike resounded sonorously throughout the dry air.

On the campus of a public high school, the new principal who had just relocated from the Naichi was solemnly extolling the virtue of obedience. (He recalled, somewhat embarrassingly, how at the Japanese high school he had worked at until now he had preached, as one of his school rules, the importance of a spirit of independence and self-respect.)

At the high school, when it came to Japanese history class, the young teacher, shy and uncomfortable, was talking about the conquest of Korea. "In this way, Hideyoshi invaded Korea."

As if they were talking about another country, a dull parrot-like echo resounded from the children's desks.

"In that way, Hideyoshi invaded Korea."

"In that way, Hideyoshi invaded Korea."

That afternoon was cold but sunny. A withered acacia tree, reduced to gnarled brown branches, hissed and shook with a northerly wind.

In front of Namdaemun Station, the wind hurled itself against the crowd, standing in a row. They fixed their eyes on the station entrance, all as one. Cars drove hurriedly to the entrance, spitting out officials with important appointments.

"The governor-general's come back!"

"The governor-general has made his return from Tokyo!"

There stood a policeman, a sword rattling from his belt, keeping strict watch. Among the crow, Cho Kyo-young was also observing his surroundings. The sole of his weathered shoe dragging along a sheet of newspaper blown by the wind, he recalled having seen once before the governor-general's white hair and childlike face. Like the previous governor-generals up until now, the current one had a military background, but he had a much better reputation than any before him. Even among Koreans, there was a considerable number who admired him deeply. However….

That moment, the amiable baby face of the corpulent governor-general, wrapped up in a thick black coat, appeared by the station entrance. At once, the officials greeting him all bowed their heads down like machines. The governor-general gave a warm nod to them and got in the car that had been prepared for him. Behind him, the terribly skinny and weak-looking vice governor-general[182] boarded the following car. The two cars sped off from the corner of Severance Hospital towards Namdaemun.

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[182] Japanese original term is Seimu-sōkan (政務総監); other possible translations include government-affairs inspector-general or government-affairs commissioner

It was in that instant. Suddenly, a man donning a white coat and a hunting cap jumped out, took out a pistol, and pulled the trigger, aiming at the car in front of him. No bullet was released. Panicked, he pulled the trigger a second time.

This time, a roaring sound followed the bullet, which shattered the car's back window and crossed explosively at a slant through the interior. Seeing the incident, the two cars increased their speed and drove away hurriedly.

One moment, the dumbfounded crowd observed the incident. The next moment, police officers instinctively rushed to follow in the direction of the hoodlum. But the gunman was still holding his pistol. The police glared at him, a skinny-framed youth of twenty-four or twenty-five. Grasping the pistol tightly, he stared vengefully at the policemen with bloodshot eyes. Then, taking his hat and throwing it to the pavement with the full force of his body, he laughed a self-abandoning laugh and flung his weapon into the crowd. Quickly, the crowd dispersed. Startled, the policemen also cowered back, and then saw the thrown pistol. In the next moment, they had already flown to the scene and pinned the gunman down. He didn't resist at all. He went pale, and, his lips trembling incessantly, he laughed scornfully while looking at the officers. Long, messy hair fell over either cheek. In his eyes, traces of agitation and excitement became extinguished, and in their stead, a sneer expressing a pitiful, hopeless composure emerged.

Holding his arm back, Cho Kyo-young couldn't bear to look at his expression. The criminal's eyes were expressing it clearly. That feeling of oppression – he could feel it pressing against him, twenty times heavier.

Who's the one who was caught?

Who's the one doing the catching?

Part Four

Four or five escorts leaned against the wall in their usual alleyway, their bare faces trembling behind white powder. Under the light of the warped streetlamp, shadows of earthen pipes jutted out silently like a row of prisoners.

"What about you? One time."

"No, no," the young man said, hands in his pockets, laughing out his rejection. His head Clad with a wool hood over his hat, the youth's quick feet disappeared under the light of the streetlamp.

With the passage of pedestrians gone again, the air returned to its quiet state, and from somewhere, a wall-shattering sound echoed with a ping.

"Me? Oh, it's just that my husband died, and with no relatives around, I had no choice but to go out and find work."

"Your husband, what did he do?"

"He was selling furs in Jongno."

In the room Kim Dong-ryeon used in her work as a prostitute, a white-faced worker, his feet pressing into the lightly soiled futon that rested above the oiled paper on top of the *ondol*.

"Well, when did he die?"

"This autumn. It was completely unexpected."

"What was it? He got sick?"

"It wasn't a sickness; it was the earthquake. In the aftermath of the quake, he was suddenly done in."

The man extended his hand and, grasping his bottle, gulped down a mouthful of saké.

“Hmm…So what was your husband in Japan for, then?”

“It was summer, the time when anything’ll sell well. He went with a friend to Tokyo, telling me he would come back right away. And then, suddenly, it happened. And he was unable to come back.”

The man lifted his eyes with a start, and looked up at her face. Then, after a momentary silence, he said sharply, “Well, anyway, he didn’t know anything.”

“Huh? He didn’t know what?”

“Your husband surely…well, it’s a pity.”

An hour later, Kim Dong-ryeon wrapped herself up in her thin futon, crying alone in the darkness. Before her eyes flickered the blood-smeared face of her husband who had desperately tried to escape.

“You shouldn’t talk about it too much. It’s scary,” the man’s words echoed faintly in her head.

Several hours later, when the night had brightened into grey, Dong-ryeon rushed madly along the sidewalk. And she called out to passersby.

“Do you know about it? About the earthquake?”

In a loud voice, she shouted the stories from last night to the people. Her hair was disheveled, her eyes bloodshot, and her body merely clad, in this cold, with one layer of bedclothes. People on the street gathered around her, shocked at her appearance.

“That’s right, all of you are hiding it. All of you.”

Finally, the police came and apprehended her.

“Hey, be quiet. Quiet!”

She moved like a warrior in front of the policeman as she cried out, sadness quickly welling up in the form of endless tears.

"What, you too, a Korean just like me? You too. You too."

After she was taken to the jail, the alleyways outside of S. Gate continued on, as ever, in their dirty living, in their rotten situation.

More than cold, it was painful. Besides their hearts, everyone's bodies felt as if they had frozen dead. On the roadside, a fish's gills were red, deteriorating. Over a snowdrift, a raw pig's head lay gnawed and scattered. Indoors, people breathed in the stench of rotten chives and garlic from the air into their compromised lungs, like gas rising from a gutter, barely living.

Nothing had changed.

Every morning at around four o'clock, Dong-ryeon's old friend Pong-mi would roll up her sleeve, revealing a pale arm, and give herself an injection. It was only times like these when she would faintly recall Dong-ryeon, who was now somewhere else. And invariably, when it became nighttime, a young rag-clad Japanese man would stand and play his violin, the sounds like the oil-deprived wheel of a car.

When the dawn arrived, a tall Chinese man would appear in the dim alleyway.

"What magnificent stars," he said, looking up at the still-dark sky. Then he would shove his hand into his pocket and search for change.

"Hmm. What magnificent stars," he'd say again, meaninglessly.

Then, he would stumble back home across the frozen road, his high-top shoes clicking against the ground.

Part Five

Cho Kyo-young meandered in front of the old American consulate. Unthinkingly, he thought about the events of yesterday.

….After he had gone home yesterday, he had immediately gotten a call from the police chief. Quickly returning to the police station, he nervously entered the chief's office. The chief silently handed over a sheet of paper and an envelope containing his daily earnings. *Huh, it's come*, he thought. Four or five days ago, a boisterous fight had broken out between students from Hwimun Public High School and students from K Middle School. Kyo-young had gotten into something of a quarrel with the section chief.

He silently took the envelope and exited to the front of the building. Then, without returning home, he loitered for a while under the streetlight, and holding the money with quivering hands, he went to the brothel outside of S Gate. This moment, which the night had been leading to for so long, had finally come up upon him.

He thought of the events from before as if they were from the distant past.

A thin fog hung low in the air. Light from the streetlamp fell in stripes, through the branches of the trees lining the road, onto the sidewalk. "What the hell should I do?" he thought dizzy-headedly, as if he were thinking about someone else's problem.

"What'll happen with them?" His wife and child's pale faces began to flash before his eyes.

Then, he suddenly remembered a room he knew on the second story of a back-alley building. There, there lay five or six crude chairs and one handmade table. On the table stood two candles. The candles' light reflected dimly against the faces of those who were gathered there. The red face of one who rapped the table lightly. One who plucked out their hair as they

thought. One who silently ran a pencil over a piece of piece. Everyone burned with hopes about their future. Finally, whispers of advice leaked out from among them.

"Keijō…Shanghai…Tokyo…"

"……."

"……."

He vaguely imagined this state of affairs. And he compared it with the misery that he was currently in. "One way or another, I have to do it. Anyhow."

Upon realizing this, he came after many hours to the side of Shokusan Bank. In the cold shadow of the stone pillar next to the closed door, a group of homeless laborers slept like a rock tossed onto the ground.

"Hey, hey!" Kneeling down among the men who reeked of tobacco, Kyo-young shook one of the men awake.

"……" Saying something he couldn't understand, the man opened his eyes, caked with bodily grease, then closing them again right away. As if Kyo-young had been too loud, the man's thin hand moved to brush Kyo-young's hand away, and he returned back to sleep. His cigarette fell to the pavement with a thump out of the man's mouth, which was surrounded by white ringworms.

"You, you all," Kyo-young said, a strange, unknown emotion welling up inside him. His whole body trembling, he thrust his neck into the men's rags and began to cry.

"You all…You all…This peninsula…This people…."

# “A July Scene in D City (1)”
# （Written in 1930 or Shōwa 5, at age 21）
# Nakajima Atsushi

Part One

“Hat!”

“Walking stick!”

“Hey, hurry up!”

While spitting out these words, little hiccups bubbled up incessantly from the pit of his stomach, impeding his speech. Since they were far from hurrying, he became greatly annoyed and started scolding his wife and their maid harshly. Even he recognized that this quick-tempered attitude was unbecoming for the president of the company, but when this realization came to him, he became all the more furious. Trying to push his hiccups down to his gut, he gulped down spit.

Anyhow, he got into the Packard that had been waiting at the entrance for him, and when he plopped down onto the cushion, another stubborn spasm from his diaphragm shook his whole body. Annoyed, he clicked his tongue and shouted at the driver, explosively relaying his anger.

“Oh, hurry up, won’t you!”

A moment later, after taking up a resigned demeanor, the car sped away toward the glaring white pavement.

This severe case of hiccups was very strange. Because of this, since yesterday he had been unable to become satisfied with meals or with sleeping. At any rate, last night had been rough. Suddenly came the first hiccup, and strangely it continued without ceasing since then.

Even the king of Southern Manchuria faced such problems – and he was not too far off from the king. Even the secretary-general, who exercised authority over no more than the Kwantung Leased Territory, was by no means a match for even the people under his feet. This violent trembling, which shook his entire body, was extremely troublesome. Even so, when it reached the evening time, it seemed to have somehow abated. He was relieved, and his family members also sighed in agreement. However, later that night, those horrible spasms suddenly rocked his diaphragm again and started to impede his peaceful sleep. At this, his household made a racket. Scratching their sleepy eyes, both his wife and their maid became restless and started to go about their housework. His doctor was also roused out of bed and came over, flustered. He made him a take a single-dose of a white pill, whose name was suffixed with -quinine. But the hiccups just would not stop. Then, someone told him that tea made from boiled persimmon sepals would help. Going far to find them, his servant boy was finally able to buy dried persimmon sepals. Boiling the peels and drinking their tea, he was still unable to quiet his problem. These strange, cruel spasms would assail him roughly every sixty seconds, frightening his mind and shaking every muscle in his body. They became so frequent that even somewhere in his stomach, he began to feel a sharp pain. When he started to experience this pain more and more, he stopped being able to sleep. He would become heated and scold his maids soundlessly. One handmaid pronounced the word "hiccup" oddly, and at this, he would anger and scold her mercilessly. In this manner, all the people in the enormous company-owned house were forced to stay up all throughout the night.

The car left from the Russian settlement toward the Shikishima Factory.

Clutching his tie a little, he blinked sleepily and looked out beyond the glass.

The light of the approaching noon dazzled his sleep-deprived eyes. The glaring rays reflected on the white pavement and made the leaves of the acacia trees lining the road to wither. Beneath the sunlight, a rickshaw-puller was sleeping languidly, leaning against the back of the rickshaw.

Mr. Y, the director-general of M Corporation (at this company, they refused to use the title "president"), wiped away the sweat that was dewing up from his forehead and timidly clutched his stomach with one hand.

Climbing the stairs, Mr. S, the company's trustee, rushed from a different room to enter the director-general's office. Bowing his head in deference, then quickly spoke.

"Somehow or another, it seems the K Times has gone and done it again."

"What?"

"It appears that their paper is exaggerating the big incident[183]." According to Mr. S, beneath the Chinese newspaper draft's headline was the story of the famous incident from the previous year, again subtitled with the fervor anti-Japanese imperialism.

"How stupid!" the director-general said angrily, waving his hands as if he were extinguishing a fire. He had become too accustomed to theatrics such as these, going so far as to perform them in front of his colleagues and coworkers as well.

"The Kwantung government already has measures to stop this."

"Yes, as it should. But there are still idiots who write things like this."

"Yes, and what a pity. Complete idiots."

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[183] The Huanggutun Incident (also known as the Fengtian Incident) of 1928. On June 4 of that year, the Japanese Kwantung Army plotted and carried out the assassination of the warlord Zhang Zuolin from the city of Fengtian.

Entering the room, he rested his right hand over his stomach. His hiccups from before had already seemed to have subsided. Softly and timidly, he pressed on the upper part of his stomach with his fingertips. It seemed like everything was fine now. He sighed in relief, and sat down in his chair for the first time. He felt as if a thorn that had been stuck in his side for a long while had somehow been removed. Picking up a cigar from the top of his desk, he placed it in his mouth and lit a match.

Now that he was no longer hiccupping, he realized for the first time how hot it was. It was a terribly windless day. He peered out the window, the asphalt looking as if it were melting. Untucking his sweat-drenched white shirt from his pants, he moved his seat to the center of the room, between the ice pillar[184] and electric fan. Then, he took the neatly folded morning newspaper that lay on his desk and spread it over his knees.

"Sino-Soviet Conflict Erupts near Pogranichny."

"KMT[185] Foreign Minister Wang Zhengting's Statement to Japan."

"Japanese Population in Northern Manchuria Increases."

"M Railways to Construct New Chinese Railroad Line."

After this, there was an unprecedented number of disapproving letters concerning the swift swearing-in of the new interior minister, after the downfall of Minister T (the man who had given Mr. Y his current position).

His eyes glossed over the pages, and he wiped the shiny, oily sweat from his age-worn brow and cheeks with a handkerchief. Then again, he reassuringly rested his hand over his stomach, saying to himself, *It's all right! It's completely all right.* He became happy, like a child

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[184] A literal pillar of ice that was used as an air-cooling method during this time period.
[185] Kuomintang, or the Chinese Nationalist Party, which ruled over most of mainland China from 1928 to 1949.

who has been liberated, and stretched his body out widely. At this, ashes from his cigar drifted onto the carpet. He rang his bell. The office assistant came in and lowered his head reverently. With Mr. Y pointing to the mess, the youth swiftly swept up the ashes. Then giving a bow, he went to leave.

"Hey, wait a minute!" he called out, and added a message.

"Tell M to come here."

"Yes," the youth said, bowing once again and clicking his left heel before he turned and went out. Suddenly, M, the secretary who donned glasses and a kind face, appeared at the doorway. He bowed and wrung his hands nervously. "We're all suffering because of this heat, huh?" he said, as if to himself.

"You! Have you finished with the first draft yet?"

"Yes, I'm mostly finished. Would you please look it over for me?"

M took out a small piece of paper from his pocket. Taking it, the director-general nodded authoritatively.

"Thanks a lot. This looks good."

M left the room quietly.

The company president began reading over the draft.

*Dear colleagues,*

*The reason I have gathered you all here today is to tell you that due to recent political disturbances, I intend to resign from my post imminently. To all of you who have put their trust*

*in someone who is as unworthy as myself and who have worked tirelessly, I express my deepest gratitude.*

This was the draft for his remarks to announce his resignation. Instinctively, he wanted to deliver an excellent speech that would ensure his name would live on. That is why he entrusted his secretary M to draft it for him, so that he would arrive at something solemn and dignified.

*Colleagues. In light of Japan's recent economic deadlock and social unrest, it is clear that the quickest solution is by means of the industrial development of Manchuria and Mongolia. Because it has long been my sincere belief that our work at M Corporation is building up the foundation of this great enterprise, I took this post with great determination and anticipation. However, becoming closely entrusted with the company's work, I have noticed that we had fallen into some bureaucratic faults since becoming a so-called semi-governmental organization. Additonally, because many of you have no doubt noticed that the situation here is more relaxed than that in the Naichi, from the outset of my inauguration, in order to maintain a practical sense of cost-effectiveness, it has been my goal to reduce our plans from the previous year by upwards of six million yen, with the permission and introspection of the rest of the company.*

From here, the speech began to list his various accomplishments since his taking office.

*It's a pretty grand speech. Really magnificent*, he thought as he read. Suddenly, he thought of the election last spring, and the work he had put in with the S Party[186], the corners of

[186] Based on the *Rikken Seiyūkai* (Friends of Constitutional Government), one of the major parties in pre-war imperial Japan.

his mouth curling upwards with a grin. Then, he kept on reading. The draft was quite long. There were even parts written down about work he had done that he did not even remember now.

*Again, as for our oil refining program, we had already undertaken the step one – to acquire shale oil. Step two, we began research on the processes of low-heat dry distillation and coal liquefaction, both of which have become a tangible reality today. Coal liquefaction in particular has a profound impact on our nation's economic policies. Since the process can take one ton of coal to produce a half ton of oil, and since our nation's demand has increased to one and a half million tons of oil, it will take three million tons of coal to satisfy this demand. Therefore, we should regard the coal mines of Fushun as Heaven's blessing of natural resources upon our nation.*

This fact, he had not known at all. After all, he had probably forgotten about it right after he was given the report on the matter. Anyhow, even if he did not know about such details, his accomplishments as director-general at M Corporation would eventually be written about in the newspapers and recorded in history. This thought brought him a childish sense of a satisfaction. With the back of his hand, he wiped away the gleaming drop of sweat that sat on the tip of his nose, and continued to read the draft in one satisfied go.

*Necessarily, we must toss away the notions of pessimism and conservatism. I am determined to pursue plans of positivity and progress until our national sentiment wanes within the country and without.*

*Finally, what I want to tell you all is this. You are all very much aware of the patriotic mission and international position M Corporation is in, and I know that you will work hard to fulfill our company's special mission for the regions of Manchuria and Mongolia. This is to say, we cannot definitively say that China with the advance of its Nationalist Revolution and Soviet Russia with its ardent nationalism are in a completely stable state of affairs. Seeing as the regions of Manchuria and Mongolia are caught between these two unstable powers, if a great war were to break out, it is no exaggeration to say that this strip of land could become the new Balkan peninsula and threaten the order of international peace. Right now, there is the potential for dangerous outbreak of fighting centered on the Dongzhi Railway issue. For the sake of the empire, and for the sake of world peace, we must stand up and take responsibility for the order and security of this land. In order to restore the people's unity and sovereignty, we must show the magnanimity of a developed nation and push back against the xenophobic words and deeds of the Chinese Nationalists and the administration of the Three Eastern Provinces*[187]*. Tirelessly carrying the spirit of tolerance, we must wholeheartedly admonish their prideful and ignorant attitude. By protecting these principles, we also protect our self-interests, and the Chinese Nationalists will have no choice but to lose faith in their cause.* (*Clever, very clever,* he thought, feeling emotive as he read.)

*As for Soviet Russia, you all are well aware that the situation is very different and we must treat is differently with our national policies. At the same time, it is imperative that we work together with the Soviets to maintain border security between Northern Manchuria and*

[187] Referring to the three northeastern Chinese provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Fengtian (which is now known as Liaoning Province).

*neighboring Siberia. International cooperation – that is, helping the two nations of China and Russia develop their natural resources – must be declared our nation's permanent priority.*

Having finished reading the letter, he had grown quite tired sitting in his chair, and he gave a big yawn. It was a significant letter. Surely the company workers would all sense this.

So the hiccups' having stopped really did have a positive effect after all. Now he had already completely forgotten the misfortune he was forced to suffer. He was in extremely high spirits. For evidence, he flared his nose, his nostrils widening. And closing his tired eyes, he took a deep, refreshing breath. Then, thinking about the uproar from last night, he let out an absurd laugh.

"Honestly, I was made to eat…dried persimmon sepals! Hahahaha."

Lighting a new cigar, he crossed his hands behind his back, and feeling a sense of peace that followed the chaos, he began pacing back and forth in his office.

Then, he heard a knock at the door. The office assistant bowed his head, then entered.

"Sorry, but someone from the municipal appeals committee has just appeared."

"What? No, it's pointless, it's a waste of time." He forcefully flicked his right hand as if he were shaking off a beggar, and when M his secretary came in, he grabbed him and spoke.

"Oh it's you again. What are we to make of this guy who's come? I guess there's nothing we can do. They're already in the process of buying D Park and opening it to the public."

M Corporation was already managing this D Park and raking in the money from entrance fees. In January, after the protest campaign had begun, plans had been made to convert this little park into public space for the city. So said Mr. Y.

“Releasing this property to the common people. Just look at that, would you. Look at that,” the director-general said to Mr. M, pointing out the window to the distant highway below. In the street corner lay two half-naked coolies, not even wearing hats, their faces yellow with haggardness. One of them seemed to be full-on sleeping, exhausted under the direct rays of the intense July sunlight. The other was biting into a yellow, overripe melon, constantly swatting away flies.

“Look at that. Just look at that,” he said, knitting his brows and rapping on his desk. He then continued to speak at Mr. M.

“However many times you turn over land to the common people, it’s going to become occupied by guys like that. A sleeping ground for all these coolies. Not a place for the common people at all. Right?”

It was in that moment, right after he had said all this. He was taken aback. Then, he pressed both hands against the round of his stomach. But by then, it was too late. Once again, the dreaded contractions of his diaphragm, and the memory of their accompanying terror, suddenly returned and caused his entire body to violently convulse.

## Part Two

“I have to already. I’ve got to move my hand.”

The boy of about five, decked in a bathing suit, diligently packed sand onto the hands of his older sister, who had on an orange bathing suit herself.

“It’s pointless, pointless. It’ll all crumble anyway.”

The little girl laughed, her little brother assiduously packing sand onto the crevice where the tunnel of sand had cracked.

"It's good already. Just leave it the way it is, it's perfectly fine."

The sister gingerly lifted her buried hand up out of the sand, and somehow the tunnel didn't collapse. Her little brother, who had been anxiously holding his breath while squatting and watching the scene, let out an exaggerated sigh of relief. He called out in a loud voice to their older brother, who was standing about five meters away, looking at the ocean.

"Big bro! Look over here! We did it. Look!"

The youth, who possessed the large body of an eighteen- or nineteen-year old, turned around a little, and in the manner of a big brother, gave a warm, almost exaggerated smile. Then, firmly crossing his suntanned arms, he looked again in the direction of the ocean.

It was quite a sunny day. Everywhere, from the ocean to the sky, particles of golden light bounced about. The outstretched sky displayed faint layers of water vapor close to the distant horizon, and underneath, the ocean flickered finely with the painful glare of midday, the kind that made one squint one's eyes. Because it was right after lunchtime, the people immersed in the water were few. But over the sand walked three or four Russian girls, wearing ink-stick green and red coverups, twirling their parasols round and round. When their brilliant white and smooth ankles treaded over the shiny, wet sand, the ground where they stepped tightened up and water rushed out, suddenly creating small, lusterless sandbars.

"Tetchan," the older brother said, turning around.

"Dad's being stupidly slow. What's the matter, I wonder?"

"Yeah," the little brother replied, looking at his older brother with long brows and big eyes.

His small-framed older sister nudged him on the shoulder and pointed toward the dressing room. “Look.”

“Ah, it’s Dad, it’s Dad,” he shouted in an absurdly loud voice, dashing off at full speed in his father’s direction.

“It’s Dad, it’s Dad, it’s Dad!”

The spoiled youngest child abruptly jumped onto his father and clung to his neck.

“Finally, finally! We were all waiting for you. Especially me.”

“Ah, sorry!” the father said, gently patting the boy’s bobbed hair.

“Crabs! Easy-peasy!”

At the water’s edge waited a Chinese boatman, smoking. Climbing up the boat’s steps, everyone remembered things they had forgotten to bring.

“Hey, Tetchan. Can you go and get some big-sized bait for us? I forgot it in the kitchen. Just run home quick and get it for us!”

“Okay, I’ll go get the long fish!”

The boy dashed with all his might along the sand, running from the shadow of the slatted wood lining the dressing room and turning in the direction of their home. His girlish bob cut began to dry as it shimmied up and down.

Finally running back to where he had started, the boy was carrying a beltfish in his hands.

“Wow, thank you, thank you. You’re quick, Tetchan!”

The boy jumped on, and the boat started to slide away from the shore.

When the boat reached the open sea, it stopped, and everyone began arranging their fishing gear. They cut their fish into small pieces and attached them to different fishing lines. Everyone took their own line, and throwing them in, they began to spin loosely like tops,

eventually disappearing into the deep blue. Holding his fishing line, the little boy leaned over the side of the boat and peered into the water.

The experienced older brother caught a crab right away. Carefully pulling up the line, he grabbed a nearby fishing net with his right hand. Then, putting the bait into the net, he lowered the net a foot deep into the water, then swiftly scooped up a load of crabs with the net. They clumsily struggled as they came onto the boat, their bellies a light purple and their bodies covered in a thin black fuzz.

"Hey, we got them, we got them!" the little brother said overjoyed, timidly poking on the shells of their spoils, which still bubbled with foam.

Leaning against the bow of the ship next to the boatman, the father felt the faint motion of the waves, and holding his fishing line, he vaguely watched his children.

His oldest son's burly frame and sun-tanned face made him smile. His son was all set to graduate from his middle school in the city, and although the father hadn't asked, his son seemed intent on attending a high school around Tokyo. Anyhow, he had entrusted his son with the matter. Next to him, the two small children watched their older brother's line, having already given up on their own duties. The two of them had the same bob cut, the same suntan, the same eyes that glittered with curiosity.

Suddenly, he began to be concerned about his youngest son, who was not with them. That little one had had a bit of a fever since last night, and this morning had been taken by his mother to their family hospital in D City. In his household, he tried as much as possible to refrain from scolding his children, and although they for the most part had grown up to be obedient and respectful, they still had a way of becoming insufferably spoiled when they got sick. Even for the

oldest one, if they didn't get taken to the doctor by their mother, it would be a sorry scene. Even though, of course, their company-owned home was in the center of D City, for the summer time, they rented a home near the foreigner-filled beach. So when the children got sick, they had to make a special trip to the hospital back in D City. His youngest son was not like his oldest. He was a weakling….

"Hey, don't do that! You brat…"

"Yeah, it's Tetchan's fault! He was making a racket and peering into the water."

At the stern of the boat, the boy was being scolded by his older siblings. He was being so loud that the crabs were even beginning to crawl back, startled, to the edge of the boat near the water.

After having caught as many as twenty crabs, the boat went back. Getting to shore and passing the many people still swimming, they returned home. The red roof and jagged green-grey wall were both equally covered in ivy, the thin vines clinging to each window on the rented summer villa. Opening the door to the entryway, the youngest child and his mother who had gone to the hospital jumped out to greet them.

"How was it?" he asked his wife.

"There wasn't anything the matter. He said that while we were on the way there, he felt totally better," she said, chuckling and lightly patting the boy on his shoulder. "When they took his temperature, it wasn't even thirty-seven degrees."

Then, she showed him a bottle of yellow medicine that she had received.

“Good,” he said, relieved.

The child was still looking a little pale, and looking at the ground, laughed shyly. Even though he had gone to the hospital, he gave off the vibe that it was his own fault.

The youngest brother got excited and began to mimic his father. “Whaaat? Was there nothing wrong?”

The sick child began to look a little irritated and glared at his little brother.

When the children again ran out to play, he grabbed the bamboo basket, still wearing his bathing suit, and went to the lot of sand behind the house. In the light of the westering sun, the great bloom of dahlias drooped their crestfallen heads. Entering the tomato patch, he saw that there were about fourteen or fifteen big deep-red ripened ones. This year the patch was doing exceptionally well. Because it didn’t seem like a resource that was to be eaten only by the family in the house, foreigners were constantly picking and taking them.

After bringing the basket of freshly picked tomatoes to the kitchen, he stripped naked and entered the bathroom, jumping into the stark-white porcelain tub.

Immediately outside the bathroom, he could hear the laughter of the children playing – kicking a rock or something – with the next-door neighbor, a Russian boy. In the kitchen, his wife had looked busy, employing the Chinese servant boy to help her prepare dinner. He loved the sounds of the evening time, with its domestic racket. Lying still, immersed in the water, he listened to the voices outside.

Unconsciously, he thought of his life in Tokyo from already fifteen years ago. He was fatherless and poor – or that is to say, not rich. He received a scholarship from his now-wife’s family to study at a vocational high school, and after graduating he worked as a lower grade

worker at a standard company. He remembered riding the train, hearing the rattling of the dark rented back-alley homes with their cheap glass windows, broken screen doors, and diaper-laden clotheslines. After he got married and they had their first daughter, all of that went away. And when their first son was born, they were able, through their connections, to escape their harsh life in Tokyo and come to Manchuria. Their life was more pleasant than they expected. His pay was now almost double what it was in the Naichi. Since that time, he had never left M Corporation. And he was also serving as the chief secretary for a club of company workers in the city. The life he had here he would never be able to achieve in Japan no matter how hard he worked, he thought, extremely satisfied, from time to time. Still, people accustomed to limited circumstances who enter into a happy life timidly question whether they deserve such success or not. Funny enough, on the other hand, in order to secure such happiness, sometimes one has to worry or suffer. In his position, he had to worry about his children's occasional sickness, about their grades, about the annual yield of the tomato patch in the yard. Often at night, after the children got to sleep, his wife – her cheeks already creasing with wrinkles – would sigh in the gaps between conversation with him. Would sigh in relief. It was the kind of thing that meant that they'd arrived at the place that they'd constantly been striving for. She would get embarrassed being looked at by her husband, and she would try to hide this emotion. Then, realizing her childishness, she would exchange glances with her husband, and smile once again.

"……."

"……."

Watching her smile like this, he always felt as if he were caressing downy fur.

In this way, Manchuria was paradise to him. Nevertheless, he knew that when the kids were a little more grown, they would return to Japan. They would return so he could show them,

children who had never known Japan, the country where he was born. They would return so he could show them things like sliding rain shutters, little square gazebos, artificial hills. They would return so that he, who in his older years yearned for his hometown's mandarin oranges, its little creeks, its distant shore, and its other modest features, could build a little house and live their – his innermost desire as a Japanese….

Coming out from the bathroom, it was already dinner time. The youngest child repeatedly called for the servant boy, and finally he came back, drenched in sweat. On the table lay the crabs they caught this afternoon, lined up and boiled red.

His family was Christian. So, before the meal, they always said a little prayer. All of them, down to the youngest child, bowed their heads stiffly, and sometimes he would look up at his older siblings and poke at their knees.

From the window, the crape myrtles' bark glowed green in the garden and the cinerarias smelled sweet in the light of the falling sun. Somehow it was a perfectly seasonal, quiet evening.

When the prayer ended, the youngest child grabbed the crab in front of him and put it on his plate, then started to adroitly peel off its shell. Then, applying miso paste to the yellow tip of its nose, he began to tell his mother about their crab-fishing adventures from the afternoon. Soon, the oldest siblings fell silent, breaking their crab legs. Then, the oldest son started to tell his mother about an open-air evening movie club.

"Where do they hold it?"

"They said it's by the pool, in the open air." Then turning to his younger brother, he said, "Hey, Tetchan, what do you think? You wanna go with me?"

"Hmm…I'll go if Mom goes."

The youngest child turned around to face his father and started to speak in a loud voice, as if he had suddenly made some important discovery.

"Hey Dad, hey Dad! You know how horses and dogs have their tails behind them?" He broke off a crab leg, then asked with all seriousness, "How come my tail is in front of me? Huh?"

Everyone looked at one another, bewildered. In the next moment, the whole table erupted into laughter about the young inquirer's comment. Then, by the window they heard a voice say in clear Japanese, "*Konbanwa*[188]." It was their Russian neighbor, with his red beard, who had appeared. He came over, surprised at the ruckus, and not knowing what had caused it, he joined in on their laughter all the same. Then, waiting for everyone's laughter to subside, he looked at the oldest son and said, "When you finish with dinner, come over! We're going to play bridge."

Bowing slightly, he disappeared from the window. After seeing the neighbor's confused facial expression, their laughter, which had briefly quieted, erupted once again.

It seemed to continue on endlessly.

Part Three

The port panted under the rays of the July sun.

Four age-worn freighters docked at the wharf, next to a British passenger ship with a big green chimney. Grey, murky ocean water scooped up from the scupper hole, gurgling about. From the second floor of the dock, a small crane peering into the hatch. An old sampan[189],

[188] "Good evening"
[189] A small flat-bottomed wooden boat, used traditionally in China and Southeast Asia

covered in dust and debris, beginning to decay. A junk, bobbing in the sea, at the neighboring Russian wharf. A small red tricolor flag, flying from its mast. In this wind-dead landscape, the sun shone harshly over the ocean, the water moving sluggishly, thick like oil.

Beyond the railway line, under the shadow of the loading truck, twenty to thirty coolies lay sleeping idly, as if dead. From the waist up, they were all naked. Half-gnawed melon lay scattered around them, clinging to the ground like vomit.

Among them, one of the men was standing up. He bit into a piece of melon that he was holding with his right hand, scratching his hairy chest roughly with his left hand. Then, leaning against the iron door to the loading truck, he gazed disinterestedly at the landscape before him.

Across from the wharf's seven-story office building, another seven-story building was being constructed, the massive structure supported by steel scaffolding. From the top of the building's skeleton, the sound of hammers echoed sharply throughout the air, the metal instruments glimmering in the sun. Next to the building, a kiln was burning white-hot. Two workers who were standing on the scaffolding were taking out searing scraps of metal, holding them above their heads before thrusting them back in. From the kiln arose a yellow smoke, and for a moment when the harsh sun's rays disappeared, the fiery tongues hissed and spattered. Gazing from below, onlookers were dazzled by the sweltering flames.

Directly below the new building, a man who looked like a Japanese store clerk, his jacket flung over his shoulder, exchanged goods with a Chinese businessman. Next to them, iron materials lay piled up on a measuring scale. From the glass entryway of the wharf's office building left a frighteningly lanky, sickly-looking coolie. Admirably, he was wearing a jacket, although it torn. Rapping on his sharp cheekbones with his hand, he walked toward the man eating the melon.

The man eating the melon lifted his dull yellow eyes and looked at the man in the jacket.

"And?"

"It was no use. No use at all."

"Nowhere?"

"Nowhere. They said to try going to the Green Mountain Villa."

"That's stupid! If they had jobs there, then why would people stay here?"

The men exchanged disappointed looks, then both plopped down onto the ground. The taller man grabbed a half-smoked cigarette from by his feet, but seeing as he had no matches, he put it in his pocket.

"Mm. So whatcha gonna do?"

"Dunno. I dunno what's gonna happen with me."

The two men sat limply, not moving for a while. Every once in a while, a train chugged along before their eyes. On the street, the smell of dust flew along with the echo of the train.

The tall man suddenly stood up.

"Hey, let's go somewhere."

"……."

"If we stay in a place like this, there'll be nothin' we can do."

The other man stretched tiresomely, wiping away the melon juice that had dribbled from his chin to his chest, then pitifully licking it off his palm. Finally, he stood up. Side by side, the two of them began walking toward town.

Along the quiet paved road, lines of trees were all but wilting, and on both sides, horse-drawn carriages and rickshaws were abundant. The horses' fur was covered in sweat along their entire bodies, and the rickshaw-pullers lay asleep in their cars, face up and legs outstretched.

As they were walking, the one man again became worried and asked, “You, what are you gonna do? For real.”

“I dunno. I dunno what’s gonna happen with me.”

“We could go to Yingkou. We could walk there. Maybe there’s somethin’ there.”

Without replying, the other man went sullen, and he continued to walk on in silence.

Lately, the major industrial products of this region, soybean meal and soybean oil, have been overpowered by foreign countries’ production. In particular, German ships bring their own soybeans directly to the D City port, taking them into this country’s factories. Lately, soybeans have all but been replaced by ammonium. The coolies were not supposed to know this. When July came and S Soybean Factory, the last soybean factory to remain open in D City, finally closed its doors yesterday morning, they were completely left in the dark. They immediately left to go to the Shahekou industrial district to talk to people at the railroad factory and glass factory there. However, these too were closed. At that, they came to the port. But they came at the least busy time of the year. From June to October – this was the port’s off-season.

The two men wandered along toward one of the city’s open-air markets.

In the vacant areas of the market, performers such as magicians and acrobats stood under the scorching hot sun, calling out to potential spectators. Wielding a Chinese sword and small flags, one thickly bearded magician was performing. He had the rarely-worn queue hanging from his head, and he possessed a cunning-looking face. One acrobat was scolding a few children, around seven or eight years old, at the top of his voice. Sweat ran down their brows, and their eyes were bloodshot from the glare of the sun’s rays. He faced one child and pulled him down onto the sand. Then, curling his body as if he were a shrimp, the acrobat made the child’s head tips of his toes stretch onto his back so that they were facing each other. Stepping with his own

foot onto the child's stomach, which was curved like a bow, the acrobat called out his viewers to give money. The boy's hair was pressed against the dirt, sweat stinging his eyes and gravel drawing out a thin line of blood from his cheek. Every time the acrobat used the force of his foot to press down on the boy's stomach, the boy gave a faint cry of pain. At the times when spectators gave very little money, the acrobat's grim face would become alight with contempt, and he would step on the boy with all of his might.

Near this spectacle, many prostitutes, their faces speckled with white powder, were looking on. Every time the acrobat made obscene comments, the women would burst into laughter, showing their gums.

The two coolies were also watching this scene for a while. Then, continuing along, they turn into a narrow alleyway that reeked of moldering urine.

Passing through the alleyway, the tall man spoke again.

"Should we try the glass factory again? One more time."

The other man replied languidly.

"Yeah. But I'm tired already."

The two of them sat down onto a slab of quarried stone.

Directly across from them stood a two-story pharmacy building, lacquered in blue. On the walls hung advertisements about medicines for hemorrhoids and STIs, and behind the broken glass, models of diseases body parts were displayed. Beneath the fleshly pink models, some of which had deteriorated into a yellowish-brown, many people were gathering looking up at them. Businessmen, mechanics, coolies, prostitutes, a beggar with a protruding eye. They walked along in the hot street, which was stained with a slaughtered pig's blood, buzzing with greenbottle flies. The gutter stank strongly, and the signboards overhead were discolored with yellow and

red. On the roadside, playbills advertising dramas at the Shanghai Theater lay scattered, as well as the white intestines of a pig. One man was diligently cleaning up the mess. Seeing this, the two listless coolies each had their own thoughts. One of them was thinking vaguely about the skin of the woman to whom he had given his last bit of money the previous night. Her skin was white and almost had a kind of elasticity to it…. The other man was not thinking about such things; he was thinking about tomorrow. *What the hell will happen with me?* Going without food or drink for the past three days, he stayed in front of the police station, intentionally causing fights to break out. That way, if he got landed in a jail cell, he would finally get a meal. But that never happened….

Just then, the door on the house behind them opened, and the aroma of hot fried entrails assailed the men's sense of smell. Suddenly their stomachs growled in hunger. Thinking about it now, they hadn't eaten a thing since the morning.

Finally, one of them stood up and said, "Let's go. Why don't we go in?"

But the other one hesitated, sticking his hands in his pockets.

The one man interrupted him. "C'mon, idiot. What's the worst that could happen? We gotta eat."

The restaurant had many pigs hanging from the ceiling. As soon as the men sat down in their seats, they began slurping bowls of udon sprinkled red with red pepper powder. Then, they thoughtlessly started stuffing pieces of fried food into their mouths. And as soon as they put the cup of gaoliang[190], they immediately began to feel at ease.

[190] Perhaps more commonly spelled as *kaoliang* in English. A strong clear liquor distilled from sorghum.

In the kitchen, immediately in front of them, they could see the body of a freshly killed cat lying on the chopping block. (In this neighborhood, cat – even cat – was a delicacy.) The cook first cut open the artery near the cat's neck, blood gushing vigorously out. After that, he began to dexterously massage the bloody cat's belly. Wringing blood out of its body over a nearby pail, he then stuck the end of his kitchen knife beneath the cat's jaw. He then ran the knife all the way from its torso to its tail, cutting off its meaty tailbone at the end, finally going over the body again two or three times until the skin was cut off cleanly from the bright red meat. He removed the joints from their limbs, stuck his fingers into the chest cavity to scoop out the lungs, throwing them into the bucket along with the intestines. Finally, giving it a rinse with water, it looked like an excellent cut of meat.

The coolies watched this preparation in admiration as they gulped down their gaoliang. They were already in a good mood. The sting of alcohol, of which they had long been deprived, lifted their spirits, making them more and more jolly. They had already forgotten about the job hunt. They had already forgotten about tomorrow's meals. They even forgot that they were enjoying their food and drink without a single bit of money on them. Then, watching the butchering of the cat, they suddenly got the urge to do something violent. The excitement brought about by this sadistically pleasant feeling only increased with the brutal butchering.

Finally, one of them could no longer stand it. He forgot about all consequences and just stood up. Going up to the kitchen counter, he grabbed the cat's blood-covered flesh and threw it into the nearby iron pot of boiling, bubbling water with all his strength. The hot water sloshed up in all directions, and before his eyes, the cat's meat began to change from purple to light brown. He watched the color change with all pleasure.

And it was then. He heard an angry voice shouting from behind him, and then by his ears, he felt a severe blow. Stumbling to turn around, he recognized the cook's bearded face.

"What're you doing?"

Intent that he not lose, he struck the cook. Then, the other coolie who had until now been sipping his gaoliang, got up to help his friend, and struck the cook as well. At that, a huge brawl erupted. The great iron pot turned over, pans fell down, soy sauce containers shattered. Then, from inside the kitchen, out came the restaurant's ruddy-cheeked, fat-bellied owner, together with two or three younger guys. Eventually, the two coolies were knocked down harshly. The owner looked down at the men who lay fallen and cursed them because of their violence and drunkenness.

"You idiots! What were you doing? Just give me my money and leave!"

The two men stuck their hands in their pocket to search for money. Not finding any there, they then turned out their other pocket. They found nothing there either. Realizing that he was not going to get anything from them even if he stripped them naked, the owner's red face became even redder, and he shouted.

"Get lost! You cheating bastards!"

With all his might, the owner kicked the men's backs. They lay slovenly against the floor. Chasing after them, he grabbed them by the bare neck with both hands and threw them out the door with a dazzling strength, one by one.

While the men lay crumpled on top of each other, having just been thrown out, they stayed in the same posture for a while, not moving an inch. Then they started to feel good. Notwithstanding the pain their hard-hit joints were in, a feeling of intense satisfaction came over

them. Their stomachs were full and alcohol coursed pleasantly through their veins. Honestly, what more could they have needed?

The scorching sun of today's July afternoon radiated over them. People began to stand around them in droves.

White dust blew through the air, the smell of which mixed with the blood flowing out from the men's faces. Lying on top of one another, they fell soundly asleep, perfectly content.

# "By the Poolside"
(Likely written in 1932 or Shōwa 7 when he was 23, published posthumously)
Nakajima Atsushi

**Part One**

On the athletic field, rugby players were practicing. Their yellow-striped uniforms stood out against the black ground. Somehow, it gave off the image of bees. Passing the ball from one player to the next, ten players who were lined up side by side began to run at full speed across the pitch, starting to practice their pass swings. Then, they came together in a tight formation and moved to practicing their dribbling. Slants of sunlight beamed over the hill, over top of the red building that used to be the French consulate in the days of Korean sovereignty. It was the moment when the sun refused yet to set.

Climbing a little ways over the hill adjoining the athletic field, a small pool appeared. When Sanzō was a student at the middle school, this area was just a field full of spring onions. It seemed that he would always see those thin green onions planted in the area after he finished up with drills, smelling like a mixture of gun lubricant and leather, going back toward the firearm safe. All that had now become a pool – surely quite a recent development. It was a small pool, ten by twenty-five meters. Along its perimeter, round pebbles lay strewn about. The water was not very clear. Buoys used for swimming classes were lined up, raised up and stretched out above the pebbles. A middle school student, bigger even than Sanzō, whose face was dark with shadow, was standing there. Over his top half he wore a swimming shirt, and over his lower, he wore the school uniform's pants. When Sanzō approached him, the boy hung his head a little.

"Are you an upperclassman?"

"Yeah," Sanzō replied, feeling a little embarrassed.

"Since water polo practice just ended, please, take the liberty to swim if you wish."

His awkward speech, which resembled the kind one would expect to find in military barracks, made Sanzō recall the scent of his old life at this school. As he muttered a response under his breath, he began to undo the buttons of his jacket. Embarrassed at his pallid, skinny body, compared with that of the middle schooler, Sanzō jumped into the water as soon as he got his clothes off. The water was tepid, shallower than expected. At his height, he could almost stand up completely. In a place with so much room to stand, Sanzō wondered if he would be able to practice water polo here. As he was about to voice this thought, he looked up to search for the shape of the middle school student who had been there just now. The boy, however, was already gone. He must have gone to watch the rugby players.

Sanzō lay face up, floating sleepily on the surface of the water. He took a deep breath. The sky was blue. Little by little, the indigo of dusk began to deepen, and in the corner of his vision, a single small cloud floated by, tinted yellow by the sun. He exhaled with a puff. The lukewarm water tickled as it made splashing sounds around his ears. Motionlessly, he closed his eyes. It felt as if his body were still swaying, rumbling. The feeling of being on that rickety train every day for the past week still remained. Going through Korea upon his return from his travels to Manchuria, Sanzō stepped foot in Keijō for the first time in eight years. From the outset, he figured he ought to visit the grounds of the middle school where he spent his days and months for four years.

At midday the day before yesterday, the waiting room at Hōten[191] Station was unbearably hot. Large silver-colored flies flew noisily about the hot air. A Russian youth of fourteen or

[191] Fengtian was the Chinese rendering of the Manchu name (Mukden) for this city. The name Mukden was used not only by Manchu speakers but also by the English-speaking world in the 1930s. Nakajima's writes the name with the Chinese characters that correspond to Fengtian, but to Japanese readers it would have been pronounced as Hōten. The city is known today as Shenyang.

fifteen was looking up at a poster of a beautiful Chinese woman with bangs standing under a peach tree. His hair was a beautiful golden, and beneath his shorts, one could see his meek and slender legs. His was a beauty that made one recall, somehow or another, the ancient practice of *nanshoku*[192]. As for what the Chinese characters written on the poster meant, neither the Russian youth nor Sanzō knew. On the very bottom of the paper, "MUKDEN" was scrawled in huge Roman characters. That said, Sanzō observed the youth reading the word, repeating "Mukden, Mukden" in a loud voice, to no one in particular. Suddenly turning around and meeting Sanzō's gaze, the youth shifted his eyes away, as if he sensed judgment upon his mutterings. His eyes were beautiful, grey like a beggar's rags.

Next to Sanzō sat a girl of sixteen or seventeen wearing a red one-piece and a black lace hat. Across from Sanzo sat an elderly wealthy-looking Chinese man and a middle-aged Russian woman. Both were equally fat, and both had sweat dripping off the ends of their noses. Suddenly, the Chinese woman stood up and came over, asking the girl next to Sanzō, in English, for the time. The girl made a troubled face, oddly giving off a dumb bout of laughter, but she seemed to have understood the question. Instead of replying, she showed the woman her own wristwatch. Pleased at the gesture, the woman returned to her seat, muttering an accented "thank you." When the girl glanced at Sanzō, she blushed and revealed an embarrassed smile. Sanzō looked to his side. On the wall, a poster with the admonishment "Keep track of your things"[193] written in Chinese was lightly sullied. From time to time, a Japanese military policeman holding a pistol case would come in from the entrance and peer into the room.

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[192] Also known as *danshoku*, this term refers to a codified practice of male-male sexual relations (oftentimes pederastic) which existed in pre-modern Japan.
[193] Rendered in pinyin: *Xiaoxin er de dongxi*.

Suddenly, water entered his nose. His nasal cavities stung painfully. Pushing his feet down to stand at the bottom, he pinched his nose tight. Then he started swimming again. After finishing one lap, he returned to his starting point, and again turning over on his back, floated. From far away a bell sounded. It seemed a little too early for it to be the dormitory's dinner bell. In an instant, the small yellow cloud in the sky disappeared from sight. Gently, a dragonfly grazed the top of his head.

In Sanzō's memory, the Hōten he passed through the day before yesterday and the Hōten he visited on a field trip eight years ago when he was a student at the middle school became mixed up with one another. At a restaurant at the train station, an old Japanese monk wearing yellow *kasaya*[194], accompanied by a young, clean-shaven monk with a ghastly pale face, was eating a beef steak, skillfully using a fork and knife. Was that from the day before yesterday? Or was it a memory from eight years ago? Thinking this over, he grew melancholy. He closed his eyes, as acacia leaves fell upon the brim of the pool, and soon enough, the lightly fading sunlight of dusk disappeared with a sigh. While he faintly sensed his surroundings being enveloped in dim blue shadows from behind closed eyelids, he floated on the water.

* * *

For most of the students, that middle school field trip had been their first opportunity to hold onto a considerable sum of pocket money and behave freely, away from their parents. They were ecstatic, jolly. Throughout the trip's destinations, some of the upperclassmen were constantly trying to show off their superiority toward the underclassmen. They walked their younger classmates along to restaurants, bars. Liquor bottles of all shapes with labels of all colors were lined up on dim shelves, and sausages with a dark red sheen dangled in front of

[194] a Sankrit word for a kind of robe worn by Buddist monks

them. Under these stood a ruddy-faced, grey-shirted grandpa who looked as if he were a Russian defector, a black pipe pressed between his brown-bearded lips. For middle-school-aged Sanzō, the kind of international landscape found at bars like this presented an irresistible charm. He didn't need to say a word, watching the scene unfold with boyish excitement: the Russian girl whom the upperclassman was talking to, with her large black eyelashes, corners of her deep green eyes, body odor emanating from her armpits, arms naked from the shoulder down, silvery peach fuzz. Going outside carrying the spirit of full-fledged adventure, he lifted his eyes, catching the intensely beautiful stars of early summer.

Those days, a sex-crazed prank called "dissection" was popular. Drunk on alcohol and excitement, the students would return to their rooms, hiding their faces and sneaking behind the teachers' backs, and cause a huge ruckus with the prank. While traveling on the train, some boys would sleep up on the luggage rack, afraid of being victimized next. The teachers would shruggingly tolerate the mischief and laugh begrudgingly. "Teachers, join in!" someone shouted. Everyone snickered while someone replied, "Oh for God's sake! You dirty-mouthed goons!"

The night that they departed from Hōten was a beautiful evening. A little before the time when everyone had to gather in front of the station, Sanzō went with his closest friend to a back-alley restaurant. The beef steak there was unbelievably delicious. Blood dribbling out drop by drop, the steak was at least an inch thick. Leaving the restaurant, outside they caught a very late sunset. From the station, the fields in the surrounding suburbs sprawled, and the sky still shone bright. The teachers' whistles, commanding the students to gather up, echoed somberly in the nearly-empty plaza in front of the station.

**Part Two**

He saw someone walking around the rim of the pool kick a pebble in, and heard a small splashing sound in front of his feet. Then, crossing his arms over his chest as he floated, in the corner of his skyward vision, the shadow of a long, thin pole suddenly flew overhead. Quickly lifting up his head, he saw that it was one of the poles used for pole vaulting. A tall youth, wearing a uniform ripped at the sleeve near the shoulder, carried it over his shoulder as he went alongside the pool's edge. After him followed a short boy wearing glasses, holding a discus in each hand. Sanzō remembered when he was in his fourth year in middle school: from some bout of inspiration he had wanted to become a famous pole vaulter. Completely out of character from his usual self, he began practicing. The beautiful track and field uniforms dazzled whimsical Sanzō. For fear of being laughed at, he resolved never to tell anybody. He would sneakily take out the pole his family used as a clothesline and practice at the track of a nearby elementary school. Of course, he told neither friends nor family. He thought he would wait until he could jump around three meters, and surprise everyone. But in the end, after his palms suffered many splinters from the bamboo rod, his pole vault stopped at two meters.

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Around that time, he learned how to play the harmonica for the first time. When day turned into evening, he enjoyed the cold metal touch against his hands as he gazed, from his second-floor window in the outskirts of the newly settled colony, at the madder-red sky, and played his harmonica. He was seventeen. With the exception of a single black cat, he didn't love anybody or anything. And, he thought, nobody loved him either. This was a little after the school field trip to Hōten.

Sanzō didn't know the woman who bore him. His first step-mother died when he was nearing the end of his elementary school years, leaving behind her newly born baby girl. In the

spring of the year he turned seventeen, his second step-mother came into the picture. At first he felt towards her a sense of both uneasiness and curiosity. But before long, he began to vehemently hate the woman's Osaka accent and face, which, despite her attempts to look younger, stood out all the more hideously. And his father, who had almost never revealed a smile before meeting this new woman, also became an object of Sanzō's scorn. His step-sister, now five years old, even looked like Sanzō himself, and for that, he hated her as well. And finally, it was himself – his own ugly features – that he detested the most. His bleary near-sighted eyes, his short small nose that was always pointed up above him like a constant apology, his big mouth protruding from his nose, his big yellow snaggled teeth – he cursed each of them, one by one, while looking into the mirror every day. And over many spots on his pale uncouth face, pimples erupted. Angry, Sanzō would sometimes pop the young pimples and cause a mess of blood and pus.

One morning, when his father praised his new step-mother for the miso soup she had made, Sanzō's face changed color. He knew well that until now, his father had never liked miso soup in the slightest. When his eyes met those of his embarrassed father, Sanzō put down his chopsticks, and without even taking a sip of tea, put his shoes on and rushed outside. He would never listen again to the words that came out of his family's mouths. But afterwards, he couldn't ignore his shame and regret, and again he would listen to his family.

When night fell, he slept holding the black cat his family had raised since he was in elementary school. Listening to the purring of the jet-black creature, feeling the touch of its soft fur against his neck and chin, he was able to fall asleep each night. It was only times like these when he was able to, just barely, forget about his hatred and resentment toward his own body. As much as he was able, he resolved to stop speaking to his family. He wanted to, somehow or

other, punish them for their shamelessness. One way of achieving this, he thought, could be to make his grades suffer. Strangely, the only success he'd found had been with his grades in school. His father would often brag to people about them, which angered Sanzō. The only reason his father sent him to the school, Sanzō thought, was because of this small vanity. On top of that, it was unbearable to him that he inherited so much from his father's appearance: from his crooked nose to his stutter. Thinking about seeing his own ugliness in front of his eyes – it was insufferable.

Nonetheless, despite this pressure from his surrounding situation, Sanzō was able to spring into his youth. At times, his body would experience uncontrollable, explosive bursts of energy, impulses to run and jump around. But he wasn't the only one. All of his friends were experiencing the same things, unable to channel the energy that radiated through their bodies. This energy, without rhyme or reason, would erupt sometimes into mischief, sometimes into recklessness. For instance, they would, out of the blue, they would rush to the front of the classroom, turn around and suddenly call out with a huge voice, startling the teacher. There were also boys who would cut the receiver to the public telephone and tie it around a rock. Other times, some of them would sneak into the physics lab at night, stealing telescopes and microscope film and the like, distributing them out to everyone afterward. When June arrived, the hill behind the school would bloom with cherries. During the afternoon breaks, boys would go out to pick them, and almost without fail came back with purple lips. There was even a boy who would kill a sparrow with a slingshot in a pachinko parlour, pluck out its feathers himself, grill it at the Chinese restaurant next to the school, and eat it while walking back to class. And there was one boy who somehow decided to bring a porno magazine to school one time. Suddenly, the whole class became frenzied. Nobody even went outside during the afternoon

break. They just turned, page after page. Their breathing heavy, saliva drooling down, they gazed with intensity, unashamed at being judged by the others. One boy – whose face shone like thin, clear wax, whose skin beamed beautiful as if dusted with white powder – threw his coin purse onto the table, and, eyelids reddening, chuckled with an embarrassed laugh and spoke decidedly.

"Sell it to me, will ya? How's three yen?"

The boy who brought the magazine laughed cunningly but tried not to let his emotions show.

Except for one teacher nicknamed the Wolf who was an ex-lieutenant in the army, there wasn't a teacher that they feared those days. Sanzō and his classmates – only in fifth year at that time – only feared the upperclassmen and the punishments they would dole out.

Sanzō, who closed himself off in a hard shell at home, would come to school, integrating naturally into the environment and becoming lively like the other boys. He remembered, though, neglecting his schoolwork. This was all part of his plan to make his grades suffer. During afternoon breaks, he would sneak off to a small depression in the mountain behind campus with some friends, and stealthily practice how to smoke. One of the kids could skillfully blow smoke rings. To the other boys, this was an incredible feat, a marker that he was more of an adult compared to the rest.

And, a little before this, he remembered experiencing an unnatural sexual act. One night while lying on his bed, he remembered, without anyone having shown him how, it happened in an instant. What it was exactly, he had no idea at first. He just knew that it was a moment of infinite pleasure. Trying to understand the meaning of it, trying to figure out why afterwards it always felt like he was being attacked with pangs of guilt and self-loathing, he was unable to escape this tempting phenomenon. Sometimes, during the middle of the day on the street, he

would feel intense urges to satisfy these desires. His breath would become heavy, and his pulse would beat hard throughout his joints. Fighting against it, his face would twist and warp into ugly expressions. At times like these, he would stare up into the blue summer sky, its brightness unbearably dizzying, as if reflecting grease. In the library, he'd take out dictionaries and, looking up obscene words and reading their meanings, felt a secret excitement. Or he'd go to old bookshops, standing up and fervently reading through illustrated instruction manuals. It was this information that his innermost self thirsted for more than anything, but the understanding he gained from it also gave him an air of superiority over the other boys.

At their school, students were forbidden from watching movies. Nonetheless, going to the moving picture theater became a point of pride among them. In the afternoon, they'd skip out of class and head to the theater. Sanzō, of course, was also guilty of doing this. Rather than the movie simply being interesting, they were more satisfied by the idea of breaking the rule. The campus stood on the foot of a Korean palace from former times. Sneaking out of school, they walked around the old ivy-covered palace walls under the strong midday light of summer. Looking up at the movie posters, with their excessive colors, excited their subtle sense of youthful adventure. But more than that, what excited Sanzō beyond containment was the street lights at night. When night fell and the lamps lit up, he couldn't help but stare. Noticing his acne-ridden face, he would apply some of his step-mother's lotion, and continue stumbling along the street. There was something about the air that made him feel as if something were swelling up in his chest. The decorations in window displays, billboards, Korean night shops – under the light of the street lamps, everything looked beautiful. On nights like that, he would sometimes meet eyes with a young girl, and her scent, like sweet white powder, would spur on endless fantasies. And when he would rendezvous with his friends, they had no reason to worry about not having a

penny. Their best merrymaking times were when they would go into a café together, and all share a single beer. And when their middle-aged waitress would come by, they would all strangely fall into an awkward silence.

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Floating lightly on top of the water, Sanzō's reminiscences quietly, pleasantly stirred his emotions. He lightly opened his eyes and saw the wide night sky. The blue sky from the days of his youth were, compared to the sky he was looking up at now, had more lustrous quality, didn't it? And the air somehow had a lighter, more gorgeous scent. The wind, just as he remembered it, would travel, gently caressing his wetted face. Sanzō, filled with the bittersweet emotions of a traveler's tired melancholy and the joy of returning home, stretched his body out long over the surface of the water.

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When he was a fourth-year in middle school, he had a particularly stubborn fondness for his black cat. He would even go as far as to chew up food and feed it mouth-to-mouth. For a week when the cat went missing, his family members had never seen him fall into such a pure fit of anxiety and desperation. It was an old cat, and what had once been her beautiful black fur had become dirty, devoid of its luster. And moreover, she often caught colds, sneezing often and leaking tears. The rest of his family members, however, all hated her terribly. That was one of the reasons why Sanzō loved his cat all the more. Whenever he returned home from school, she would wait at the door like a dog in order to greet him. She would gaze up, her pupils resembling multifaceted crystals planted like seeds into gelatin, and whine with her spoiled voice.

One day, while Sanzō was eating supper with his little sister and the family's maid, his father and step-mother came home after being out. They had apparently gone out to look for

something, and had eaten before coming home. Hearing this, Sanzō could feel himself become strangely on edge. Suddenly he wondered why they hadn't brought his little sister along (whom, regardless, Sanzō didn't even love). He realized that he was clearly feeling envious, and that realization riled him up with unreasonable anger. They gave Sanzō a little box of soy-broiled eel as a small gift. Again at this, Sanzō's emotions revolted for no reason at all. His face went bitter, and he took a bite. After that, he put the box and its leftovers under the table for the cat. Suddenly, his father went silent and stood up. He kicked the cat – purring and eating – away, grabbing the sleeve of Sanzō's shirt in his left hand, and with his right hand striking him in the head three or four times. Then, his voice trembling with anger, his father spoke for the first time.

"What do you think you're doing! I went to the trouble of getting that for you!"

Sanzō was silent. His father responded again, Sanzō laughing loudly, distorting his face uglily.

"Since you gave it to me, I'm gonna do whatever I want with it."

Another fit of rage seized his father. He punched Sanzō in the face with the intensity such that his own fist must have hurt. His father hit him with an increasingly sick ferocity that even Sanzō could feel. Sanzō, however, didn't try to defend himself in the slightest, instead finding the beaten somehow amusing. Rather, he felt more indignant at his father's having kicked the cat, since clearly she had nothing to do with the matter. The step-mother was taken aback, having no idea how to stop it, and the aged house maid was the same. The cat had run off into the yard, and his little sister simply stood trembling, tears welling up in her eyes.

Finally, his father stopped the beating. Then he stood dumbfounded for a moment, standing and looking down at Sanzō. He looked as if he had just woken from a dream. Sanzō, cold and indifferent, looked up at his father's face. Their eyes meeting one another, his father

revealed a look of guilt and averted his gaze. Right now, his father had completely lost, Sanzō thought meanly. His father would be the type to say this fell under the logic that "a parent scolds his child because he loves them." Rather than, of course, this being a case of simply beating his child because he lost control of his emotions.

And then after some time had passed, Sanzō thought to himself: "In a parent-child relationship, any kind of behavior is ignored." And pure rage began to well up inside him against this truth.

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This memory stung his heart bitterly now. Suddenly turning over his body in the water, he stuck his face under and, kicking his legs evenly, pretended to swim freestyle. But he hadn't gone fifteen meters before he became out of breath. He lifted up his head and stood up with his feet against the bottom of the pool. Then, before his fog-covered glasses he could see the figure of a girl in yellow. Wiping off the water droplets that had accumulated on his glasses and looking properly, it was a girl wearing a ragged yellow Korean traditional dress, standing about two meters from the edge of the pool, watching Sanzō's ridiculous swimming style. She was around eleven or twelve, and her hair was neatly braided and tied with thin red ribbons. Sanzō almost called out to her saying, "*Kichibe*." *Kichibe* meant "girl" in Korean. "I still remember some Korean," Sanzō thought to himself, chuckling.

In his own home, when his little sister was a baby, there was a Korean girl around her age that his family employed. He used to call her *kichibe* or *kannana*, two words with the same meaning.

Seeming bothered by the fact that she was now being looked at by Sanzō, the yellow-clad girl ran away behind where she was standing, shouting words that he couldn't understand. Then,

from the shade of the trees in that direction, three or so naked boys came tottering out. More than anything, Sanzō couldn't help but snicker at their big, protruding belly-buttons. The girl knocked the boys' heads with a clunk, then took off running. The dirty-looking girl's retreating figure reminded Sanzō of his first questionable experience.

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One night, Sanzō was walking along the street with a friend. This friend was a beautiful boy who had set out to buy an erotic magazine. On his face, somewhat aglow having just taken a bath, lay a pimple. Right next to his lip, it was red as if painted on. There was something strangely sexually appealing about it. Sanzō didn't want to return home. If he were to go back, as he did dutifully every night, he would be met with the desperately sad face of his father and the timid, worried face of his stepmother. His father hadn't hit him again; it was just that looking at his languid face was unbearable. For as long as he was able, Sanzō wanted to walk around. The path climbed from wide stretches of main streets up toward the hills. As for what kind of places the road led to, both Sanzō and his friend had a vague idea. Sanzō suddenly stopped in his tracks and looked at his friend's face. His friend returned a glance. Then, without any catalyst, the two of them burst out laughing. In that moment, they saw in each other's eyes the mixing of apprehension, nervousness, and curiosity. In the moment after that, they burst out laughing again, before again turning silent and continuing to climb up the hill. All the while he looked over at his friend, clad in yukata, and at the pimple on his face. Still in his school uniform, Sanzō walked, hiding away a small vermillion Werther volume in his pocket. The book was *Paul et Virginie.*

They had known that a street like this existed around this area, but this was the first time that they were stepping foot there in person. Continuing to climb up the dark hilly street lined with acacia trees, they began to see shops lit up brightly. Sanzō could feel his heart start to pound

violently. Trying to pretend to one another as though this weren't their first time doing something like this, the two of them went silent, and with the right amount of coolness entered the dark alleyway. In front of the short clay door of a traditional Korean-style building, stood four or five women, faces painted starkly white. They were all Korean. The lights in the building were all old-fashioned gas lamps, burning with blue flames. Staring at the women, standing in under the white light and dressed in red, and green, and yellow, and all sorts of colors, Sanzō could not distinguish one woman's face from another's.

Seeing the two boys, the women spoke to them in broken Japanese. "Come in, you," they said. Or just "you, you." Other times, "sexy guy." Broken phrases like that. Realizing that those last words were clearly directed only at his friend, Sanzō, in the midst of his excitement and confusion, began feeling vaguely uneasy. The woman rushed out to them and wouldn't leave them alone. The boys panicked. His friend ripped his sleeve away and then ran away, escaping alone. Also trying to escape, Sanzō was eventually able to break free from the women and chase after his friend. A flustered mess, his friend ran in front of him the whole time, rushing as fast as he could manage. Sanzō had no idea where the road, meandering and winding, was taking him. But anyway, he came to a lamp-lit area and thought it all right to stop there. A little ways around the corner, there was a small earthen door, and by it, a gas lamp lit up pale blue. Underneath the lamp stood someone – a solitary woman. For whatever reason, Sanzō started laughing in that moment – a mistake. But the woman also replied with a subtle laugh. Then, she briskly walked up to him and grabbed him tightly with her small hand, saying once more in Japanese, "Let's go." Reflexively, he brushed her hand away. The woman was surprisingly weak and stumbled around dizzy, but her hand would not let go of Sanzō's school uniform shirt. Sanzō vigorously thrust the woman away and drew himself back. He could hear the sound of cloth ripping apart.

Two or three of his shirt's buttons fell and scattered on the ground. The forcefulness of his movement surprised the woman and she pulled back her hand, a womanly expression that begged for forgiveness surfaced to her face. But then suddenly, she started to pick up the buttons. "Give me back the buttons," he said, extending his hand. She laughed, as if happy, and turned her head to the side. "Give them back," he said again, facing her. Laughing again and showing the buttons, she pointed to the house behind her and said with awkward pronunciation, "Come in."

Sanzō scowled at the woman for a moment. She looked as if she were about the enter the house. He became truly angered.

"No. Those things. Listen to me."

Saying this, he turned and began to walk away. Without even looking over his shoulder at the woman, he continued on hurried feet to chase after his friend.

His friend was standing waiting at a place tucked away where the little road curved. Side by side, the two of them began descending the lonely hill that they had just climbed. Seeing the confusion and shame in each other's faces, they kept walking almost entirely without a word from their mouths. When he thought that they had walked about halfway back, he heard small pittering footsteps from behind them. Sanzō turned around. Unexpectedly, it was the woman from before. Looking directly at Sanzō's face with big eyes, she came near. "Button," she said. Then she opened her small palm to reveal the three buttons from before. "Sorry." She was out of breath, looking as if she'd been running to catch up with them. They were standing at a dim lamp, where the acacia trees, running throughout the hilly road, stopped abruptly. It was just then that he was able to compose himself and see the woman's face.

She had a small build. Probably still a child, he thought. Thin eyebrows, thin nose, thin lips, small fleshless ears, and big bulging eyes – uncharacteristic of Koreans – that stood out ostentatiously on her face. Her dress was vermillion, tied in a big bowtie at her right hip. Out from the under the sleeve of her cheap yet glimmering *chima* stuck out her dainty hands.

She summoned Sanzō's hand so that she could return the buttons. He held out his hand. While returning the buttons, she let her hand linger in his. It felt soft, and cold, and somewhat damp. Holding this position, the girl looked – motionlessly, directly – at Sanzō.

"Come," she said in imperfect Japanese.

There wasn't the slightest bit of flirtation in her voice. Her attitude merely resembled that of someone presenting a perfectly natural request. Sanzō felt strangely bewildered – but it was a different kind of bewilderment than before. Holding her soft hand strongly in his own, he said, "Goodbye."

"Goodbye, no," she said instinctively, only grabbing onto his hand all the more tightly. She tilted her head slightly and looked at him with her deep black pupils, and in that moment, he felt her flirtatiousness for the first time. Sanzō shook his head and said again, "Goodbye." Then, putting the buttons he received into his pants pocket, he walked over to his friend who had been waiting for him. The two of them started again to descend the hill side by side, when his friend patted Sanzō hard on the back, laughing, as he usually did, girlishly.

"Look at your moves! You're clever, you."

Sanzō pulled out his sleeve that had been ripped off and again laughed an amused laugh. About thirty steps forward, he looked over his shoulder, faintly seeing the girl standing under the lamp. Descending the hill and coming to the major road that led to the Japanese settlers' neighborhood, his friend said he was going home already.

"Are you going home too?"

"Yeah," Sanzō replied.

He parted ways with his friend, but he didn't go home. He took out his wallet from his pants pocket and, after checking it, returned it again. And then, to tame his throbbing excitement, he deliberately started to climb again, in big strides, up the hill that he had just come down.

The room had a low ceiling and an *ondol*[195] the size of three tatami mats, the floor completely covered in oiled paper. Facing a courtyard, a small four-cornered window lay open, lined with a green bamboo screen rather than a paper one. The room lacked any kind of décor. Piled in the corner were stacks of nightclothes, and next to them, a dresser lacquered in faded crimson. There also a hung a new mirror, painted with gaudy yellows and reds and greens – the aesthetic that Koreans enjoyed so much. Against the side of the mirror, a forelocked Japanese children's doll lay propped up. These were the only decorations to be found in the room. Leading him into the room, the girl plopped down on the hard floor, tucking her legs behind her and, ignoring the mirror, applied a deep red to her lips. Then, turning to face behind her, she made a gesture with her hand as if to say "sit," all the while saying something in Korean. Even if he had wanted to sit, there was no cushion on the hard-earth *ondol* floor. With no other recourse, he crouched down and leaned against the wall, covered in tan paper as was the bed. "*Eolmayo*?" he said, asking how much. That was one of the few expressions he knew in Korean. "How much? It no big deal," she said, responding in Japanese. Then, thinking a moment longer, she added, "Cheap." The frail-framed and frail-faced girl's use of weird Japanese and kind expressions exuded a strange feeling for Sanzō. While there was a kind of beauty in broken language, the

[195] a traditional Korean underfloor heating system.

girl's unwitting use of coarse and vulgar language, the way a man would make complaints, along with her mismatched expressions was comical.

She stood up and began to spread out a futon. It seemed that she still feared that he would leave. He asked whether he was the only customer tonight. "Not alone. Many," the girl replied. But she didn't seem to be answering the question he meant to ask; she had probably understood him as asking whether she still had other co-workers around in the house. Giving up, he stopped asking questions. After laying out the bedding, the girl looked up at him with an inquiring look. He was breaking his back trying to make known his intentions. He had simply come to a place like this to take a look. So he needed only sleep on his own side, she over on hers. He tried to explain this to her in what little Korean he knew mixed with Japanese, but his effort was futile. Getting worked up by her inability to understand the translation, she stood before him, utterly confused. Finally, he pointed to the futon.

"Anyway, you can just sleep here," he said.

At last, it looked as if she had understood this bit. Then, as she was told, exactly as she was told, she slumped down onto the futon, without even removing her clothes, and rolled onto her side. Turning his back to her, he sat in the corner of the room under a lamp, and pulled out *Paul et Virginie* from his pocket. The street lamp outside was gas, but the lamp in here was electric. Peeling off his jacket, he tried to keep reading his sad romance story. But he kept getting distracted, reading the same passage over and over, unable to grasp its meaning. However, he continued to pretend that he was reading. A cool gust of evening wind came in through the bamboo screen. A moment later, he could hear the girl rustling awake behind him. He kept pretending to read, acting as if he hadn't heard her. "Red book," she said, as if to herself. Sanzō looked up at her for the first time. She made an expression of boredom and bewilderment. "You

can sleep," he said, pointing again to the futon. She began to look more and more troubled, and seemed as if she were on the verge of both tears and laughter. She couldn't for the life of her understand the feelings of her customer. She laughed a dumb, confused laugh, then tilted her head, as if flirtaciously questioning his countenance. "Go sleep!" he said again, this time in a rather violent manner. She retreated her body back in fear. In the midst of his bad temper, the girl's fawning eyes reminded him of those of his black cat. Suddenly, he pulled out four fifty-yen silver coins from his inner pocket and piled them on top of her dresser. Still looking afraid and alternating glances between Sanzō and the money, she didn't budge an inch. Suddenly feeling sorry for her, he spoke in a kind tone.

"It's okay. I'm not angry. You can take the money. You can go to sleep."

She continued to sport a puzzled expression. Seeing her like this, he successively began to feel anger well up in the pit of his stomach and, disregarding her, began reading *Paul et Virginie* once again. But he was unable to read anything, skimming over the same part over and over again. The girl stood up and, this time really dressing herself, went to get into bed.

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Wind crossing over the surface of the pool, it gradually began to get cold. Standing up with the upper half of his body out of the water, Sanzō sneezed, and realized it was time to get out. Without going to the place with the metal ladder, he went to pull himself up the two feet to the edge of the pool, but since he was so fatigued, he barely had any strength in his arms. Finally pulling himself up, he grazed his right hand against the corner of the pool and ended up skinning his elbow a little. At first the surface of his white skin gradually began to be tinged the color of peach, and finally deep red blood began to patter out drop by drop, becoming bigger and bigger

in front of his eyes, and finally gushing to the ground in a stream. He thought it pretty, as if he were observing someone else's wound.

While wiping his body off with a dry hand towel, he suddenly noticed, before his eyes, a bird resting on the branch of a pear tree, looking straight at him. It was a Korean magpie, with a black bill and white chest and two purple wings. It had been a long time since Sanzō had seen this kind of bird in the Naichi[196] – many years, in fact. Sanzō took the hand towel and flung it toward the bird, but it wouldn't leave. He then walked slowly over in the direction of the pear tree. When he was about ten feet away from the tree, the magpie let out a short, throaty cry and flew away.

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Sanzō didn't know why, but word of that first adventure of his (or rather, attempt at an adventure) had leaked out. Three days afterward during the afternoon break, two fifth-years dragged Sanzō out to the hill behind campus without any pretense. Both students were pretty much regarded as hard-liner jocks and almost militaristic. Their bodies were big and their physical prowess strong; Sanzō had no choice but to follow along. Behind the school lay the ruins of an old palace. Underneath the tall, yellow-lacquered roof, a plaque with Chinese characters reading *Sūseiden*[197] faced forward. At the peak of the roof, strange tiles shaped like phoenixes and lions stood lined up. Broken chairs and desks from the school lay strewn in the middle of the palace courtyard. The upperclassmen made Sanzō climb up the old stone stairs, decorated with dragon patterns. Suddenly, his nose was pricked with the smell of grass. To the

[196] Literally "Inside-Land." A name for the colonial motherland, Japan.
[197]崇政殿: Chinese characters with the meaning of Worship-Governance Palace; they would be read as *Sūseiden* in Sino-Japanese pronunciation and as *Sungjeongjeon* in Sino-Korean pronunciation.

point where they were hiding the stone wall, summer weeds grew opaque. The hot rays of the June sun peeped through the leaves of the cherry trees, whose flowers had recently fallen.

"I know you're thinking about running back to school. Don't pretend to be so ballsy," one of the fifth-years said to him. The other said nothing. Sanzō didn't offer any point of self-defense; clearly, he was paralyzed with fear. The most that could happen to him was to be punched, he thought, as he calmed his emotions down. Nevertheless, he felt his heartrate rise naturally, and felt his face go pale. And though he was avoiding looking out in front of him, he felt a strong sense of being stared at. "Take off your glasses," said one of the boys, Sanzō averting his eyes. This was so that when he got beaten up, his glasses wouldn't get broken. To help with severe nearsightedness, Sanzō wore thick glasses. Although he was frightened beyond belief, he did as he was told and took off his glasses, not feeling a single ounce of brazenness. Staying silent, he continued glaring at the upperclassmen. Suddenly, a hand reached out and grabbed the earpiece of his glasses. Sanzō, despite trying to defend himself in the moment, was struck hard on his right cheek by an open palm, and he dropped his glasses. Enraged, Sanzō leapt at the boy, lost in delusion. In an instant, Sanzō was thrown down on top of the grass. Seeing him try to raise himself up, they jumped down and hit him senselessly. After beating him for a good while, the upperclassmen silently went back to the school.

Lying face-down in the grass, Sanzō lay motionless for a while. He didn't feel any pain. Teardrops fell from his eyes onto the grass. *I'm a man without any courage.* At least he hadn't taken off his glasses on his own free will, he thought, assuaging his self-reproach. All at once, by some bout of supernatural power, he daydreamed a scene in which he enacted revenge against the two boys. In his fantasy, he was like Son Gokū from *Journey to the West*, using black magic to inflict maximum punishment. This daydream continued for several moments. Then, waking

back up, Sanzō felt a new surge of indignation well up within him. Lacking physical strength – to him, it was a fatal flaw. Now, he felt no value in things like his grades. They were awful and vexing. But for Sanzō, it was something he couldn't rebel against. Again, tears flowed down his cheek. His glasses fell right in front of him. He felt the heat from the sun against his back. Out from a crack in the stone wall slithered a lizard, and coming right up in front of his nose, stared at him strangely with big, round pupils. Then, it jumped back into the thick grass. His face pressed in by the intense smell of fresh grass and by the scent of the dirt, he cried, for a long while.

**Part Three**

The rugby players had already gone, and there was no one left on the athletic field. Only the lonely goal, made up of two goalposts intersected by a crossbar, remained. The sun had already fallen, and the black silhouette cast by the old French consulate and its surrounding forest had left the yellow sky yet unstained. Beyond this, ruins of a palace from olden times were used as an enclosure between the train tracks and the athletic field. Indeed, in the far corner of the sports ground was the door of the old Korean palace, lacquered in red and yellow. By the door, some Koreans, resting pipes in their mouths, were lowering pails of water. Behind the door a spring was gushing water; they had come to ladle it up. Many years before, tired from summer drills, Sanzō would often scoop up that water with his hands and drink.

The color of the sky gradually changed into deep navy, tinged with black. In the pool, three middle school students, were swimming alongside one another in rows. They seemed to be competitive swimmers given their adroit swimming style and perfect physiques. Looking at these shadowed bodies, legs docilely stretched out, shoulders bulging with muscle, Sanzō felt intensely

jealous. Seeing his own pallid arms, comparing them to those of the swimmers, he couldn't help but feel inferior. "Submission to the flesh" and "contempt for the mind" – those feelings brought about when he'd been beaten up by upperclassmen so many years ago – again, he felt it anew.