

Kobayashi Hideo: The Long Journey Toward Homeland (1902-1945)

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I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

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Abstract

The famous Japanese critic, Kobayashi Hideo (1902–1983), passed through five broad stages up to 1945. In the first stage (1929–32), he sought to reinstate the claims of “the man,” the feeling, thinking human being, in writing, in place of the various literary dogmas adopted from the West: “Behind literature, see the man.” In the second stage, (1933–37), he attempted to define the “modern individual” in a Japanese society of change, anxiety and chaos, adopting the term the “socialized I” to explain his sense of a self integrated into society. In this period he sought a model in the West and found Dostoevsky. The impetus behind this stage can be summed up in the saying, “Behind the man, see society.” In Stage 3 (1938–39), Kobayashi concluded that the “silence” of Japanese people expressed a “wisdom” that accepted the “inevitable” or their “fate” in history. This stage can be summarized in the dictum “Behind society, see history.” Kobayashi’s key direction in stage four (1940–41) is “Behind history, see nature,” the latter term meaning nature (fused with humankind). In the fifth stage, from 1942 into the postwar period, Kobayashi adopted a Dostoevskian “harmony and serenity” in espousing a transcendence of the human realm, when the human organism in its greatest struggles sees the need for beauty in art. This stage can be summed up in the saying “Behind nature, see (that which inspires) beautiful literature.”

The thesis charts these five stages with biographical material, some of it gleaned from interviews, and with analyses of Kobayashi’s works, as well as works by Dostoevsky, the alter-ego of Kobayashi from 1933–43. Kobayashi emerges as a figure who lived a complex series of intellectual and personal changes, in strong reaction to the revolutionary political and cultural transformations in prewar Japan.

Introduction

When Kobayashi Hideo was a second year student at Tokyo Imperial University in 1926, his lecturer, Suzuki Shintarô, gave him a grade of zero on a test paper in which he wrote, “I refuse to answer such a foolish question.” On a second test, Kobayashi did so well that Suzuki was forced to reconsider his previous judgment and accept that Kobayashi might have been right about the test question. Soon afterward, Suzuki read Kobayashi’s paper on Mallarmé and concluded that it read more convincingly than the writings of the French Mallarmé scholar Thibaudet (Suzuki, “Reminiscences”; KHZ-BII 169). The paper reflected something of Kobayashi’s life up to then, a growing spiritual maturity which included his quest into the unknown.

0.1 General Intent and Scope

0.1.1 The Intent

The present study is an attempt to cast light on the challenging figure of Kobayashi Hideo. He has remained an enigma to many of his readers, just as he was to his university teachers. Kobayashi has been described as “The Divine Critic,” a “Modern Socrates,” “A Trickster of Paradoxes,” and “A Tactician, Reactionary, [and] Dogmatician.” (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 63). His works and character have provoked varying responses among both Japanese and Western commentators. This study attempts to explore the question of whether Kobayashi was a “divine critic” and “modern Socrates” or a “trickster” and “tactician,” through a critical biography that considers his life as well as his writings. This study argues that the achievements of his “maturity” from 1929 through 1944 indicate that he was more of a “divine critic.” It ends in 1944 and includes

comment on how Kobayashi reacted to his six-month stay in Nanking, the site of the massacre in late 1937. At the end of the war, Kobayashi did not publish for a year, perhaps affected by the period of adjustment from imperial rule to representative government. 1945 provides a convenient cut-off point for this study. His writings to this date comprise the first 14 volumes of the 28 volume *Complete Works* (Annotated edition, 2003–05). After the war, Kobayashi turned from considerations of “homeland” to discussions of the arts. These later writings are to be explored in another study.

Keene identifies the maturing process of Kobayashi by calling his writings a “spiritual autobiography, a record of his growth.”

[Kobayashi’s] works of criticism were in fact discussed as segments of an autobiography, or even as “I novels” by Nakamura Mitsuo¹ in his book on Kobayashi. The “I novels” of Kobayashi ... form a spiritual autobiography, a record of his growth as he responded to the works before him. (Keene, *Dawn, Criticism*, 588-89)

Kobayashi was an unusual kind of modern critic. In his first major essay, Kobayashi describes the artist as one who tests words or ideas in life, and writes what has been embodied (incarnated) as a result of his/her “walking” in “ongoing struggles.”

However, for the artist, art is neither a function of sensation nor a function of thought. It is an activity. For the artist, the work is no more than a signpost marking the distance along the way. What is of value is the walking When the poet writes the final line of a poem, he has simply completed one monument to his ongoing struggle. (trans. Anderer, 27; “Various Patterns,” 1929)

¹ (1911-88). Critic, playwright and novelist who was an early contributor to Bungakkai under the influence of Kobayashi.

This critical biography explores Kobayashi's monumental works as the result of his "walking." After looking at his family background and youth it describes his struggles in life in the five stages of his development as a writer. The "monuments" in each stage enable the readers to follow how Kobayashi focused, in succession, on the "man," society, history, nature, and beautiful literature. He wrote in a state of tension between "theory" and "beliefs," constantly wavering and testing in his writings his awareness of the world around him. Those restricted to "theory" faded for him and those leading to his "beliefs" remained significant.

This is an original study of Kobayashi's life and works up to 1944, which attempts to clarify their significance in light of the interpretations of Western scholars: including Seidensticker, Keene, Anderer, Hirata, and Dorsey. More so than Japanese commentators, these tend to emphasize issues of ethics and morality which Kobayashi attempted to bring to the fore so strongly, particularly in his study of Dostoevsky. This study also seeks a second kind of audience, Westerners and Japanese alike, who desire to explore Kobayashi's views of a decaying Western civilization, which Japan imported unaware of the dangers to its culture. Particularly prominent in the 1930s was the conceptualized, rational history promoted by Japanese authorities and scholars, which Kobayashi attempted to counter in the prewar days, as will be discussed in Chapter 6.

0.1.2 Major Works of Kobayashi Hideo (1902-83)

Kobayashi Hideo was a precocious writer who became the foremost critic in twentieth-century Japan. He was born in Kanda, Tokyo in 1902 and reared in Minato-ward, Tokyo. He graduated from Tokyo

[Imperial] University in March 1928, taking his degree in French Literature, with a thesis on “Arthur Rimbaud.”

He first achieved critical acclaim for the essay “*Samazama Naru Ishô* [Various Patterns]” (1929), his first major piece of writing and now the title of Volume One of Kobayashi’s collected works (2002-05). It won a prize in the *Kaizô* magazine, a publication dedicated to attacking the materialist and historicist view of literature represented in the “proletarian” writings which had become important in the mid-1920s.

Kobayashi’s series of essays in literary criticism beginning in the early 1930s made him the founder of modern criticism in Japan just before the Manchurian Incident (September 1931). The Incident increasingly affected Japanese society and Kobayashi, which led to his second monumental essay, “*Shishôsetsu*” (“The I-Novel,” 1935), the title to volume six (2003) of his *Complete Works, Annotated* (2002-05).²

Turmoil followed the China Incident (July 1937) as another major event. By traveling to the Continent (China, Korea, and Manchuria), Kobayashi attempted to understand and express the Incident in “On History” (1938-39), his third major writing. It became the preface of his book *The Life of Dostoevsky* (1939).³ Then the deadlock of the China War increasingly affected the domestic scene, which led him to write on Japanese history and tradition in the essay “History and Literature” (1941), the title of volume thirteen (2003), as the fourth important essay.

² Volume two is titled “Rimbaud,” [1926, 1930, 1947] and Volume four is “Letter to X” [1932].

³ It is the title of volumes eleven (2003), including articles on Dostoevsky adjunct to his series, “The Life of Dostoevsky” (1935-37).

The Manchurian Incident (September 1931) and the crisis of the China Incident (July 1937) increasingly interested him in Japanese history and tradition as a means of explaining these disturbing events. This was compounded by the shock of the Pacific War (December 1941), which led to his writing highly original essays on the Japanese classics, providing fresh human and religious interpretations. The three catastrophic events took place within a period of ten years (1931-41), which corresponded with his acceptance into and departure from the literary circle. The last two crises occurred in four short years (1937-41), during which period Kobayashi completed four volumes (out of a total of fourteen of his complete works, 2002-05), volumes ten, eleven, twelve and thirteen.

Kobayashi continued to pour out his feelings during the Pacific War from 1942 to 1944 and after, which were featured in two books: *Transiency* (January 1946), and *Mozart* (December 1946). This study ends here, highlighting the first fourteen volumes, the half-way point of a total twenty-eight volumes of his *Complete Works* (2002-05).⁴ Particularly volumes twelve to fourteen highlight some ideas of “nationalism” and “homeland” that peaked during the war years, and presents some ethical questions that remain today.

0.1.3 Postwar Writings

The postwar writings are not discussed in this study. They include “*Kindai Kaiga*” (“Modern Paintings”), written in forty-five parts in a period of four years (March 1954 to June 1958), which demonstrated that Kobayashi understood Western culture in addition to Western literature

⁴ The first set of Kobayashi’s *Complete Works* [*Zenshū*] (1950-51) appeared in the postwar era in eight volumes, and a second set in twelve volumes (1976-77), both published by Shinchōsha.

(Keene, *Dawn, Criticism* 608). His concern for life following intuitive perceptions led to the major work “*Watakushi no Jinsei Kan*” (“*My View of Life*,” 1949), and “*Jôshiki ni tsuite*” (“On Common Sense,” 1964). He wrote his best seller titled *Kangaeru Hinto* (Hints for Thought) in the 1960s. This was followed by his magnum opus, *Motoori Norinaga*, which was begun in January 1965 but was not completed until 1976.

In 2002 a new, cloth-bound *Complete Works* appeared in modern Japanese type-setting, with the supplements (*Bekkan*) including new secondary-source writings and an expanded indexing system. Then in 2003-05 an annotated paper-back series was published in twenty-eight volumes. Some essays, interviews, symposia, as well as Kobayashi’s translations of French writers were newly added. Of the six supplementary [*Bekkan*] volumes, the first includes the whole body of Kobayashi’s writings on Henri Bergson under the title of *Kansô (Afterthoughts)* (1958-81), never before included in his previous *Complete Works* (1951, 1975).

0.1.4 The Approach to Kobayashi’s Writings

One parallel for the approach adopted here is in Janine Beichman’s literary biography of Yosano Akiko, *Yosano Akiko, Embracing the Firebird* (2002). Beichman, like this study, emphasizes the early “process of development” of the artist to help explain some aspect of the artist’s works: “This book attempts [to pinpoint] what happened during the years of childhood and adolescence that helps to account for the later, epiphanic burst into poetry” (5). Beichman describes this early aspect as a “mystery” that surrounded Yosano, which she traces by devoting a high proportion of her book, much of the first nine chapters, to her biography. In

the last three chapters, however, she deals with Yosano's major collection of poems, *Tangled Hair*, thus separating her life from her main works.

This study uses a similar approach in an attempt to clarify the "mystery" of how Kobayashi "matured" in such breadth of subjects and depth of thought. Biographical accounts of his early life and education provide helpful clues to his development, as Kobayashi became first a literary critic and then a social-cultural critic, immersing himself in the modern world. This study applies biographical material to the first half of Kobayashi's career, thus differing from Beichman's work, which concentrates on Yosano's early life.

First, an account of the background of Kobayashi's family members reveals some of the early influences which shaped the direction of his life. He inherited from his parents his exceptional abilities in reading, writing and his creativeness in cultural matters. Kobayashi's father was singled out as a researcher of jewelry-making and design. He was aggressive and untiring in his pursuit for perfection in numerous ways such as research. Kobayashi's mother was also well educated and a woman of culture who taught such skills as tea-ceremony, flower arrangement, and koto. She came from no ordinary family as her great-grandfather had been a tutor of the emperor. (See Chapter 1.)

Second, Hideo's enriching educational environment did much to influence the scope of his future writings. His holistic education in primary school among some of the brightest in Tokyo included learning literature, music, and sports. Moreover, his homeroom teacher was unparalleled in the history of the school in dedication and innovative methods of education. Kobayashi was reading at age thirteen what adults were reading in their

thirties, that is, almost twenty years in advance equal to that of any ordinary adult.

Third, this early enriching education was further broadened by his father and Uncle Jôya Moku telling Hideo of their international experiences. His father became an international researcher and businessman, and Uncle Jôya, an international reporter in New York, who brought news from around the world. They undoubtedly expressed their views regarding the Imperial rule, the process of Westernization, Japan's role in WWI, and other events occurring in Manchuria.

Fourth, evidence yet to be made widely public⁵ indicates that Kobayashi's traits of resistance began in middle school, a sign that he understood what he was reading. He was reprimanded for speaking out and fell behind in his study for entering First Higher School. He preferred to associate with those who rebelled against the school policy of rearing students to become members of the élites of Japanese society, which resistance continued into higher school. In university, he was notorious for his spirit of independence. His sister, Takamizawa Junko, has well described Kobayashi's independent manners in her memoir.

Fifth, biographical accounts verify that beginning in 1929 Aoyama Jirô instilled in Kobayashi an understanding of the arts. Kobayashi respected him as the foremost avant-garde of objets d'art, though he rarely wrote about this legendary genius until after WWII. In exchange for his training Kobayashi, Aoyama sought a proxy in Kobayashi, a genius who could absorb much of his knowledge and express it in writing, a skill that

⁵ This material consists of personal interviews as well as a pamphlet by Ono not widely circulated (see Appendix).

Aoyama had no desire to develop in himself (KHZ-A [Bekkan 3], “*Kobayashi to iu Hito* [The Person of Kobayashi],” 25). (See Chapter 3.)

Kobayashi often referred to the “I,” particularly in many of his early reminiscences (*omoide*), which this study draws on in its early chapters. Hirata notes that “[e]arly in his career as a critic, Kobayashi was criticized for his ‘impressionist, subjective’ style by his fellow Japanese critics” (Hirata, 221). Hirata however sees a place for the subjective, explaining his own and Kobayashi’s reference to the “I”: “It [autobiography] is, however, remarkably effective in enticing the reader into his discursive sphere—his history, his personal mythology.” He continues that, “what matters here is that Kobayashi’s text remains an effective and seductive invitation to something he names *jiken* (event)” (Hirata, 221). This study also adopts Hirata’s approach, including many of Kobayashi’s accounts of “events”: in particular, the deaths and illnesses of immediate family members (father, mother, and himself) and of close friends (Tominaga, Yasuko, Nakahara). It extends to his writings about important “historical” events: the Manchuria Incident (1931), the China Incident (1937), and the outbreak of WWII (1941).

0.1.5 Zuihitsu Style and “Fragments of Ideas”

Kobayashi’s essays are not easy to read, and this adds to the difficulty that is always there in linking general comments to the writer’s biography, or vice versa. He expresses himself in a style that is basically *zuihitsu* essay writing, meaning “following the brush.” That is, his ideas formulate as he writes, but not in any concerted order. Thus, the organization of ideas is poor and important insights can appear suddenly as

flashes of inspiration. Because they are so highly charged with meaning, fragments have the power to suddenly become dominant ideas.

In “Various Patterns,” Kobayashi describes the complex process involved in creating these “fragments” of ideas:

I can abstract ideas from the artists’ works, which indicates that something other remains however much I imagine. My mind strolls in this richness, when I believe that I understand the artist’s thoughts in total a *fragment* [*danpen*] of a new idea finds me [open to it] for new consideration. There is no escape after I find it: the *fragment* is no longer a *fragment*, but an expanding idea that swallows the thought just apprehended. (KHZ-A 1:139) (My italics.)

For similar reasons writer Nagai Tatsui warned this author against attempting to discuss Kobayashi in strict rational analyses. He claimed it a difficult task that would distort his thoughts more than clarify them (interview 1988).

Kobayashi’s essays require his readers to be engaged rather than detached. The frequent experience of ideas swallowing “the thought just apprehended” *compounds the difficulties of anyone seeking an analytical approach*. Seidensticker suggests that reading, and then writing on, Kobayashi’s works is actually an exercise in “self-awareness.” Seidensticker describes the experience of writing about Kobayashi: “The fact that I am here writing this essay and thereby improving my awareness of myself is as important as anything I am writing” (1971 421).

Seidensticker claims that there is a breaking down of the distinction between one’s life of “self-awareness” and [the] art [of writing]” in Kobayashi (1971 421). He turns to Kobayashi’s words, “Criticism is self-awareness,” and begins by applying this dictum to himself (421). As he reads

Kobayashi's moral message, he makes it his own. "Its concern is more than literary Artist and critic alike are by way of becoming no more than men of sympathy and sincerity" (421). Kobayashi's message becomes Seidensticker's moral message, particularly the prioritizing of "the way of becoming" over that of rationality in producing criticism.

0.1.6 The "Logic of Destiny" and "Beliefs"; "Relativism"

The terms "theory of destiny" or "logic of destiny" provide a key to understanding Kobayashi's progress to "maturity."⁶ Identified with an "awareness of that circulating in one's blood," they help explain the "realities" of his world and how he responded. Kobayashi asked what ran in his blood or what the "theory of destiny" was and increasingly replied in terms of "beliefs," as in a 1933 essay:

Logic cannot live within each [writer], unless each spends particular time on it and suffers pains. Thereby, "living logic" (*ikita rikutsu*) becomes the rationale for "logic" transformed into "beliefs (convictions)" (*shinnen*). Some say that anyone can explain with "logic," and others say anyone can talk of "beliefs," but I think this. Writers never live according to "logic" but rather along the line of "beliefs" (*shinnen*). Their life refutes any "logic" unrelated to reality, a fact which logic is unable to prevent and thereby dies out. ("On the I-Novel," KHZ-A 4: 229)

For Kobayashi then, people live according to their "beliefs," not to their "logic." That is, "logic" which involves a process of "logical analysis" is unable to grasp the entirety of that aspect of "reality." He argued that the

⁶ In 1929 Kobayashi proposed the "theory (*iron*) of destiny" (see chapter 5), then in 1933 the "logic (*rikutsu*) of destiny" (see chapter 6). Thereafter he simply uses the words "destiny" or "fate," particularly after the China Incident (1937) (see chapters 7-9).

“logic of destiny” can become a basis for one’s “beliefs,” from which people develop a guide to their conduct and mature.

The “logic” of Kobayashi is often part of a thinking stage, which does not immediately or necessarily translate into action. More often than not, the “logic” dies out and never develops into “beliefs (convictions).” The process of “logic” requires “time and pains,” during which time a fragment of thought either germinates and develops or dies and fades away. Often, however, Kobayashi wrote articles that were not consistent with his “beliefs” (but as, for example, a means to an income in the depression), for which reason some commentators have called him contradictory and a “trickster.” (See chapters 8 and 9.)

Another key concept in understanding Kobayashi’s maturity in life and writings is that of “relativism,” which he formulated in 1937 as “Behind literature, see man; behind man, see society and history.” (See Chapter 6.) This formed, he claimed, one basis of modern Western criticism. Japan first participated in this relativism when Marxism introduced its scientific criticism (“*Hihyô no Hôkô* [Direction of Literary Criticism],” KHZ-A 9: 219).⁷ In the same essay Kobayashi admits the failure of his earlier writings when he ignored the “social aspects of criticism.”

Logic cannot live within each [writer], unless each expends time and suffering. I had just graduated from university after studying French literature briefly. I was so possessed as a youth by self-confession that I could not have possibly written current criticism (*bungei jihyô*), though other expressions were possible I had completely ignored the social aspects of criticism. (KHZ-A 4: 229)

⁷ Kobayashi also refers to “relativism” as an aspect of French criticism in his essay “*Kankyô*” (“Environment,” 1940).

Kobayashi's "relativism" reflects a flexible response to a lived "reality," which enabled him to suddenly shift his attention not only from literature to society in 1932 but also from society to "history" around 1937 and then to the classics in 1942. As Seidensticker comments, "The transition is easy from such a view of criticism to Kobayashi's views of history" ([1971] 441).

0.2 Westerners' Approach and This Study

Western scholars in general portray the figure of Kobayashi as a far more forceful, dominant "individualist" than do Japanese commentators. This difference is evident when their work is compared with perhaps a hundred or so volumes on Kobayashi, not to mention the additional hundreds of magazine articles in Japanese dating back to the early 1930s. Even modern Japanese scholars based in the West, Hijiya-Kirchner and Suzuki Tomi for example, do not explain in any detail important terms such as the "socialized I" in their studies of "*Shishôsetsuron*." (See Chapter 6.)

0.2.1 The Uniqueness of this Study

This study argues for more attention to the biographical accounts which other scholars (Westerners and Japanese) have so long ignored.⁸ Professor Tsukamoto Toshiaki explains that tracing down biographical data requires tedious and tiring work that most scholars (at least in Japan) have until recently lacked the time and resources for (interview).

⁸ In the postwar period, Japanese commentators tend to speak in the abstract as seen in two examples: one a symposium analyzing the word "existence" without context, and the other the term "socialized I (*shakaika shita watakushi*)" by discussing only the "I" and not the "socialized" aspect. (See Chapter 6, "The Social Critic.")

In general, all the studies of Kobayashi by Western scholars—Seidensticker, Keene, Anderer, Harootunian, and Hirata—describe his strength as a man of ethics and action,⁹ Seidensticker and Keene focus on Kobayashi's term “self attestation” (*jiko shōmei*), and this is confirmed by biographical evidence. He supported leftist writers in the 1930s and invited them to join forces with him. (See Chapter 6.) Kobayashi was his own man, not the reactionary ultra-nationalist that some have made him out to be. Anderer speaks of Kobayashi being “immersed in the modern world”(13) and “the irreducible actuality of modern Japanese cultural life”(14). Biographical evidence can specify how he “immersed” himself and what the “irreducible actuality” may have referred to. (See Chapter 6.) Biography also needs to be related to works. Harootunian describes Kobayashi's independent stance in calling for an attempt “to defeat both the age and society” in the symposium “Overcoming Modernity” (1942). He quotes Dostoevsky's idea of “transcending modernity,” but ends there without specifying in which essays Kobayashi actually attempted to “transcend modernity.” (See Chapter 9.)

0.2.2 Seidensticker, the Pioneer (1971, 1979)

Though Kobayashi enjoyed an enormous readership in Japan, he was virtually unknown in the West until Edward Seidensticker wrote the article “Kobayashi Hideo” in *Tradition and Modernization in Japanese Culture*, edited by Donald Shively (1971). This established him as the first Western scholar of Kobayashi. The first six pages of this first article are most important, for their emphasis on the moral dimension of Kobayashi's writings, and the common problem of how to live in one's society and age.

⁹ Western scholars, who write from the 1970s in the West, are uninfluenced by the scrutiny of government which Japanese commentators were subjected to in the 1930s-40s.

Seidensticker's second article, also titled "Kobayashi" (1979), discusses a selection of Kobayashi's works from his first important essays to his later works in the 1960s. Seidensticker sees in Kobayashi's writings an urgent moral and ethical message for humanity: to regain a wholesome consciousness of life by eliminating conceptual or abstract thinking.¹⁰ He comments that Kobayashi held the belief that "art is concrete, a child of nature which must never forget its parent"; for this reason, modern Japanese literature "fails to apprehend its object as a whole" (158), resulting in an over-conceptualization that has been drowning man's life in fiction (159).

0.2.3 Keene (1984)

Donald Keene included a section on Kobayashi in *Dawn to the West: Drama, Poetry and Criticism* (1983). He deals with Kobayashi's attitudes towards modernity, proletarian literature and war. He also details the important debate with Nakano Shigeharu and the strong influence of the French poets, Baudelaire and Rimbaud, and his interest from the late war years in classical Japanese literature. Keene also discusses the role of Dostoevsky and Motoori as Kobayashi's "alter-egos" (592, 606). Keene's chapter differs from Seidensticker's in including a more lengthy discussion of Dostoevsky's influence on Kobayashi.¹¹ He comments: "Japanese critics have not been as much concerned with the originality of Kobayashi's Dostoevsk[y] as with his success in identifying himself not only with

¹⁰ He cites Kobayashi's essay, "Shiga Naoya" (1929): "Shiga does not think and he does not feel. Above all he acts" Seidensticker adds a quotation from another essay written a decade later: "An artist knows himself in the act of creating and not through ... self-reflection."

¹¹ Seidensticker concedes that this is an omission in his own account, and explicitly leaves treatments of this aspect to someone more familiar with Dostoevsky's works ("Kobayashi" [1971] 445).

Dostoevsk[y] but with the characters in the novels” (Keene, *Dawn, Criticism* 593).

Keene notes that both Kobayashi and Motoori warn against forcing a work into a rigid scheme or describing the historical background of the work. They conclude that it is more important to “go to the heart of the work” and to “understand its meaning” (*Dawn, Criticism* 610).

[Kobayashi’s] attraction to Motoori Norinaga probably originated in the similarity in attitudes he detected between Motoori and himself: both men believed that the critic must *go to the heart of the work* he is considering and try to *understand its meaning*, rather than to describe the historical background or attempt to *force the work into an existing critical scheme*. (My italics.) (*Dawn: Poetry, Drama, Criticism* 610)

They warn against using “an existing critical scheme.” Kobayashi’s practice was, however, not always consistent with this: he himself earlier claimed he relied on the ideas of Sainte Beuve in 1935 and a “relativism” in 1937, as we shall see.

0.2.4 Anderer (Translation 1995) and Harootunian (2000)

Paul Anderer translated a selection of Kobayashi’s essays in 1995 in *Literature of the Lost Home: Kobayashi Hideo: Literary Criticism 1924-1939* (1995). This includes translations of five important essays from 1929 to 1935¹² and helpful excerpts from thirty-seven miscellaneous essays.

¹² “*Samazama Naru Ishō*” (“Multiple Designs,” 1929), “*Gendai Bungaku no Fuan*” (“The Anxiety of Modern Literature,” 1932), “*Kokyō o Ushinatta Bungaku*” (“Literature of the Lost Home,” 1933), “*Bungakkai no Konran*” (“Literature of the Lost Home,” 1933), and “*Watakushishōsetsu*” (“Discourse on Fiction of the Self,” 1935; [or “*Shishōsetsuron*,” (“Discussions of the I-Novel”)])

The translations are fluent and elegant in style but lack sufficient interpretive comments, since the discussion of the five major essays is limited to a brief fifteen pages. Anderer also emphasizes the influence of Dostoevsky, claiming that Dostoevsky is “the foreign writer who most possessed Kobayashi throughout the 1930s” (12). Indeed as Kobayashi wrote in 1932, “But now, truly, the time has come when we must engage Dostoevsky” (“*Gendai Bungaku no Fuan* [The Anxiety of Modern Literature],” 1932 43).

Anderer was followed by Harry Harootunian in his book *Overcome by Modernity* (2000). It seeks to reflect on the experiences of “modern life” in the interwar period, and how this was thought about, discussed and recalled it by contemporaries (Harootunian, Preface: xi). He devotes Chapter Two, “Overcoming Modernity,” to a discussion of the 1942 symposium. Dostoevsky’s influence is emphasized:

Reading Dostoevsky apparently revealed to [Kobayashi] ... whether literature is pledged to the task of representing society and age or should follow an altogether different path *in order to defeat both the age and society* in which he lives and writes. (80). (My italics.)

Harootunian does not, however, offer new interpretative comments, but contributes by drawing attention to Kobayashi’s focus on Dostoevsky in the 1942 symposium on “Overcoming Modernity.” (See Chapter 9 of this study.)

0.2.5 Two Ph.D. Dissertations (1996,1997)

Two contributions in English on Kobayashi have appeared recently, both representing a younger generation of scholars detached from

the experience of World War II that affected both Seidensticker and Keene in their attitudes. In “The Implicit Return: Kobayashi Hideo’s Failure to Achieve Modernism and the Problems Concerning His Ideological Conversion” (1994), the first paper by Matsui Midori,¹³ she proposes the controversial opinion that Kobayashi was a victim of a process of “brainwashing” as were many other writers at the time.¹⁴ Her conclusion is that: “Kobayashi’s case is now recognized as one of the most serious examples of the betrayal of the intellectual in Japanese literary history” (*Literary* 91). This is an unduly severe judgment, as this study argues in Chapter 9, below.

A different approach is taken by James Dorsey in his 1997 University of Washington dissertation, “An Intersection of Aesthetics and Ideology: Kobayashi Hideo, 1922-1942.” Dorsey blames Kobayashi’s response to the war on a faulty perception. His thesis is centered on the views of Tosaka Jun, a leftist critic and thinker, who led an attack on Kobayashi in the 1930s from which Dorsey borrows the term *bungaku shugi* (literary aestheticism). Dorsey claims *bungaku shugi* “records the final stage in the growth of Kobayashi’s thoughts ... which Kobayashi was to hold and promote throughout his career” (Dorsey 135, 145). Dorsey also claims that this *bungaku shugi*, or inner perception, disabled Kobayashi from seeing the destruction of war, particularly the atrocities in Nanking and the deaths at Pearl Harbor. He concludes that “reason and universal theories must [for

¹³ This paper becomes part of her dissertation, “Beyond the Failure of Modernism: Contradictions in the Poetics and Politics of T. S. Eliot and Kobayashi Hideo (1996) at Princeton University. She tones down her sharp criticism: “It is not my purpose to condemn Eliot’s and Kobayashi’s ... lapse of their political judgment” in her Introduction (“Failure” 9).

¹⁴ Matsui depicts Kobayashi as typifying *tenkô*, a conversion from literary modernism to Japanese tradition or *kokyô* (home) according to the traditional values of the *kokutai* (Japan polity) centered on the Emperor.

current writers] take precedence where intuition [such as *bungaku-shugi*] fails” (“Intersection” 11).

Both writers end on an unequivocal, ethical note criticizing Kobayashi for representing a nationalism which they hold responsible for the atrocities of the war. This study, however, takes the view that strict censorship prevented Kobayashi from reporting the true nature of the China War, and that Kobayashi’s “nationalism” is expressed more in “silence” (as in “Impressions of Manchuria”) and in attempts to “transcend” the modern interpretations of historians by following the tradition of Dostoevsky (see the term “transcending modernity” in Chapter 9).

0.2.6 Hirata (2005)

Hosea Hirata represents the next generation of Kobayashi scholars. In *Discourses of Seduction—History, Evil, Desire, and Modern Japanese Literature*, he is concerned with an ethics based on “desire,” not confined simply to the actions solely perceived by the conscious, but also conditioned by “the traditionally and culturally established, *knowledge of the good*” (8).¹⁵ (My italics.)

Hirata discusses Kobayashi in two chapters. “Criticism in Poetry: Kobayashi Hideo as a Poet Manqué” concurs with the findings of this study that Kobayashi’s early works are “tightly bound with death” (208); Kobayashi’s discourse of fate (*shukumei*) is “a key concept throughout his

¹⁵ Non-academically speaking, this author began discussing the problem of “evil” with Professor Tajima Toshio (formerly of Senshû University, Tokyo) in 1982. He explained Kobayashi’s idea of “evil” in terms of the apple of knowledge in the story of Adam and Eve. That is, with knowledge emerged concepts of the consciousness regarding good and evil, which introduces innumerable paradoxes in reality, which are contrary to the rational mind.

career” (215); and “[Kobayashi’s] realm of magic ... is the strangest land of unknowing” (230), an aspect which this study calls “mysterious.”

His other chapter explores Kobayashi’s concept of “home” by discussing the essay “Literature without a Home” in terms of Marcel Proust’s *mémoire involontaire* (“involuntary recollection”) (237); Walter Benjamin’s notion of story-teller (“experiences” linked with “tradition”) (242); and Barthes’ *punctum* (that which punctures cultural knowledge) (247). Missing in Hirata’s comments, however, is the aspect of Kobayashi’s story based on Eastern thinking. Following Confucian thought, Kobayashi claims to have experienced “genuine beauty” for the first time in his late forties, as shown by his essay *Nenrei* (“On Age,” 1950). He then sees that the appreciation of beauty is an ongoing process that changes over time. (See Chapter 9.)

Hirata concludes with the comment, “I [as an individual] seek my home. It is not *our* home. Because such a thing does not exist from the beginning” (Hirata 257-58). The title of the present study is “The Long Journey Towards Homeland,” the definite article “the” referring to Kobayashi’s own particular journey. Moreover, it is the journey (or the walking) that is important and not the home, which this study argues is best seen as an “expression of silence.” (See Chapter 7.)

0.2.7 Biographical Accounts of Kobayashi in Japanese

The first full-scale attempt to bring Kobayashi’s life to bear on a study of his works was undoubtedly Etô Jun’s *Kobayashi Hideo* in 1961. He drew upon some unpublished manuscripts of Kobayashi (borrowed from Ôoka Shôhei), which brought to light Kobayashi’s early relationship with Tominaga Tarô and Nakahara Chûya. This biographical study is difficult to

follow. Etô's comments on Kobayashi's early life and works are based on the scheme of a father-son relationship which appears to have no bearing on what follows. Thereafter, Etô relies on numerous lengthy quotations from Kobayashi's works, with insufficient biographical material to give the work coherence. His work now appears outdated in the light of the new accounts regarding Aoyama Jirô's extended influence on Kobayashi (1929-52); Kawakami's postwar explanations of the significance of Stavrogin (*The Devils*); and Kobayashi's journeys through China in 1943-44 to help Chinese writers. Etô's work is significant, nonetheless, as the first full critical biography (*hyôden*) of Kobayashi's life and works.

The next scholarly analysis of Kobayashi's life and works was brief, perhaps because Etô's voluminous work sufficed at the time. They were those of Yoshida Hiroô in 1966¹⁶ and Shimizu Takayoshi¹⁷ in 1981, who both titled their first chapter, "*Kobayashi no Hito to Sakuhin*" ("Kobayashi, the Person and His Works"). Both discuss Kobayashi in terms of his formative years (1902-32); creative social criticisms and tradition (1932 – 39); beauty and history (1940 and after). Shimizu, however, discusses each period at greater length and extends his discussion of the postwar years to 1981.

The works of Etô, Yoshida, and Shimizu represent scholarly attempts to relate Kobayashi's life to his works. Other studies have appeared but they are essentially memoirs and reminiscences. Indeed, most works on the life of Kobayashi appearing from the 1950s to the early 1970s are accounts of one or two chapters in length by Kobayashi's closest friends.

¹⁶ The first chapter of 14 pages introduces the other 190 pages of comments on Kobayashi's essays to 1943.

¹⁷ The longer critical biography of 40 pages introduces over 200 pages of commentary on Kobayashi's essays to 1945 and after.

They include in their titles the words “and I,” “and Myself,” “My,” which suggest brief, personal reminiscences.¹⁸ Others, including former teachers and classmates, have also written short pieces.¹⁹

Two are most important, written by those who knew Kobayashi well, writing on him as he lived. The first is critic Kawakami Tetsutarô who wrote *Waga Kobayashi Hideo* [*My Kobayashi Hideo*] (1978). He explains Kobayashi’s concern for civilization as a whole, and for the Japanese view of history specifically. His series on the figure of Stavrogin in “*Akurei*” (“The Devils”) were affected by the censorship during the war years. The other significant memoir is that of Kobayashi’s cousin, Nishimura Kôji, who wrote *Waga Itoko Kobayashi Hideo* (*My Cousin Kobayashi Hideo*) in 1995. He makes it clear that Kobayashi had not abandoned Yasuko as formerly believed, and provides the earliest account of Kobayashi’s views on nationalism as a natural process of maturity.

0.2.8 New Biographical Information (1980s and 1990s)

Biographical writings took a new direction in the late 1980s after the deaths of Aoyama (1979) and Kobayashi (1983). Although Kobayashi’s reputation generally towered over Aoyama’s because of his prolific writings, it was revealed that Kobayashi was predominantly under the instruction of

¹⁸ Examples are novelist Ôoka Shôhei’s “*Waga Shi, Waga Tomo* [My Teacher, My Friend]” (1953); and cultural commentator Kon Hidemi’s series of short articles. These are titled “*Kobayashi to Watashi, Jo* [Kobayashi and I, Article One]” (1967), “*Kobayashi to Watashi, Ge* [Kobayashi and I, Article Two]” (1967), along with three other articles written in 1983, the year of Kobayashi’s death. The former lover of Kobayashi, Hasegawa Yasuko, wrote *Yukite Kaeranu* (*Never to Return*) in 1974, a memoir depicting her love triangle with Kobayashi and Nakahara.

¹⁹ They include his university mentors, Suzuki *sensei* and Tatsuno *sensei*, who both wrote articles about Kobayashi. Others who wrote reminiscences comprise of former university classmates Ono Chiyotarô, Saitô Torao, Satô Masaaki, Hatano Kanji and Nakajima Kenzô. (See Works Cited.)

Aoyama in the prewar days, not only in the arts and objets d'art but also in all aspects of life. Three books in particular make this clear.

The first is *Aoyama Jirô Bunshû* (1987) (*Collection of Aoyama Jirô's Writings*), which includes three articles of special interest: “*Kobayashi to Sanjûnen*” (“Thirty Years with Kobayashi”), “*Kobayashi no Sutairû*” (“Kobayashi’s Style”), “*Me no Hikkoshi*” (“The Eyes’ Changing Focus”). The book went unread, however, because Aoyama was not known as a writer (interview with Shirasu).

The second is that of Shirasu Masako, related to Kobayashi by her son’s marriage to Kobayashi’s daughter. Her most important work is *Ima Naze Aoyama Jirô* [*Why Aoyama Jirô Today* 1991] which further enlightens the reader about Aoyama Jirô’s enormous influence on Kobayashi’s life and works.²⁰

The third is that of Nonogami Keiichi, former editor from 1935 at *Bungakkai*, the literary journey started in the mid-1930s²¹ and collector of objets d'art. He wrote *Kôkyû na Yûjô* [*High-Quality Friendship*] (published 1989) which describes the 1930s when Kobayashi particularly considered Aoyama his “teacher,” a genius in the arts and a teacher of life.

By integrating newer accounts (such as those on Aoyama’s influence on Kobayashi) into older ones, this study aims to update Kobayashi’s biography, but more importantly shed a new light on his essays, particularly his view of the arts.

²⁰ She also wrote *Yûki, Waga Shi, Waga Tomo* (*A Playful Soul: My Teacher, My Friend*) in November 1989. She recounts that, before she met Kobayashi, she was a “student” of Aoyama in the postwar years and felt indebted to him.

²¹ Nonogami knew Kobayashi through *Bungakkai* and Aoyama through his interest in *objets d'art*. He recollects his days spent with both of them, drinking, carousing and discussing *objets d'art* through the night.

0.2.9 Translation of *My Brother Hideo Kobayashi* (2001)

The lack of a book in English on the life of Kobayashi led the author of this study to translate *My Brother Hideo Kobayashi* (2001). This was done with the help of Professor Leith Morton, who also provided the Introduction, and with the aim to bring biographical accounts of Kobayashi to English readers. This book by Takamizawa Junko is a compilation of her numerous articles up to 1985 on her brother with the addition of letters and memoirs after her brother's death. It has been an important source of biographical information on Kobayashi in Japan.

Shirasu Masako, a relative, suggests in her interview (September 1988) that Takamizawa knew her brother best, but also explains that Kobayashi found his sister limited in her understanding of his writings. Nonetheless, this author found her memoir important since she provides information previously unavailable, particularly the letters to and from her brother.

Shirasu also points out Takamizawa's unusually sharp criticism of Kobayashi's lover Yasuko, explaining that Yasuko's illness was actually caused by Kobayashi's "aggressively-assertive" (*hageshiî*) personality (interview). Takamizawa's book also neglects to indicate where and how Kobayashi met his wife, Mori Kiyomi. This event was subject to rumor, and only clarified by a letter to this author from Nishimura Kôji. (See Appendix A 5.5.3.)

Both Shirasu and Takamizawa referred this author to Ôoka Shôhei who commented that Takamizawa had over-emphasized Kobayashi's interest in Christianity in her final chapters (interview). Shirasu agrees that Kobayashi never showed such intense interest in Christianity, and that

Takamizawa was a devout Christian who seemed to misinterpret her brother's underlying interest in religion in general (interview 1988).

Probably a more accurate estimate of Kobayashi's beliefs is recorded by Takamizawa herself: "Hideo knew that man's ability and talents were limited, and thereby believed in a Great Power that transcended man, or what we call the gods." She quoted him as saying, "It is our heavenly- endowed gifts that transcend man's power and that produce masterpieces" (Takamizawa, *My Brother*, 151).

0.3 Some Other Considerations

0.3.1 Key Tasks

This study attempts to help to map out for readers the important essays of Kobayashi's long journey and highlight the important terms. A careful selection of material is required since Kobayashi wrote numerous essays to earn his keep in the depression years (Seidensticker, "Kobayashi" [1979] 157).

The first task was to place the key words (called "focal points") — "man," "society," "history," "nature," and "beautiful literature" — scattered throughout Kobayashi's first fourteen volumes of the 2002-05 *Complete Works* in the context of the five "stages" of his growth to maturity (from 1929 to 1945). The five stages themselves show a development from "theory of destiny" or "logic of destiny" (from 1933) to "beliefs," culminating in his notable writings on the classics which began in 1942.

A second task was to select a few terms already familiar to Westerners, so as not to confuse the reader with a deluge of translation of Japanese words into English. For example, this study selects as key terms

“theory of destiny” and “beliefs,” and not others which require an excessive amount of explanation. Seidensticker explains that French Symbolism had little long-term effect on Kobayashi, since he eventually began to do what the writers of Japan had been doing since medieval days (Seidensticker, “Kobayashi” [1971] 461). At what point French words change into a traditional Japanese sense is difficult to pinpoint. Kobayashi was aware of the difficulties with any language, particularly poetic ones representing the subtleties of thought as one poet pointed out.²²

0.3.2 Organization

The study is arranged in two parts: The first part (chapters 1-4) covers his family background and early life to his first major essay (1929). The second part (chapters 5-9) explores the period from the beginning of his career as critic to the end of World War II (1945).

The first half includes accounts of his primary school days (Chapter 1), discussions of his higher school days (Chapter 2), descriptions of his university years (Chapter 3), and finally an update of his year in Kansai (Chapter 4).

Chapter 5, “The Literary Critic (1929-32),” describes stage one of Kobayashi’s life in terms of focal point one, “Behind literature, see the man,” as related in the essays “*Samazama Naru Ishô* [Various Patterns]” (1929), and “*Shiga Naoya* [Shiga Naoya] (1929). The key words are “theory of destiny” and “innate tendencies.” Chapter 6, “The Social Critic (1933-7),” discusses stage two in terms of focal point two, “Behind the man, see society,” explaining this in connection with the essays “*Shishôsetsuron*

²² Paul Valéry commented in *Une Soirée avec Monsieur Teste* (1895): M. Teste is intensely “interested in the process of the intellect but indicates his objections against expressing them in words which limit and to some extent falsify thought” (Brereton 251).

[Discussions of the I-Novel]” and “*Dosutoebusuki no Seikatsu* [The Life of Dostoevsky]” (1935-7. The key term here is the “socialized I,” which this study attempts to clarify.

Chapter 7, “The ‘Early’ Cultural Critic (1938-39),” provides the background for stage three by discussing the essay “On History” (1938-39). It gives an account of his first two trips to the Continent in 1938 just after the beginning of the China War. The word “fate” is used to describe the Japanese sense of “silence” and the inevitable. Chapter 8 discusses stage four under the title “The ‘Maturing’ Cultural Critic (1940-41),” a maturing process that occurred quickly within two years as will be discussed.

Chapter 9 discusses the last two years of this study as “The Wartime Cultural Critic (1941-42),” when the mature Kobayashi alternates between active trips to China and contemplative retreats into the Japanese classics and art. These trips mark the end of the first half of his career—i. e. in terms of a biographical account.

0.3.3 The Appendix

The Appendix includes a chronology of Kobayashi’s life and important events, a short list of essays (1922-45), maps, sketches, and a list of interviews. The circumstances of the interviews are explained in Appendix A.4.0, Interviews.

0.3.4 A Note on Referencing and Translations

Titles of major works appearing for the first time in this study will appear in Japanese followed by the English translation. For the titles of Kobayashi's writings, the Japanese characters appear in the Appendix A.2, Short List of Kobayashi's Writings; and for secondary sources, in the Works Cited. Occasionally both Japanese and English titles appear in the text for the convenience of the reader.

The title "*Shishôsetsuron* [Discussions of the I-Novel]" appears in Japanese throughout to indicate this author prefers the newer reading to the older reading, "*Watakushishôsetsuron*," and to distinguish it from another essay with a similar title, "*Shishôsetsuron ni Tsuite*" [On the I-Novel]" (1933).

Translations from the Japanese in this study are this author's unless stated otherwise. Titles translated into English will appear in parentheses and in brackets in the Works Cited. Interviews wholly conducted by the author appear as "interview with" When the interviewed person's name is self-evident and dates are clear (or on one date), the abbreviated form will be "interview."

Chapter 1

Family Background

1.0 Introduction

Family background is an important element in the make-up of any writer. Parents, in particular, have a very large impact on attitudes and abilities, by way of inherited genetic traits, direct influence, and as models of behavior. Kobayashi himself identified “inborn traits” (*ataerareta soshitsu*) — what this study terms “innate tendencies” (*jinseiteki hōsoku*) — as “fate” (*unmei*), and thought that this “determines half of what one becomes, and what transpires after birth the other half” (Takamizawa, *Dialogue* 111-13).

This chapter traces Kobayashi’s “innate tendencies” through the traits of his father Toyozō and mother Seiko. It finds Toyozō a “logical” and practical scientist as well as a craftsman, who worked tirelessly to achieve his goals, and his mother a devoted woman with deep cultural and religious interests and with a quiet, unassuming disposition (interview with Takamizawa, June 1988). That is, Kobayashi inherited the “spirit of a man of action” (*jikkoka no seishin*) from his father and the “soul of an aesthetic writer” (*geijutsuka no tamashi*) primarily from his mother.¹

1.1 Toyozō (1874 - 1921) and Seiko (1881 - 1946)

This study describes Kobayashi’s father only briefly, since further information about him and his family is provided by Nishimura Kōji.² More emphasis is placed here on his mother, Jōya Seiko, and the Jōya family,

¹ These terms are used by Sugino in describing Kobayashi (515).

² *Waga Itoko, Kobayashi Hideo* (*My Cousin, Kobayashi Hideo*) (1995).

because less information has been available on them. Her older brother, Jôya Moku, and younger brother, Jôya Saburô, also appear to provide clues regarding the “innate traits” of Kobayashi. (See Appendixes A.5.1.1 and A.5.1.2, Family Trees.)

This study refers to its subject by his first name “Hideo” from his childhood to his second year in higher school in 1923, and by his last name, Kobayashi (his “pen name”) from 1924, when he began to gain a reputation as a writer among his peers.

1.1.1 Father, Kobayashi Toyozô

From a humble background, Toyozô never seemed destined to become the founder of the foremost school of technology and founder of the diamond industry in Japan. He was born to the Shimizu family of five sons and two daughters in Hyôgo Prefecture but adopted at a young age by the Kobayashi family, who were business people. He graduated from Normal School in Izushi County in Hyôgo Prefecture, then earned a teacher's certificate at Tokyo Higher School of Technology. He graduated as an extraordinarily diligent student in 1899, excelling so much he gained a position as instructor, and later an Assistant Professorship in 1907 (Yoshida, *Course* 354).

Two years after graduating at age 27, Toyozô married Jôya Seiko in 1901. She gave birth to Hideo in Kanda, Tokyo a year later, then his sister Fujiko (later renamed Junko) in 1904. At that time, however, Toyozô was abroad on a study tour on behalf of the Ministry of Education. He left in August 1903, which meant he studied in New York until early 1904, and then went to England for some months before returning via Europe to Japan in September 1904 (JDI 2).

Ueda (91) records him as studying at “a fine-arts technical school” in New York, then at “a Birmingham technical school,” before visiting technical schools in Germany and France. His actual study tour must have lasted about a year, allowing for travel by ship and train (interview with Tsukamoto, September 2005).

In the year following his return (by late 1905) he helped to found a technical school (today the noted Tokyo Institute of Technology) where he instructed in the latest techniques. By 1907 he was acknowledged as Japan’s leading authority on jewelry manufacturing techniques (Ueda 91; Mikimoto 3-8). He also served as an advisor to Muramatsu Precious Metals Factory from 1906 to 1910. He resigned both this advisory role and his teaching position to work for Mikimoto Pearls from 1910 to 1917 as manager of a jewelry factory at 5-2-1 Shimo-Meguro. As manager, Toyozô traveled abroad for the second time from July 1912 to December 1913, first to purchase a machine in Antwerp, Belgium to cut and grind diamonds and precious stones, and then on to America (Jôya S. 257).³

Takamizawa outlines her father’s achievements at this time, mentioning his plan for Jôya Saburô, the younger brother of his wife Seiko, to become his apprentice.

Sent abroad for the first time in 1903 by the Ministry of Education, my father returned ... but saw the need for the Ministry of Education to establish a school to teach these techniques in Japan. Acceding to his request, the Ministry of Education founded the Tokyo Higher School of Technology. To this newly founded technical school, my father had Uncle

³ The purchase included a boring machine with a set of dies and parts. During the trip Mikimoto Pearls, having a new branch office in London, also requested him to observe the jewelry and accessories industry there.

Saburô transfer from Kaisei Middle School to learn some basic metallurgy techniques. (*My Brother* 27)⁴

In 1915 Mikimoto Pearls sent Toyozô on his third trip abroad, this time to London to represent Mikimoto Pearls at a Japan-Britain exhibition. Apparently inspired by this exhibition, Toyozô decided to set up a factory to match international standards and resigned from Mikimoto two years later, in 1917. Envisioning a future diamond industry in Japan, he started a company of his own in December 1917 (JDI 2).

Toyozô with six other shareholders raised the enormous sum of 500,000 yen as initial capital,⁵ thus founding the first diamond company in Japan, Nihon (Nippon) Diamond Company (Sugawara 18). He took the gamble of his life in “pursuing his dreams” (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 5). Toyozô served as both managing director and engineer-researcher. He purchased the imported machines used at Mikimoto Pearls and staffed the company with fifteen technicians also from the Mikimoto factory.⁶ The new company went into debt the first two years (1917-1919), when the war years made raw diamonds scarce and expensive. After three years of trial and error, Toyozô succeeded in performing the “brilliant cut” of diamonds as well as the drilling of tiny holes in precious stones and diamonds. In addition, he developed new techniques such as inlaying precious stones and tooling “claws” for fixing stones that made him a pioneer in machine operation and jewelry

⁴ Saburô studied at Kaisei Middle School from 1905 to 1913. He graduated in 1914 and became an employee and trainee of Toyozô, who headed the Mikimoto Pearl Precious-Metal Factory for two years (1913-15) (JDI 3).

⁵ Equivalent to renting forty offices in the Ginza for a year (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 5).

⁶ Toyozô also headed the new factory which was far ahead of others in terms of technology. Saburô was assigned to learn and operate the advanced machines at the factory in Shirokane, Shiba Ward (now Minato Ward). An office was also later established in Ginza at a cost of 12,000 yen and staffed with five people (JDI 3). Nishimura writes that Toyozô first established an office of five people at his Imazato home, most likely using his study (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 5).

manufacture (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 7). After World War I ended, Toyozô traveled to Singapore to purchase uncut diamonds, and to Burma for jade, diamond and rubies (JDI 4). One story claims that he stayed in India for up to six months (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 8).

The stress of traveling on Toyozô was considerable, and a factor in his death a few years later in March 1921 at age 47 (Jôya S. 268). In addition, he negotiated purchases and imported precious raw stones; served as managing director, financier and production manager. He also headed experiments to improve and develop machine parts, while obtaining numerous patents in his name (Jôya S. 268).

Some of his ideas were unprecedented in Japan, because they required a sense of adventure and entrepreneurship without regard for failure. Toyozô sought to cut and polish airplane propellers for military purposes, and to develop finished jewelry for sale, including the international market. As his creative talents (*seishitsu*, an aspect of his “innate tendencies”) developed, he also experienced a greater anxiety and sense of responsibility (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 6).

Hideo greatly admired his father’s craftsmanship. As his sister comments: “Hideo respected our father who had a deep feeling for research and a taste for artisanship... [H]aving inherited his father’s blood ... he liked to help him make things” (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 3). Hideo applied to his writing his father’s trait of never being satisfied unless he was creating a new path as well as his ever-active spirit of enterprise (interview with Takamizawa, June 1988).

1.1.2 Mother, Seiko (to 1923)

Jôya Seiko lived through four upheavals in Japanese history — the westernization of Japan, the Great Kanto Earthquake, the Great Depression, and World War II. These circumstances set the tone for her lifetime of unhappiness. The attractive and demure mother of Kobayashi was reduced to subservient roles, first to her mother-in-law, then to the conciliatory role of wife to a Meiji-born husband, and finally to the obedient mother of her son and elder child, Hideo. Seiko never appeared happy in her marriage, perhaps because she rarely had a life of her own, as her daughter Takamizawa explains:

Father, with his artisan spirit, devoted his time to work, leaving all the family affairs to our mother. This left her alone at home, but she remained a dutiful mistress of the household. She obeyed her mother-in-law, our father's foster mother, then attended to father. She spent her days sewing or washing, starching, and re-sewing kimonos. Not once did I see her enjoying her hobbies, such as knitting or making artificial flowers. Even the *koto* that she so enjoyed playing, she only occasionally strummed in secret after putting me to bed, probably to escape the critical eyes of her mother-in-law and father. (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 19)

She was too intelligent for this demeaning role, to be confined to household chores, as she came from a family of brilliant scholars and educators. Her grandfather, Jôya Shinkyo, was a Confucian scholar who served as instructor to the father of Taisho-Period Empress Teimei (1884-1951). Seiko's father, Jôya Ken (d. 1900), was also an educator and scholar of repute who saw that all his children, including his daughter Seiko, received the finest education available to girls of the day. She graduated from a Girls' Middle School, trained as a seamstress, and later qualified as a

teacher in *koto*, tea-ceremony and flower arrangement. She learned and practiced these until her teens in Ushigome, Tokyo where she was born and reared.

She married Kobayashi Toyozô in 1901 at the age of seventeen and gave birth to Hideo in 1902 and Junko in 1904. Toyozô was often away abroad or at work, while Seiko lived under the watchful eyes of her mother-in-law until the latter's death in 1910. Seiko was always frail in health, writes Takamizawa, remembering her mother drinking a specially prepared medicine and fresh soft-shell turtle blood during the period Hideo and Junko were attending primary and middle schools (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 19).

The death of Toyozô in 1921 deeply affected Seiko, according to Kobayashi's first work of reminiscences, "Suicide of the Octopus" (1922). "Compared to Ken'kichi's [Hideo's] or his sister's sentimental grief, his mother remained far more depressed. When despondent, she remarked, "I want to die" ("Octopus," 350; KHZ-A 1: 19). She depended on her son Hideo, who often "abandoned" her when he lost himself in writing and drinking with his fellow writers. She also depended both emotionally and financially on her brothers, Moku and Saburô, a fact which Hideo was probably aware of (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 37). Her life did not change, and she accepted her fate of ill health, loneliness, and self-despair until her death in 1946.

She found relief and refuge in religion and fortune readings. Takamizawa records that her mother was reared in the old ways but practiced the Tenrikyô faith from 1921, after giving up her faith in Jôdo Buddhism. At this time, she fell seriously ill and went to stay in Kamakura, where the live-in household maid was a faithful member of Tenrikyô. Seiko became a believer and sat with the maid before an altar, praying for health and a good life. Every evening, believers came to comfort her, telling her that

Buddhism cures illnesses: “The Founder of Tenrikyô said, ‘Sickness is rooted inside that which our Founder categorized as eight vacillations of the heart’.” This gave her strength, but her ties to Tenrikyô more or less ended after she moved back to Tokyo in 1924. She was religious but could never believe in any one faith for long (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 82). She also believed in name-omen predictions, seeking a name change in 1926 for Hideo's live-in girl friend from Sakiko to Yasuko, then for her daughter from Fujiko to Junko.

Despite her poor health, Seiko maintained a dignity about her, which cousin Jôya Kazuko characterized as like “a wife of a samurai” (*bushi no tsuma*). She always sat quietly and formally with her legs folded under her on the straw mat. This air of propriety made her appear “cold” and uninviting, but once people adjusted to it, they felt comfortable with her (interview).

For two-and-a-half years (from the fall of 1921 to February 1924) she recuperated in Kamakura at her brother Moku's house from a case of hemoptysis. She occasionally went to a rest home adjacent to Nanami Beach. Hasegawa Sumie, an apprentice of Wakana (Moku's wife), provides the following description of those days. Wakana helped care for Seiko in her home, respectfully addressing her elder as “onêsan” (elder sister) or “O-sei-san” (honorific for Seiko-san). Nonetheless, Wakana faced Seiko's “cutting remarks” (*iji waru o iu*), moreso than was perhaps common among older women in those days (interview). Seiko also had a sharp tongue of the type that Hideo was noted for, which seemed to run in the Kobayashi family.

Kaibori Kazuko relates that, in spite of the occasional verbal abuse, her mother Wakana often praised Seiko's talents: her skills in koto instrument, tea ceremony and flower-arrangement, and her knowledge of kabuki. These were all accomplishments of a traditional upbringing and

some intelligence. Seiko enjoyed another pastime, the board game *igo*, which she was so skilled in that Moku could rarely defeat her. Even then she always sat formally and quietly on the straw mat with an air of refinement (interview).

1.1.3 Mother, Seiko (1924-1946)

Seiko recovered sufficiently in Kamakura and joined Hideo and Junko in Mabashi, Kôenji to make their new home, a small four-room rental. (See Appendix A.5.4.2. Rental Houses.) They lived here for four years (1924-1928). The family had lost all their property after the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923, except for a small down payment obtained by selling the house.

Although Hideo was concerned about the family debt and their need for income, he spent little time at home, often going out drinking with his coterie friends, or reading, writing and talking about literature. He was in his last year at higher school and was attempting to establish a coterie magazine. His entering Tokyo Imperial University in April 1925 pleased her, but not the fact that he continued to drink with his fellows, the poets Nakahara and Tominaga, and took up with his lover, Yasuko in November. Hideo had already sold most of the remaining family furniture and items to pay for his life with Yasuko (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 47). Many saw Kobayashi as irresponsible, but Cousin Nishimura Kôji writes that he was a “filial” son, even “pious” in his own way. This appears a strange comment since Nishimura Kôji, as Hideo's cousin, also remembers that later Kobayashi became a high-living bachelor, who, though poor, lived “uninhibitedly free and wild.” (See appendix A.5.5.2, Nishimura Letters.)

According to Takamizawa, her mother felt abandoned by the son she relied on. Although never very healthy, during 1924-1925 she took in sewing and went out to teach flower-arrangement and tea ceremony so as to make ends meet. Junko added to the family's financial worries when she decided to enter university in 1923, a decision opposed by her mother and Uncle Moku but approved by Hideo.

Seiko lived with Junko and her new husband after fall 1928, with the family moving to Takinogawa, Tokyo in 1929, where she stayed for two years. Kobayashi joined them there and wrote the prize-winning essay "Various Patterns" in 1929, which gained him a wide reputation — all to the delight of Seiko. His writing output increased between 1930-31 as did his income, which enabled Hideo to move with his mother to Kamakura from 1931 to live near his literati friends. Seiko, however, would have preferred living with Junko, remembering how Hideo had often abandoned her when they lived together in Mabashi, Kôenji (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 84). Once in Kamakura, Seiko often found herself alone as she had predicted and began to complain to Junko of Hideo abandoning her (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 85-86).

Seiko gained someone to keep her company when Hideo married Kiyomi in 1934. They made their home with Seiko near the Jôyas until 1937. That year Kiyomi gave birth to Haruko, making Seiko spend more of the next five years in Tokyo, either with Junko or with Saburo, as Takamizawa claims (interview June 1988). Seiko spent more time in Kamakura when Hideo's daughter Haruko reached pre-school age. Nishimura suggests, however, that Seiko and Kiyomi were often at odds with each other, which Kobayashi found particularly disturbing (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 217).

In the period between 1934 and 1941, before the outbreak of war, Seiko occasionally stayed with Jôya Saburô in Ôta Ward, Tokyo. Saburô's daughter, Jôya Ikuko, provides the following description (interview, July 10, 1988). She remembers Seiko as rather “gloomy” (*inki*) and aloof, and so quiet that few noticed her in the house. Seiko preferred Tokyo whenever she found life difficult with her daughter-in-law, Kiyomi, particularly after Haruko was born in 1937. Seiko was not the most pleasant person to live with in her dark moods.

Around 1942 Seiko ceased believing in physicians and medicine, which did not help. She began relying solely on Ohikari-sama (The Great Light) and pressed Kobayashi to become a member. To please his mother, he commuted to Tokyo to get a license, and hung a medallion of Ohikari-sama around his neck (Gunji, *Reminiscences* 170). When Seiko passed away in 1946, Kobayashi dedicated his book *Mozart* (1946) to her, in an expression of his grief over her death.

Like his mother, Kobayashi himself became a mystic of a sort. One dark night after the war, he fell from a station platform in central Tokyo, landing hard on his chest in a small area free of steel tracks and railroad equipment. The sake bottle he was holding in his hand had shattered into tiny pieces that glittered under the light. When he saw these, he felt sure that his mother's spirit had been present and saved him (Kobayashi, “Afterthoughts,” KHZ-A-BI: 258). Again, after the war, a large firefly came fluttering before him as he stepped out of his Kamakura home to go on an errand. It hovered before him glittering in the darkening night and led him down the pathway. He had no doubt his mother's spirit had reincarnated as a firefly and visited him (Kobayashi, “Afterthoughts,” KHZ-A-BI: 257).

1.2 The Jôyas

Kobayashi had two uncles on his mother's side, but felt closer to Uncle Saburô who was like a big brother to him since he lived with Kobayashi until 1924 (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 14). His older Uncle Moku, an international journalist in New York, did not establish any close bonds until 1918, or 1916 when he temporarily returned to Japan.

1.2.1 Uncle Jôya Moku (1884-1963) and Aunt Wakana (1889-1959)

Moku Jôya's daughter, Ms. Kaibori Kazuko, who lived near Gotanda Station, provided most of the information in this section in an interview with the author about her parents Moku and Wakana (interview, July 22, 1988). It soon became apparent that her parents led unusual lives for Japanese in the 1920s, and their experiences provided exposure to Western culture and ideas. Takamizawa Junko affirms that Moku shared his experiences abroad with the inquisitive Hideo when he was in middle school, as well as helping him with his English lessons (interview, June 1988). Cousin Nishimura Kôji claims that Hideo undoubtedly learned much from his uncle, a well-learned, cultured gentleman. (See Appendix 5.5.2, Nishimura Letters, No. 4).

Moku had spent some fourteen years abroad, mainly in New York City, and Wakana lived for about six years in Europe. She painted and exhibited, sharing her skills with aristocrats in England and France, with many who were interested in Japanese painting. Kaibori explains that her mother, Wakana, was the daughter of an eminent *ukiyo* painter in the Utagawa School, and became an artist in the Japanese style of painting. On one of her trips abroad, Wakana met Moku, a well-known international

news-reporter for the *New York World* from about 1908 to 1918.⁷ Moku won Wakana's hand in New York, but the affair began with a misunderstanding. Moku (called “Mock” in New York) stood impressive at nearly six feet, when most Japanese men were a little over five feet. He also had a prominent nose for a Japanese man, so it was no wonder that Wakana mistook him for an American and greeted him in English: “Hello, it’s nice to meet you.” Moku hastily corrected her: “I’m a true-blooded Japanese, so please speak in Japanese.” (See Appendix A.5.2.1, Moku, Saburô and Hideo.)

Wakana too was something special in the eyes of Japanese. She had talents in English and French, in French cooking, and Western classical music. She knew the social graces of European manners, which she later used to entertain Moku’s foreign guests who visited Kamakura. Even after their marriage in Kamakura in 1924, she had oatmeal with English tea for breakfast, an oddity for most Japanese then. She also enjoyed cooking Western meals, and occasionally prepared a full meal of French cuisine. She left the tedious parts of housework to her apprentice, Hasegawa Sumie, or another maid. Since Moku was often out on work assignments, Kobayashi enjoyed talking to Wakana on his visits there about Japanese paintings and Western ways.

Moku had returned to Japan temporarily in 1916 on assignment and then permanently in 1918 when he quit the *New York World*. He lived with the Kobayashis for a few months, then near them, before joining Wakana around 1920, living at first in the attached but separate room called “the room for the retired” (*inkyô*). He waited until 1924 when he was about forty to register their marriage because, her daughter explains, Wakana

⁷ Moku was a graduate of the noted Fourth Middle School in Tokyo and the prestigious Tokyo University of Foreign Languages. He later studied at the University of Pennsylvania (1906-08) (Interview with Takamizawa, June 1988).

“lacked confidence in becoming a housewife.” She wanted a test period to see if she could commit herself to him, as well as having her painting career to consider and an asthma condition to deal with. It was to Moku’s house that Hideo’s mother came to live from 1921 to 1924, although she went at times to a nearby convalescent hospital. Apparently Kobayashi and Junko stayed with Moku when visiting their mother, and walked about twenty minutes to the beach which is the setting for the “Suicide of the Octopus” (1922), (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 42).

Moku was assigned to Tokyo (1916-17) by the *New York World* as special correspondent for its Far-East affairs, with a focus on China and Japan.⁸ He then made Japan his permanent home, working for *The Japan Times and Mail*⁹ from 1918 (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 5). In 1921-23 he worked for Manchuria Railways in Dairen, reporting for *Manchuria Daily News* on Far-East affairs. He transferred to the Carnegie Peace Foundation in 1923, serving as a member of the research staff for Far East history and economics until 1931. He moved back to *The Japan Times* from 1933 to 1939, but why he left then is unclear. He returned as guest writer in 1941 and served as chief editor from 1955 until his death in 1963 (Hasegawa, *Times* 72-73).

Even after returning to Japan, Moku found it easier to express himself in writing in English rather than Japanese. Kaibori comments that particularly when editing the English paper, *The Japan Times*, he found it easier to think in English than in Japanese; in fact, his Japanese often sounded like a translation from English.¹⁰ Moku did not only write about politics and economics, but also took a keen interest in literature and culture.

⁸ *Japan Biographical Encyclopedia and Who’s Who* (1961). S.v. “Jôya Moku.”

⁹ The older name for *The Japan Times*.

¹⁰ Letter to the author dated May 26, 1989 (Appendix A.5.5.2, Nishimura Letters).

He translated and had published Nakamura Kichizo's play *The Death of Ii Tairo* in 1927. In the same year he published *Quaint Customs and Manners of Japan*, which sold well and had up to four printings. In 1958 he reprinted his four earlier books with additional jottings in a thick volume, *Things Japanese*. The jottings had been published since his days as a reporter for the *New York World*, when he was dismayed at the sheer lack of knowledge in the U.S. regarding Japan.

Kaibori provides the following information. Although Moku was true to the meaning of his name, "silence,"¹¹ Wakana was criticized by some as too "showy" (*hade*) and "glibly talkative" for a Japanese woman, considered then as better "seen but not heard." Moku's brother Saburô and his wife also found Wakana too Westernized for their taste. Kaibori admits, "We were all a little different anyway, including my parents." She adds that Hideo and Junko were different as well, perhaps because of the influence of their father who had been abroad.

Hasegawa Sumie¹² had direct contact with Wakana and Kobayashi; she described her life with them in an interview with this author one afternoon (July 31, 1988). She lived at the Jôyas from 1918 as an apprentice, one who helped with Wakana's painting and did the cooking, after Wakana had taught her European cooking. Another maid did the housework. She summed up: "Life was 'not too good' but comfortable for the depression

¹¹ Nishimura Kôji also reports that Moku was a man of few words, which made him appear rather "unapproachable and forbidding" at times (letter to the author May 9, 1989; see appendix A.5.5.5, Nishimura Letters). Kobayashi enjoyed playing golf with Moku later in life, since he mentions him in his essay "*Gorufu no Meijin* [Expert Golfer]," published in 1959 (KHZ-A 23: 22).

¹² Hasegawa Sumie was born in 1901 and went to Wakana's father to serve as an apprentice ukiyo-painter but he referred her to his daughter Wakana. She went there at the age of seventeen, staying for twenty-five years until the outbreak of World War II.

years of the 1930s as they lived in a ‘big house’ (rented) with many rooms. Seiko lived next door in the ‘retirement room.’”

All the Jôyas were warm to her, but she occasionally felt a distant “coldness” in the presence of Hideo and Seiko. They called her “Sumi-chan” and were nice to her, but their biting, satirical remarks (*hiniku*) kept her at a distance. This satirical trait seemed to run in the Kobayashi family, yet, Hideo in particular would astonish her with his frequent “eye-opening remarks” (*hatto to iu koto o iu*). With these brief but significant statements, the interview with Hasegawa ended.¹³

1.2.2 Uncle Saburô (1893-1977) and Aunt Yûko Jôya

There was also the traditional, conservative side of the Jôya family: Hideo’s uncle and aunt, Saburô¹⁴ and Yûko. Among all the relatives it was Saburô who remained most attached to Kobayashi.

The following information is based on an interview (July 10, 1988) with the daughter of Saburô, Jôya Ikuko. Saburô held fond memories of his “little Hideo” having lived with the family since 1905 when he was nine and Hideo was three. (See Appendix A.5.2.1, Moku, Saburô and Hideo.) Saburô and Hideo played tennis and other games together and shared meals. When Hideo became older, he would borrow Saburô’s hat and books, sometimes selling the books when he needed money and without asking his permission. Though upset by these antics of Hideo, Saburô continued to remember Hideo,

¹³ Hasegawa Sumie appears to be standing at the rear with a scarf on her head in the photograph of Moku’s house, damaged in the 1923 earthquake (Yoshida and Kawaguchi 11)/

¹⁴ Uncle Saburô worked as apprentice to Toyozô from the age of 20, then served as instructor for the trainees from 1919 when a system of apprenticeship for other workers was adopted in Japan. As successor to Toyozô, he held this training position for some years after Toyozô’s death until the age of 33.

often referring to the most illustrious critic of modern Japan by his childhood name: “I wonder how Hide-chan is getting along.”

Ikuko tells that Saburô retained some less pleasant memories as well. Seiko, his older sister and Hideo’s mother, did not enjoy preparing meals or lunches in the kitchen, so every day Saburô, Hideo and Junko brought the same lunch, rice sprinkled with seaweed (*nori bento*), which other students poked fun at. The well-reared Seiko did not enjoy doing chores around the house, so she made Saburô carry water into the house from the well after the housekeeper left, which was usually a job for a maid. Saburô partially blamed his sister Seiko for using him for household tasks and thereby discouraging him from marriage until he was 31, an age considered late in those years. Perhaps because Saburô was needed by Seiko, no one suggested that he visit his brother Moku in New York, a fact that he regretted.

Saburô apparently rarely spoke to others of his being the “big brother” of Hideo, a reticence which ran in the Jôya family. Shirasu Masako¹⁵ mentions this trait in Kobayashi as well. “Many people have failed to realize how unassuming Kobayashi Hideo actually was in real life,” she emphasized during an interview (May 1988).

In 1924, a year after the Great Kanto Earthquake, Saburô finally married Yûko, an active woman who later involved herself in social causes and organizations. He moved with this banker’s daughter into a building in Shirokane, which had been converted into a diamond and precious-jewelry factory, where they lived and worked for nearly ten years. Saburô devoted his life to the diamond industry in Japan, building on the legacy of Kobayashi’s father. He played a major role at the Japan Diamond Company from 1917 to

¹⁵ Shirasu Masako (1910-1989) was a cultural critic, friend, and later a relative of Kobayashi.

1937 as the company developed into the largest prewar diamond firm. In 1937 he helped found what became the largest diamond company in postwar Japan, serving as head or manager (*bu-shunin*). After World War II Occupation Forces Headquarters recognized Saburô's expertise, requesting him and three others to assess the value of Japan's diamond holdings (Hasegawa, *Times* 272).

Saburô's daughter, Kazuko, attested to her father's artistic expertise: "He often came home claiming to me that he could spot a genuine diamond at first glance without a thorough analysis." However, she ended the interview on a sad note. In spite of his skills, and "After a lifetime of dedication to the company, it never provided him with the sufficient retirement bonus (*taishokukin*) and pension that he deserved. He passed away leaving only the house to us."

It is likely that Saburô and his wife were asked to help with the debts of the Kobayashis especially after the sudden death of Toyozô, as well as in other ways. This is indicated by the gratitude that Hideo showed them for a lifetime. In later years Hideo attempted to repay them by speaking at Asahi Shinbun Hall in June, 1968 at their request, and serving as go-between for their son's marriage in 1972. Into his seventies, Hideo remembered his "big brother" and wife by inviting them to his Kamakura house after New Year. They enjoyed Hideo's favourites—sukiyaki, tempura, and eel—over some sake as they reminisced for the whole day about the early years, recollects Jôya Ikuko.

Kobayashi expressed his appreciation of Saburô's life and achievements when he spoke at his funeral in 1977:

Uncle Saburô carried on my father's work and devoted his lifetime to it. He was a creative craftsman. He put his heart

into perfecting diamonds, without publicizing or writing about them. He was a craftsman who earnestly sought that satisfaction and joy when [having to relinquish] his perfected work, and to continue creating again. Only recently have I understood this noble task of the craftsman. I am writing something now, which I had wanted Uncle Saburô to read; but unfortunately (qtd. in Takamizawa, *My Brother* 123)

1.3 Summary

Traits from both sides of his family seem to have shaped Kobayashi's "innate tendencies," that which "flowed in his blood." From his father, Hideo inherited a high-spirited aggressiveness in research, development, innovation, and enterprise as well as a knack for craftsmanship. From his mother, he learned the refined aspects of culture, watching her practice and instruct in tea-ceremony and flower-arrangement. Her side of the family included Moku, who wrote columns on Japanese culture, and Saburô, who displayed skilled craftsmanship in creating beautiful diamond jewelry. Hideo was also exposed early to Western ways by his father's world travels and Moku's international background in journalism, although he himself did not travel abroad until 1938. According to Kaibori, those around Hideo stimulated him in cosmopolitan ways, including Wakana's tastes in Western food and manners combined with her skills in Japanese painting.

Chapter 2

Childhood Through Higher School (1902 -1925)

2.0 Introduction

Chapter One discussed the “innate tendencies” inherited from the family which remain essentially unchanged. Other traits, combining with these to form what this study calls “destiny,” are influenced by the timing and circumstances of birth and development.¹ This chapter explores how both “innate tendencies” and environment interacted in the early years of Hideo’s life. The external factors that shaped Kobayashi’s youth included: (1) the good fortune of having an elite social environment, education and teachers; (2) the death of his father and long illness of his mother; (3) the burden of debt incurred by the Kobayashi family (4); his suffering and the questioning that followed it, including the meaning of religion; and (5) the growth of a Bohemian group of young writers.

This chapter is divided into two parts: from Hideo’s childhood to his prep-school years (1902 to 1920) and then his higher school years (1921 to 1925), with Kobayashi emerging as a writer in the third year.

2.1 Childhood to Prep Studies (1902 - 1920)

Kobayashi grew up in a period after the Russo-Japanese War that discouraged the “emergence of individualism” or the “rise of self-consciousness” (Powell 23-4). By the time he entered kindergarten in

¹ This is related to Hirata’s definition of “fate”: “Fate by definition is irreplaceable (the fact that I am here and not there despite the fact that I could have moved there)” (“Seduction” 216). See Glossary for other definitions of “destiny.”

1906, Japanese naturalism had assumed prominence in the literary world. It “never developed like its Western counterpart, a force for social criticism but instead withdrew into the inward-looking, self-oriented form ... of the I-Novel” (Powell 28). The majority of writers chose to flee into the safety of a community called the *bundan* (literary world)² since it was fundamentally unsafe to write critically about the oppressive political and legal systems of Imperial Japan. It was risky to develop a social awareness (Powell 28-30).

2.1.1 Childhood Through Primary School (1902 - 1915)

2.1.1.1 Early Childhood

Hideo was born in late March 1902 in Kanda, where he attended kindergarten, before the family moved in 1909 to Shida-chô, Shirokane,³ Tokyo, north of Meguro Station on the Yamanote Line. (See Appendix A.5.3.1, Sasabe’s Map.) It was an area that provided ideal schools for children of the prominent families living in the area. Sasabe explains (interview, 1988)⁴ that former *daimyô* lords of the Edo Period such as the Ikeda family of Bizen, the Shimazu, Date, and Hosokawa families had located their suburban villas (*shimoyashiki*) there. Then from about 1897, the area was opened to middle-class families such as company managers and government officials for purchases of large estates of 6,600 to 10,000 sq.m. (200 to 300 *tsubo*).⁵

² Anderer defines the *bundan* as “the small group of writers, critics, and editors whose work and opinions have determined what qualifies as ‘literature’ throughout the modern period” (Anderer 159). Powell suggests a more narrow definition, “the small community of creative writers engaged in ... ‘pure’ literature, called the ‘literary elite.’” She calls it an “exclusive, sectarian community of professional writers” (Powell xii).

³ Takamizawa preferred the older reading *Shirokane* to the newer one, *Shirogane*.

⁴ Sasabe prepared notes for the interview, copies of which he handed to the author and Ms. Takamizawa who brought the author to Sasabe’s home.

⁵ After Japan’s naval victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), navy staff, rear admirals and captains were rewarded with purchases in the area. One such estate developed into the Happo-en Gardens and others into universities, research centers, and military installations.

Shirokane resembled today's Den'en-Chofu, considered one of the most fashionable residential areas.

The family living in Shida-chô, Shirokane included Hideo's mother's younger brother, Saburô, from 1905, and Toyozô's foster mother until her death in 1910. In 1916, they moved to Imazato-chô, Shirokane, closer to Meguro Station, into a comfortable Western-style house. (See Appendix A.5.4.1, Shirokane House).⁶

The Kobayashi house was a rare, cosmopolitan house, a novelty in those days. It had a gold-colored knob (with a lock) on the door to the study and a gas light on the wall that lit the living room with its large sofa; later gas was provided for the kitchen as well as a telephone and a gramophone for the six-mat room where they had most of their meals (interview with Takamizawa, May 1988). (See Appendix A.5.4.1, Shirokane House.)

The back yard (at the entrance to the house) was graced with a white fig tree, a pomegranate tree, an astringent persimmon tree, and an apple tree. The main yard displayed numerous trees and plants and a small open area to play tennis. To one side a weeping maple tree was planted which had bright red budding leaves at the coming of spring (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 14)⁷.

In the winter, vendors would pass by in the neighborhood. The soy-bean vendor called out, "Hot roast beans, steaming roast beans." As he

⁶ Others who came to live there included a live-in maid, and for brief periods two student brothers from a Kure family and a female university student. Ms. Takamizawa traced her childhood home on a street map to a plot one block west of the large Buddhist Sanctuary in Imazato-chô. The street numbers, however, indicate that the site is now part of the temple precinct.

⁷ Hideo's father planted other maples that changed colors in the fall, a fragrant olive tree, a plum tree which bloomed with white flowers, camellia trees of several types, and a sacred bamboo.

heard the cart, Hideo would throw down his books, leap out from under the *kotatsu* table,⁸ and get two “sen” coins from his mother who was doing needlework nearby. He would dash outside calling out “bean man” to stop him. As the bean man shifted the beans over the hot charcoal in the cart, they would begin to crackle, and Hideo would bring them inside and munch them with his sister. Hot beans were a treat since Western sweets had not yet been fully introduced to Japan (*My Brother* 31-32).

Once a year, in fall, his mother would take Hideo, his sister and the maid for an outing to the large Ryôgoku National Sumo Area to see the “chrysanthemum doll” exhibition. In the morning, they saw the scenes on the stage of dolls changed seven times in an instant, the walls falling and the background scenes rising from behind the stage, all controlled electrically. Then a house lifted up from below as props exited to the left and right. For lunch they took the trolley to Asakusa where they enjoyed sushi, deep-fried lobster *donburi* or buck-wheat noodles. The afternoon ended with a walk along the famous movie street of Asakusa with Hideo selecting a film for the four of them from the numerous theaters (*My Brother* 32).

The family also enjoyed music after supper, especially Hideo, who listened with his father to the classical records brought from abroad. His father was developing a ruby needle for cylinder gramophone records, and his father would ask Hideo each time to restart the cylinder records. The recorded music so fascinated Hideo that he would listen in his free time to Mozart in particular as well as *Faust*, *Tosca*, *Lohengrin*, and *La Bohème* (*My Brother* 21). Years later, he stated that, “I was gifted with a good ear [for

⁸ Takamizawa approved this term although a *kotatsu* stove was often sunk into the floor in the prewar period.

music], but not with eyes [for the arts]. So I decided to take up objets d'art" (Shirasu, KHZ-A, *Bekkan* 3:102).

2.1.1.2 Primary School Years: A "Rascal" with a "Holistic" Education

Though Hideo had a taste for music and was brilliant at school, he had another side: he was a rascal throughout his primary school years. He lacked the tenderness of most brothers who were then taught to care for a younger sister. He made his sister Fujiko cry numerous times in arguments which he thoroughly dominated (*My Brother* 55). He also teased her by calling her stupid (*baka*) and other names, though he never abused her physically. Throughout her primary school years, she rarely cherished thoughts about her brother except for one fact: Hideo was always the top student in an elite primary school.

In my childhood, I thought Hideo a spiteful brat. Though he often helped me in primary school days with arithmetic and Japanese — as we studied with our small desks side by side in the same room — he would shout angrily whenever I was slow or failed to understand him. As he became engrossed in something, he would be completely indifferent to me, which made it difficult for me to draw near and endear myself to him. He was always a brother to be feared. (*My Brother* 16)

Hideo showed his mischievous streak at Tadoku Island in Mie Prefecture while vacationing in the summer with family friends. Hideo and his friend slicked the floor with a candle and hid waiting for his friend's grandmother to walk by. When the grandmother slipped on the slick wax and vented her anger, they giggled in fun at a distance (*My Brother* 16).

Hideo was rarely scolded for such antics, the feudalistic morality then allowing for the eldest son to have his own free way. This included the need for Junko to obey Hideo, who held “absolute” power to decide on all matters. She was always the one scolded though it was Hideo who often caused her to cry (*My Brother* 20). It was this “royal treatment” of Hideo that encouraged him to do as he pleased later in life, a trait that was to plague the family and those around him.

Though small in stature, Hideo also displayed aggressiveness. His physical stamina was developed through the two activities of martial arts and swimming training undertaken early in life. He took *kyôkenjutsu* lessons, a kind of aikidô “health exercise,”⁹ from about the third grade, which he once exhibited for his father’s friends. He stripped to his shorts and proudly pounded his chest yelling “Ehh—Ehh,” to the delight of his father. Then in fifth and sixth grade, he participated in the Yôki Group formed by his homeroom teacher Mr. Ozawa, who valued acumen of mind, strength of body and a durable spirit (*My Brother* 22.) (See Appendix A.5.2.2, Yôki Group.)¹⁰

Sasabe (interview) explained Shirokane Primary School’s policy of *zenjin kyôiku* (holistic education), a unique method which balanced training of the mind, body and soul.¹¹ This holistic education included *jôsô kyôiku* (cultivating empathy and aesthetics) developing feelings (*jô*) as part of one’s knowledge (*chi*) and strength of will (*ji*). Toward this end, the principal appointed a fine-arts and music teacher to serve as vice-principal over the

⁹ Takamizawa approved this reading though she was vague in her explanation.

¹⁰ He also played baseball, went mountain climbing in middle school, enjoyed skiing in the thirties, and went golfing in his fifties.

¹¹ Few schools in Japan had developed such a holistic education in those days, except for perhaps Tamagawa Gakuen in Machida City, Tokyo.

other fifteen academic teachers. Hideo's homeroom teacher, Mr. Ozawa, augmented instruction with a summer school, which was unheard of in those days, at his hometown, Ohara in Chiba Prefecture, where he combined lessons with swimming in the ocean.¹²

Sasabe raised his voice in the interview as he emphasized the importance of this kind of balanced training of the body, mind and spirit for Hideo's later years. Mr. Sasabe himself was the last surviving and the closest of Kobayashi's childhood friends. After the interview he provided additional invaluable information, much of it recorded for the first time.

2.1.1.3 The Top Pupil of Mr. Ozawa

Always at the top of his class, Hideo particularly excelled in Japanese language and in writing.¹³ As Sasabe commented, "Hideo saw far deeper and wrote with something hidden behind his words, a skill far advanced of the older pupils in school." When one of his compositions was selected as best in school in 1910, Mr. Ozawa, seeing Hideo as a future writer, provided him with a pen name. Hideo wrote for the class essay magazine which he actively compiled in the fifth grade. Skilled in the Japanese language, he read at a much higher level than other pupils, including

¹² Mr. Ozawa still lacked a college degree, in common with many teachers who were studying for a credential, but which they made up for with dedicated teaching.

¹³ Kobayashi's father, an engineer, encouraged Hideo to take math lessons in the sixth grade at Mr. Nishimura's house in Shibuya. Saitô comments that most pupils came wearing a dark blue *kurume gasuri*, but Kobayashi wore soft, light colored clothing with a black cap and a long cloak. Saitô, a classmate there, was impressed by Kobayashi's outfit and thought, "Is he an actor's son?" (Saitô 97).

Tolstoy's works in translation "from the fourth or fifth grades." Reading was a form of recreation for Hideo, a boy of few words (*mukuchi*).¹⁴

Hideo received straight As at a most competitive primary school.¹⁵ Seven out of forty pupils in his class passed the entrance exam for the First Middle School, a feat that brought instant fame to Shirokane Primary School and Mr. Ozawa. Any school that qualified even one or two for the 163 places at the elite First Middle School gained in reputation, since most of the qualifying students ranked top of their primary schools nationwide.

On Sundays and holidays Mr. Ozawa took the pupils on excursions to historical places or to parents' homes to listen to their experiences abroad. This was in addition to his providing special lessons for the seven preparing for entrance exams. Four of his students later won the Japan Cultural Award, the highest prize in Japan, in the space of about ten years: Osaragi Jirô (writer), Kihara Susumu (brain surgeon), Kobayashi Hideo (critic), and Oka Yoshitake (political historian). Sasabe concluded that, "It speaks for the holistic education of the mind, body and spirit (including heart-felt things) and the dedicated teaching of Mr. Ozawa in particular at Shirokane Primary School."

2.1.2 Middle School and Preparatory Studies (April 1915-March 1921)

After Hideo entered First Middle School in 1915, he was most likely reading the early *bundan* naturalist writers such as Shimazaki Tôson (1872-1943), Kunikida Doppo (1871-1908), and Tayama Katai (1872-1930).

¹⁴ At this point in the interview, Takamizawa, who sat nearby, nodded in agreement. This quiet trait few recognized in Hideo, who was known as a dominant talker when drinking and an eloquent lecturer.

¹⁵ See photo of the report card (Yoshida and Kawaguchi 4).

These writers were influenced by the ideas of Western avant-garde or bohemian communities which had dedicated themselves to creating a “liberating environment for the independent pursuit of their art” (Powell 24). These “Japanese writers judged the sincerity of their works by the moral stand which they took in real life” (Powell 29).

[I]n the first decade ... the problem of how to write was superseded by a problem of a moral nature, of *how to live* the life of a modern man in a modern age. [This was in] a fashion similar to that of nineteenth-century Russia where the problems were ... treated as real-life issues. (Powell 28) (My italics.)

They featured the ideas of the “liberation of the individual” in the spirit of Flaubert, Balzac, Maupassant and Zola: They were “rebellious in spirit,” expressing “the truth about human nature and social reality”(Powell 26).

Against this background, it is not hard to imagine how Kobayashi embraced a “spirit of resistance” in his middle school years despite a social and intellectual climate which emphasized conformity. He chose to follow an independent stance that he maintained in higher school and university, and indeed for his lifetime.

2.1.2.1 School Life in the Middle School Years (1915-1920)

In 1915 Hideo entered First Middle School (now Hibiya High School) where he gained a reputation as a voracious reader. By the age of thirteen or fourteen, his reading so intensely had cleared the shelves of books borrowed from a neighbor’s library. They included Western classics in translation, such as the works of Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, and

Maupassant.¹⁶ He had also read many important Japanese works of literature, and found particularly impressive Tanizaki Jun'ichirô's *Ningyo no Nageki* [*Lament of a Mermaid*]. Some ten years later he could recall from memory the opening paragraphs of Tanizaki's story, which had appeared in *Chûô Kôron* magazine, a publication for adults (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 75).

Kobayashi wrote of his reading habits in his essay "*Dokusho ni Tsuite* [On Reading]" (1939):

There is no harm in voracious reading. On the contrary, those failing to have a period of voracious reading may never develop the joy of reading. The reason is, one best develops the basic reading habit by poring over numerous books. ("Reading," KHZ-A 11: 80)

Takamizawa comments that, "Whenever I saw my brother at home, he was almost always reading at his small desk... . He read books which were difficult even for adults with amazing speed" (interview, May 1988). He was also exposed to the New Testament, when he visited the house of a classmate whose parents were Christian, and occasionally attended church. Hideo became too busy preparing for entrance exams to continue, but Takamizawa remembers Hideo telling his mother with wide eyes: "In Christian teachings, the Emperor is unimportant. Christianity does not honor the Emperor at all [but only] God who is mightier" (Takamizawa, *Dialogue* 186).

Sasabe (interview) claims that Hideo's upper-classmates at First Middle School, some of whom became the most precocious writers in Japan, "polished" Hideo. The most significant was Tominaga Tarô¹⁷ who graduated

¹⁶ Published by the Shinchôsha Press in pocket-size editions.

¹⁷ Tominaga Tarô (d. 1925) was an artist-poet and later a close friend of Kobayashi, sharing an interest in Symbolism. Kobayashi most likely did meet Tominaga at higher school although Tominaga, unlike Hideo, was a model student and took little interest in literature

and left Tokyo in 1919, but later sent Hideo poems of Baudelaire and befriended him in 1924. Another significant figure was his life-long friend, the critic Kawakami Tetsutarô (1902-1980), who arrived in Tokyo in his third year, transferring from Kobe First Middle School. Other classmates included one-time critic Ishimaru Jûji (1902-1968) and novelist Kimura Shôzaburô (1902-84).¹⁸

Apart from his literary classmates, Hideo, nicknamed “*pochi*” (tiny spot), made friends in the “*Chibisuke Kurabu*” (Shorties Club). Feeling threatened when playing among bigger boys, the smaller boys formed their own group, playing baseball or “*jintori*” (capturing territory). Kimura Osamu, son of the doctor at Ôtsuka Hospital and friend through higher school, was also a member of the club, sharing interests with Hideo in sports as well as musical instruments (Saitô 98).¹⁹ The quality of the “Shorties Club” is reflected in the twenty-four members who attended their reunion in 1961 in Koganei City. Four were doctors, five were university professors,²⁰ and nine were business leaders. Others followed the professions of politics, writing criticism and journalism (Ono, “Shorties” 135).²¹

2.1.2.2 Resisting School Rules

at that time, preferring kendo. They already knew each other by 1924 “without an introduction” (Tominaga, “Surrounding” 34-35).

¹⁸ There was also Murai Yasuo, later a university professor of Japanese language, who published Tominaga’s poems and introduced the future writer Ôoka Shôhei (1909-88) to Kobayashi in early 1928.

¹⁹ Kimura was a good friend of Hideo, but their paths gradually parted as Kimura failed to settle down in life. He finished in the French Law Department at Tokyo Imperial University, became a judo instructor, dallied as a chiropractor and finished medical school but never sustained any profession for long (Ono, “Shorties” 134).

²⁰ Yamauchi Tamahiko, later a professor of physics at Tokyo University, remained a member of the “Shorties Club” though he grew taller as they advanced in grades.

²¹ Saitô Toraô became a reporter at *Asahi Shimbun*, and left a diary mentioning his encounters with Hideo.

At the First Middle School the discipline was military fashion and the school curriculum geared to passing entrance exams. The principal, Kawada Masaki, once an aspiring student in England, sought to create an elite school like Eton or Harrow aimed at developing “distinguished citizens” by teaching “moral discourses.” He required the pupils to learn the *Book of Filial Duty*, *Mencius*, the *Analects* and other Chinese classics. Chinese morals were taught by the principal, though an English major, in the first year, and by other teachers in the second year (Ono, “Middle School” 128).

The military-type discipline was enforced all day, from the daily “morning gathering” to extra-curricular activities, even after they exited the school. When the younger brother of the emperor enrolled in the school, the pupils had to salute him each time he passed by. Each class had the pupils’ names posted in order of their test scores at the back of the room. After school, the school prohibited pupils from going into an eating place, buying a hot sweet called “tortoise” on cold days, or going to an entertainment center. Even using a bat was taboo because it was considered to be “dangerous” (Ono, “Middle School” 129).

This did not deter the Shorties Club. They played baseball in secret against the taller boys, pupils taking turns as lookout to report any teacher patrols. On one occasion, the principal entered by the rear gate, caught the group playing baseball, and threatened them all with dismissal. So they moved to Yoyogi Park where they used the wall of the military prison as the backstop. When a list of Shorties Club team-members fell into the hands of a teacher, the principal assembled their guardians and reprimanded the pupils before them, even accusing the pupils of playing baseball with delinquents (Ono, “Middle School” 129). Hideo continued to resist by playing “rubber baseball” at lunchtime and helping to form another team of classmates to play at Yoyogi Park after school.

With his rebellious temperament, Hideo resisted the military-type discipline and the distorted curriculum centered on entrance exams. He preferred to enjoy literature, music, and sports—subjects which the school discouraged since they were not included in higher school exams. Teachers confiscated novels, music sheets and baseballs whenever they spotted them in students' bags (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 33). To enjoy music, he went on Saturday afternoon after school to Hibiya Park, which was then located adjacent to the school.²² He listened to military bands and the music of Beethoven and Wagner at the Hibiya Amphitheater. It was around this time that he decided to learn the mandolin, an activity unrelated to his studies but an interest that developed, leading to his forming the Crescent Mandolin Club in higher school with Kimura (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 34). Shirasu Masako²³ explained (interview May 1988) that these early interests in sport and music were not wasted by any means. They both developed in Hideo at a young age a sense of musical repetition which appears in his writing, first during the war years and finally in his *magnum opus*, *Motoori Norinaga* (1978), a great work that rhythmically repeats the theme as if in a sonata.

In addition to sports and music, he enjoyed literary pursuits, writing reminiscences with a friend for a class-circulating magazine. Unfortunately, none of these writings survive today. His grades suffered, however, because of his extra-curricular activities and interests. At graduation he was ranked seventy-fifth out of 116 students. His report card also shows comments for being outspoken in his second and third years.²⁴ This outspokenness was indicative of those he preferred to associate with.

²² The school was relocated to Akasaka in 1925.

²³ Shirasu Masako had a villa in Karuizawa adjacent to that of Kawakami. Through him, she met Aoyama Jirô, and then Kobayashi.

²⁴ See photo of report card (Yoshida and Kawaguchi 7).

Hideo, though small in stature, preferred to walk haughtily around the town with his mischievous, so-called “gang-type” classmates instead of studying. He used to talk about these friends on his occasional visits to Kawakami, who lived nearby, when Kawakami was in his four and fifth years in middle school (Kawakami, *Kobayashi* 28).²⁵

Hideo failed his entrance exams for the First Higher School, when for the first time his sister saw him crying. She does not criticize him, however, but finds supportive words for his demeanor:

Hideo’s rebelling for five years [1915-20] against the middle-school education and an additional year spent as a prep student, I believe, enriched him in no small way in the years that followed. (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 35)

2.1.2.3 Preparatory Studies (April 1920-March 1921) (Age 18)

Not much is recorded about his year of self-study, except that Hideo and his good friend Kimura Osamu²⁶ rented a cottage in Ohara, Chiba Prefecture. Here they swam, cooked meals, and practiced the mandolin in between their studies. This was the place they had had their summer school in primary school under Mr. Ozawa, and no doubt they followed a routine of study and swimming.

During this year, Hideo and Kimura learned the mandolin and became accomplished at it, a skill which Hideo displayed at Kawakami’s house one day by strumming a concerto. Once he had mastered the

²⁵ In Gotanda. (See Appendix A.5.3.1, Sasabe’s Map).

²⁶ Kimura often used to visit the Kobayashi home, since he shared the same interests of music and sports with Hideo. He was the son of the family doctor of the Kobayashis, who had cared for Hideo’s mother and later performed Hideo’s appendectomy in 1921 (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 48).

mandolin, he sought a greater challenge by learning the violin, but writing short stories took priority once he entered higher school. There too he developed deep ties with two or three writer friends, and Kawakami was left to his own in higher school (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 29).

2.2 Higher School (April 1921 - March 1924)

Tragedy struck in Hideo's life in 1921 just as he passed the test for the First Higher School at age nineteen. His father died at age forty-seven, which led to innumerable difficulties for the Kobayashi family, particularly Hideo, the head of the family now.

2.2.1 First Year at Higher School (April 1921 - March 1922)

Hideo's father died of food poisoning only a few days before Hideo learned that he had passed the exams for First Higher School in March of 1921. As head of the family Hideo was responsible for the debts incurred by his father, a sum of 1,000 yen. His mother became ill and his own case of appendicitis developed into peritonitis, requiring a life-saving operation in October (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 40). Soon afterwards he suffered from nervous exhaustion and dropped out of school. At this time he considered suicide and thought deeply about religion and the meaning of life and death.

This experience led to his first reminiscence, "Suicide of an Octopus," in which he depicts himself metaphorically as an octopus eating its own legs. He thinks back to March 1921 when his father died, and then to the following fall to thoughts of suicide and caring for his mother. The characters are based on himself, his classmate Sasabe, and his sister Junko (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 129). He returned to higher school still depressed

in April 1922 to repeat his freshman year and published the reminiscence in the coterie magazine *Kyôon* [*Footstep Sounds*] in October.²⁷

2.2.1.1 “Suicide of an Octopus”

In “*Tako no Jisatsu* [Suicide of an Octopus, 1922]” (KHZ-A 9-34), the protagonist Ken’kichi (Hideo) is about to meet Yaeko (Junko, his younger sister) and Shibuya (his childhood friend Sasabe) on the beach in Kamakura. As the protagonist walks on the beach his nerves are pierced.

The ocean current rippled in vivid stripes but appeared battered by the direct sunlight as its waves crawled up the beach The sand glistened as if grinning. These brilliant colors of the scenic coast battered the fatigued nerves of the sleepless Ken’kichi, provoking a series of hallucinations. (9)

Throughout the previous night, he has debated with a friend, probably his friend Tominaga, then in Katase.²⁸ He joins Yaeko and Shibuya in their conversation about the suicide of an octopus.

Yaeko: What do you think of my octopus committing suicide?”

Ken’kichi: An octopus that commits suicide cannot survive.

Yaeko: It eats its own legs because it is hungry.

Shibuya: I presume it’s dead. How interesting.

Ken’kichi: The remark, “How interesting,” is uncalled for ...

Yaeko: The legs started to grow again, so it might live. (11)

²⁷ The early reminiscences were only published posthumously for the general reader in 1983.

²⁸ His friend Tominaga had been recuperating since February from his illness, under the care of his mother.

That night, Ken'kichi is disturbed by the story and steps out toward the beach where he observes groups of sunburned people wearing the band "Nichiren Youth Group".

A fellow ... was waving his sunburned arms up and down as he shouted over the roar of the waves ...

Then he remembered Romain Rolland's and Bergson's words about some conceited youths who proclaim their willingness to suffer repeatedly. He thought, "Suffering willingly is no different from suffering unwillingly. Nothing can stop the octopus from committing suicide." (15)

He probes thoughts of "suffering" as he walks back along the beach to his room and thinks about religion.

That group [on the beach] sought a religious life distant from him. He had in his middle-school days sought religion out of sentimentality, but now he thought that his stagnating in a complacent religion ... was out of the question. He wanted to understand religion, but not believe in it. The death of his father had brought him so much suffering and this in particular had turned him against religion. (16)

Early next morning, Ken'kichi thinks about the time his father died, and his mother's deep grief and gloom which followed.

Compared to Ken'kichi's or his sister's sentimental grief, his mother's remorse remained deep. They had seen the same death, but her grief had so deeply affected her. After she became sick, Ken'kichi was saddened by her inability to overcome the gloom of death and by her bleak outlook for the future His mother remarked, "I want to die," but Ken'kichi couldn't find the words to comfort her. (19)

He then remembers the thoughts of his own death that night after he has cared for his mother's cough:

That night, his mother coughed repeatedly, and he had gone to bed late. He could not sleep as he imagined her coughing sending armies of bacteria through his mosquito net. Ken'ichi breathed heavily and tossed in his bedding. He was startled by the thought that, should he become infected, he would prefer death over a long convalescing period in bed. (20)

Later that morning Ken'ichi leaves Kamakura to reach Tokyo in time for the Memorial Service at 2 p.m. As the train nears Tokyo Station the anxiety that lingers reminds him of the suicide of the octopus.

Then perhaps, after a week, the octopus legs would begin to sprout out Then the octopus would repeat the process of suicide – a fantasy and a sneer – that connected to his life as if a chain. (30)

2.2.2. Second Year (April 1923 - March 1924)

Hideo's "resistance" at middle school became "rebellion" at higher school. He joined the "Self-Independent Group" who as "Bohemians" rebelled against being "educated into the elite" of a society that, they believed, promoted a façade of values which had led to the decline of nineteenth-century Europe, and now early twentieth-century Japan (Hatano, 263). Hideo grew his hair long, defying the First Higher School rule, refused to sing the school-dorm anthem required of all freshman students, cut classes, and entered class late without explanation, occasionally with a flushed face indicating that he had been drinking (Hatano, 262-63).²⁹

²⁹ Takamizawa reports his drinking with coterie friends throughout the night around this time (*My Brother*, 45).

2.2.2.1 In Higher School as a Rebel

Takamizawa describes Kobayashi at this time: “The First Higher School students ... intentionally adopted an air of toughness, which awed the girls He dressed in defiance crudely wearing a crumpled cap and hanging a dirty towel from his belt, as he walked haughtily along in his tall wooden clogs” (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 41). Yet his classmate Hatano³⁰ saw another side to this non-conformity. For him, Hideo was a straight but flexible thinker, who taught him in so many ways with his vast reading and knowledge. Hatano was astounded by his ability to read French, including Maupassant’s works in the original and Poe’s works translated into French. In his intense pursuit of understanding, Hideo at age twenty had grasped the essence of French writers far in advance of others (Hatano, 262).³¹

Hideo also read Japanese literature, praising one of Akutagawa’s works, “*Tamanegi*” (“Onion,” 1920)³², some years before this became the accepted view. For this, he gained a reputation as an independent thinker among his peers. By his own account, Hideo read in depth and breadth, five to six books in parallel, one book commuting on the train to school, and another secretly in the classroom, a book at home and others elsewhere. He

³⁰ Hatano Kanji (1905-1988) was a child psychologist and later a professor at Ochanomizu Women’s University. After the earthquake, living 3-4 stations away from each other, Kobayashi and Hatano commuted together for six months to the First Higher School at the Hongô campus (Hatano 263).

³¹ Hatano remembers Hideo reading literary works in the Western History and Ethics class. Hearing a noise, Hatano looked behind him to see Hideo rapidly reading a French novel, rudely flipping through pages, which he later explained after class, “Reading literature requires such passion” (Hatano 263).

³² Kobayashi later took a critical view of Akutagawa’s writings: “[Kobayashi] has had extremely biting things to say [about Akutagawa]” (Seidensticker [1971] 422).

says that before finishing them, he would begin reading three or four other books (“On Reading,” KHZ-A 11: 80).³³

2.2.2.2 The Great Kantô Earthquake and Financial Ruin (1923-1924)

The Great Kantô Earthquake on September 1, 1923 temporarily halted his reading and terminated his classes as the entire city and areas to Chûbu had been devastated. When Hideo heard rumors of tidal waves sweeping Kamakura, he went by ship to his mother and found her safe with Uncle Moku and his wife Wakana. They had escaped the tidal wave by climbing the hill and made a temporary dwelling from their half-destroyed home (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 43). (See photo, Yoshida and Kawaguchi 11.) Nonetheless, he stayed there a week to help them repair and clean the house he had often visited.

Hideo returned to the Shirokane house where he was living with Junko, Uncle Saburô, and a home-helper, but the house had been tilted. The center of the yard had a split, one side sixteen centimeters higher than the other (Saitô 98).³⁴ Later that fall, lacking the funds for repairs, the Kobayashi family decided to sell the tilted Shirokane house. After they received the first payment, the buyer defaulted on the remainder, despite his mother’s and Uncle Saburô’s pleas. The loss of their home completed the financial ruin of the Kobayashi family.

³³ Hideo was also obsessed with music, visiting Hatano’s house in Ôgikubo to listen to his records. As poor as he was, Hideo once bought a ticket for the concert of Mischa Elman (Russian violinist, born 1891). Hideo had all the more reason not to sing the dorm anthem, which he thought crude compared to classical violin music. This convinced Hatano that for a genius, refusing to do something for good reason was more important than doing something as mere custom (264). Another friend at higher school was Ishimaru Shigeji, who lived in Aoyama. Kobayashi visited him every three days to discuss his reading. Ishimaru became Kobayashi’s listener until Kobayashi moved to Kôenji in fall 1923, and later requested Kobayashi to become a coterie member of *Yamamayu*, which he claims to have started and financed in 1924 (Ishimaru, KHZ-BII 176).

³⁴ A map indicates that the house had been built on a land-filled area, which may explain the extent of the damage to the yard. (See Appendix Map.)

They were forced to move in February 1924 to a low-rent house in Mabashi which Hideo found with the help of Hatano (Hatano 262). It was one of the cheapest available, with little access to sunlight and at the bottom of a precipice between Nakano and Kôenji stations. Hideo and Junko asked their mother to join them there from Kamakura, as Uncle Saburô had remained in Shirokane, moving with his new wife into a building nearby that Hideo's father had earlier converted into a diamond factory.

2.3 Third Year at Higher School (April 1924 - March 1925)

Hideo's years at First Higher School coincided with a period of great transformation. The earthquake had destroyed much of downtown Tokyo, and the modernization of Japan now began on a grand scale. "The beginning of radio broadcasting (1925), the proliferation of bars, cafés, the rapid developments of tramway and suburban railway systems, the beginning of the subway system (1927), the growth of department stores and modern business offices" – all occurred after the earthquake (Powell 118).

The reverses and distresses in Kobayashi's life led him to write his second set of reminiscences, published in July 1924. This time the story is based on his feeling of being imprisoned in his brain as he traveled in December 1923 when classes were cancelled for the rest of the year after the quake. The tone of the story reflects Baudelaire's works which had been referred to him by his friend Tominaga Tarô, who discussed Symbolism with Kobayashi on his return from China in February. That spring Kobayashi had also come upon Rimbaud's works, just as he was drafting his reminiscence. Another important influence came that summer when he met Shiga Naoya, "the god of the novel," who encouraged him to write at a time his confidence was beginning to falter.

2.3.1 First Semester, Third Year (April 1924 - August 1924)

Kobayashi's personal problems seemed to entrap him more than the effects of the earthquake. In "*Hitotsu no Nôzui* [One Brain]" (KHZ-A 1: 35-46) his thoughts returned to his sufferings two years previously, but this time he shows signs of breaking through to the real world.

2.3.1.1 "One Brain" (Published July 1924)

The boat goes past Ôshima Island toward Yugawara Town in Kanagawa Prefecture from where Kobayashi plans to catch a bus to Manazuru Town. His state of mind changes suddenly as he looks out to the ocean.

The boat sent glistening ripples, white like crisp-floating ice, which glided out onto the ocean. Suddenly I shivered, at the sensation that the frozen scales of fish deep below the waters had combined with their raw smell to stimulate a portion of my brain. (37)

Soon after the boat docks at Manazuru Harbor Kobayashi catches the bus to Yugawara Town but feels irritable and restless.

I sensed my eyes pulling back, feeling my wearied brain grow faint. Even the straw strands caught between the spinning cart-wheel and headband of the man pulling the cart caught my eye. I read the graffiti and poster notices on telephone poles as they whizzed past. (39)

Kobayashi is fatigued at the inn that night but finds no rest, unable to free his thoughts from his father's death, his mother's illness, the family debt, and a relationship with a girl (unidentified). His afflicted mind ("brain") feels like "a slimy goose egg" that he imagines in the maid's broad forehead.

At the inn, a narrow-eyed maid with a broad forehead served me a meal ... I imagined a yellow, slimy brain portion like a goose egg planted inside her wide forehead, which I thought was fabricating the words of her chatter. (41)

The next morning he walks out through the trees toward the bus stop to return to Tokyo. Then the morning sights, sounds, and smells of nature suddenly seem to penetrate to his brain. He feels his brain recovering, stimulated by the natural wonders around him.

A clear stream flowed near the street. A wagtail hopped along forming small yellow curves along the rocks, which were damp from the snow water. Noise from a power-saw cutting trees pierced the air. The melting snow bared the tops of small mounds of sawdust. I smelled the scent of fresh wood, which had a wondrous freshness that I had been unaccustomed to lately. I felt refreshed. (45)

The reminiscences center on the spirit of freedom, a longing for self-discovery in the “lure of travel.” The protagonist “I,” who is imprisoned in his “brain,” is agonizing but finally makes a breakthrough to the real world.

2.3.1.2 Reading Baudelaire (February) and Rimbaud (Spring)

Kobayashi broke into the real world around the time Tominaga returned from China in February. They became closely involved in discussing Baudelaire (1821-67)³⁵ and the Symbolist Movement.³⁶

³⁵ Baudelaire was labeled a symbolist despite writing thirty years before the movement existed. His major work, *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857), mentions the word symbol only three times. Nevertheless, he had alluded to what is known as “symbolic” today (Pyre 21).

³⁶ The greatest activity of the Symbolist movement occurred in 1885-95, eleven years after the death of Baudelaire. The other great “symbolist,” Arthur Rimbaud (1854-91), had stopped writing poetry and had no association with the movement.

Tokyo-born Tominaga Tarô had graduated from the First Middle School and entered the Second Higher School in Sendai in 1919. There he happened upon the English translation of Baudelaire's "*Les Fleurs du Mal* [The Flowers of Evil]" (1857), which he later sent to Kobayashi.³⁷ Tominaga explained what Kobayashi had found in Baudelaire's "The Flowers of Evil": that the real universe would emerge from his consciousness (or awareness) and sensibility (Fowlie, *Literature* 162), and that "infinite dimensions [existed] behind the conventional surfaces" of the real world (Robinson 131). Kobayashi sought the kind of world that Baudelaire believed to be real "as if taking a new voyage through life of experiences to attain awareness" (Robinson 134). He took a "voyage" of his own to Manazuru town in December 1923, a trip into his consciousness that resulted in "One Brain."

Then some months later, in the spring of 1924, Kobayashi came across a pocketbook edition of Rimbaud's volume *Une Saison en Enfer* [*A Season in Hell*] (1873) in a second-hand bookstore in Kanda.

My first encounter with Rimbaud took place when I was twenty-three, in the spring. At the time, as I recall, I was strolling aimlessly through Kanda I was completely unprepared. I had never dreamed that such a tremendous charge of dynamite could be planted in the miserable little pocket-sized *Mercure* edition. (trans. Keene, *Dawn: Poetry, Drama Criticism* 583; "Rimbaud III," KHZ-A 15: 114)

For Kobayashi, finding Rimbaud was an "event" (*jiken*) of major importance.

The little book exploded in great style, and for several years I was caught up in the whirlpool of *the event* called Rimbaud.

³⁷ Tominaga dropped out of the Second Higher School after a romance and returned to Tokyo in the fall of 1921, where he enrolled in the Tokyo Foreign Language School, French Section in 1922 (Saitô 99). Saito writes that he and Tominaga drank, painted and wrote poetry when Tominaga returned from Sendai. They visited each other often, both living in Shibuya where Tominaga met Kobayashi. Tominaga left for Shanghai in fall 1923, returning in February 1924 (KHZ-BII 202).

It was definitely an event I experienced to the extreme the reality of what is generally referred to vaguely as “influence.” (trans. Keene, *Dawn, Criticism* 583; “Rimbaud III,” KHZ-A 15: 114) (My italics.)

About the same time, Kobayashi was drafting in “One Brain” his experiences of consciousness or “brain.” He remembered that he had “smelled that scent of fresh wood ... and felt refreshed,” feeling something “real” of nature unavailable in Baudelaire’s type of the “self-awareness.” Soon after, Rimbaud’s poems “exploded in great style” and opened the doors of his “one brain” to the outside world. Further reading of Rimbaud led to his second “voyage, a journey into the “real” world of nature on April 11, 1925, traveling to Ogasawara Island.³⁸

2.3.1.3 Kobayashi Meets Shiga Naoya (Summer 1924)³⁹

After reading Rimbaud in spring and publishing “One Brain” in July (written a few months earlier), Kobayashi visited Shiga Naoya (1883-1971) in August. Shiga was a writer who had fascinated him since he was aged 18 at middle school.

I was in my fourth year in middle school, when Shiga’s book *Nigotta Atama* was censored. I borrowed the book from a classmate, who had a brother who adored the White Birch Society. Since it was censored, we read it in secrecy. We were scared to read it then but ten years later it was distributed

³⁸ (See “*Ogasawara Kikô* [“Ogasawara Travels],” 1925; later published as “*Kikô Danpen* [“Travel Tidbits”]). Date of first publication is unknown (KHZ-A 1:73).

³⁹ Shiga Naoya (1883-1971) was originally from Ishimaki Town in Miyagi Prefecture. He moved to Tokyo in 1885 and then to Yamashina in Kyoto after the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923. He was a graduate of the primary and secondary schools at the Gakushuin and entered Tokyo Imperial University in 1906. Before dropping out in 1910, he had established ties with Mushanokôji Saneatsu (1885-1976), Arishima Ikuma (Arishima Takeo’s brother), Satomi Ton (1888-1983) and others who established the *Shirakaba* (*White Birch*) magazine. See Chapter 5 below for Kobayashi’s later contact with Shiga.

throughout Japan I was so infatuated with Naoya then that once I settled in at [the First Higher] School, I had wanted to meet him. (Gunji 76)

Kobayashi had undoubtedly read Shiga's other works since he had drafted an essay on Shiga in 1924 that went unpublished until 1929. (See Chapter 5).

The visit to Shiga is described by Gunji. Kobayashi visited Shiga two days after the First Higher School had lost the annual baseball game against the Third Higher School in Kyoto (Gunji 76). Kobayashi, along with other members of the cheer squad, probably became involved in a drunken brawl with the Kyoto University students. It took him the next day to recover before visiting Shiga (Gunji 77). Not much is known about the visit with Shiga except for a letter Kobayashi wrote to him on February 6, 1925, some six months later.

2.3.2 Second Semester (September 1924 - March 1925)

Kobayashi was already publishing other short reminiscences in the coterie magazine *Seidô Jidai* [*Bronze Age*]: “*Ame* [Candy]” in September 1924 (Issue 7) and “*Tanpen Jyûnihen* [Twelve Short Pieces]” in October 1924 (Issue 8). Kobayashi and others do not often refer to these reminiscences, but he refers to them in his first letter written to Shiga in February 1925, indicating he has not completely abandoned writing altogether.

2.3.2.1 Letter to Shiga

Kobayashi corresponded with Shiga Naoya, expressing his “interest” in writing reminiscences. He still appears entrapped in his self-awareness, not quite able to break out into the outer world and people.

He writes that “I must commit suicide,” due to “losing interest in the lives of others,” and his inability to write, other than reminiscences.

Recently I have realized that I had possessed an exceedingly romantic view of aesthetic works. I am losing interest in the lives of others. When I say, “I can write about that fellow,” I fashion a story [about him]; afterwards I feel completely foolish. I listen to music, and when the unbearable intoxication vanishes, I feel that I must commit suicide.

He feels “burdened” when he compares his reminiscences to the great writings of the likes of Balzac and Tolstoy.

However, as long as I feel like writing reminiscences, I feel that the wonderful fascination that novelists like Balzac and Tolstoy have, is for me, a burden. I always feel this wall in front of me If you move to Tokyo as I hear, I wish to meet you. (Kôno 102)

That very same month in February, he had published his third lengthy reminiscence, “*Ponkin no Warai* [Laughter of Ponkin],” (Issue 3 of *Yamamayu*, February 1925), which is retitled “*Onna to Ponkin* [A Woman and Ponkin]” in December 1927 (KHZ-A 1:65). The “crazed” woman’s identity is unknown. Kobayashi, whom met while Tominaga was in Kyoto.⁴⁰

2.3.2.2 Letters: Tominaga and Kobayashi (Fall 1924 - March 1925)

After Tominaga left Tokyo in July for Kyoto, they corresponded. The letters reveal a mutual interest in Symbolism. In Tominaga’s first letter of September 27, 1924, he writes expressing his desire to be a painter: “My family forced me to make a living, which I can do better as a painter than as a writer” (Etô, *Kobayashi* 11). Kobayashi replied by encouraging Tominaga

⁴⁰ The lady is not Yasuko, whom Kobayashi did not meet until Nakahara brought her to his house in April 1925.

to write poetry for the coterie magazine *Bronze Age* by joining the group (Etô, *Kobayashi* 11).

In a second letter to Kobayashi on October 23, 1924, Tominaga explains his illness (tuberculosis) and discusses Rimbaud's "*Une Saison en Enfer* [A Season in Hell]" from a hand-copied excerpt that Kobayashi had sent to him that summer. Tominaga then shared the poem with Nakahara Chûya (1907-1937), a new young poet recently arrived in Kyoto whom he asks to join him (and later Kobayashi) in Tokyo.⁴¹

Tominaga had coughed up blood in Kyoto, and left there in November or December for medical care in Tokyo. Once in Tokyo he joined Kobayashi to form a new coterie magazine, *Yamamayu* (Wild Silkworm Moth) that December, as they found *Bronze Age* unsuitable to their tastes.⁴² The newly formed journal became a focus of literary significance, with member of high quality: such as Kobayashi, Tominaga, Nakahara, Nagai Tatsuo, Kawakami, Tetsutarô, and Aoyama Jirô. Tominaga contributed in no small way to the journal in six issues from December 1924 to July 1925, after which his illness prevented his writing before his death in November.

Tominaga sent Kobayashi a fifth letter from a Tokyo hospital in February 1925, indicating a new interest in prose writing.⁴³ Kobayashi replied on the same day, February 15, 1925, agreeing to send him a copy of "A Woman and Ponkin" (Etô, *Kobayashi* 11).⁴⁴ In March, Tominaga decided to write from his hospital bed, contributing poems and criticism to the third

⁴¹ All the following dates are based on Aoki Ken (ed.), *Nenpyô, Sakka Dokuhon: Nakahara Chûya, [Chronology, a Reader of Writers: Nakahara Chûya]*, 1993.

⁴² Kobayashi refused to compromise (KHZ-BII 176).

⁴³ Bedridden, Tominaga communicated by letter: his third letter to Kobayashi on November 28 and his fourth on December 12, 1924 concern his writings published in *Yamamayu*.

⁴⁴ On February 21, 1925, Tominaga wrote a thank-you letter for this (Etô, *Kobayashi* 11-12).

edition of *Yamamayu*. These far surpassed those of others, establishing him as a leading writer.

That same month, Tominaga's mother removed him from the Tokyo hospital to a rented room in Katase, Kamakura, hoping the clean air would help cure him. At the time, Kobayashi was graduating from the First Higher School and processing his entrance into Tokyo Imperial University. Both he and Tominaga awaited the arrival of Nakahara.

Chapter 3

University Years and Literary Development (April 1925 - Spring 1929)

Students at Tokyo Imperial University quickly adopted the spirit of a new relativism in morality, arts and politics that had affected the intellectual climate on major campuses. In literature works such as James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) suggested a brewing mood for change that proved a fertile time for interest in French literature and Symbolism as well. It almost seemed that the period was waiting for the likes of Kobayashi and his fellows to emerge, according to classmate Sato (Sato Masaaki 47).

Kobayashi's reading of the Symbolist Baudelaire had begun at the suggestion of artist-poet Tominaga around 1922 and he fell under Tominaga's direct influence in early 1924. In his last year of higher school, Kobayashi turned from Baudelaire's poems to Rimbaud's, wrote his second reminiscence (in July), created with others the *Yamamayu* magazine (in December), and was to become legendary as much for his behavior as his writings. This was particularly true when Nakahara Chûya and his live-in girlfriend Yasuko arrived in Tokyo in mid-March 1925.

3.1 First Year in University (April 1925 - March 1926)

Still a "wayward youth" (*furyo shônen*), Kobayashi agreed to enter Tokyo Imperial University only to please his mother (Shirasu, "Father" KHZ-A02, Bekkan II:188). But he never bothered to pay tuition, preferring to spend his days drinking and carousing with poets Tominaga and Nakahara, traveling and later pursuing Nakahara's girlfriend. Despite his dissipations,

he continued to publish articles and read widely. As he later commented: “At no other period since [university] have I read so many books” (Shirasu, “Father” 188).

3.1.1 The First Semester (April 1925 to September 1925)

3.1.1.1 Meeting of Three Symbolists

Kobayashi, Tominaga, and Nakahara Chûya (1907-37) met together for the first time in early April 1925 in Katase town, where Kobayashi took Nakahara to meet Tominaga who was recuperating there. This marks a new chapter in Japanese literature, since no Japanese symbolist had ever dared “to embody” or “to incarnate” (*nikutai-ka suru*) Symbolist literature in a way the trio did (Shimizu Takayoshi, *Course* 58). The intensity of their lives took its toll, however, with Tominaga dying at age twenty-four in November 1925, and Nakahara mentally afflicted before dying at age thirty in 1937. Only Kobayashi survived. Kawakami Tetsutarô¹ comments that he survived with a stamina healthier than Tominaga and a personality not as eccentric as Nakahara. Most importantly, he was a critic not a poet (*My Kobayashi* 33-34). As Hirata suggests: “The poet sees first. He dies in advance. The critic [always arrives late] and must endure ... to follow the poet’s fatal plunge into madness and death” (223).

What drove the other two to “madness [or] death”? Kawakami explains that they as “decadents” were committed to a struggle against the bourgeoisie or elites of society who, they believed, were following the spirit of

¹ Kawakami Tetsutarô (1902-1980) was an acquaintance of Kobayashi from his third to fifth years (1918-20) at First Middle School. He was an economics major, who then became an important writer and critic. Keene lists Kawakami among the significant critics in Shôwa Japan after Kobayashi (Keene, *Dawn: Poetry, Drama, Criticism* 611). His *Nihon no Autosaidâ* [*Japan’s Outsider*] (1959) won the sixth Shinchôsha Prize, and then the Japan Art Academy Award in 1961.

rationalism imported from the West. This process had caused the civilization of nineteenth-century Europe to fall into decay. But, as Kawakami also comments, Kobayashi as a critic saw the need to part from the Symbolists and did so in 1932-33. He realized that Dostoevsky offered a better analysis of the same kind of decay in Russia. This decay was being led by the intellectuals (*My Kobayashi* 68). Perhaps because he was a critic, Kobayashi saw how Baudelaire's concerns related to Dostoevsky's, and finally took Dostoevsky as his model by which to criticize Japan's emulation of a European civilization on the decline (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 68).

3.1.1.2 Nakahara, Kobayashi and Tominaga in Tokyo (Spring)²

Nakahara, another "wayward youth" (*furyô shônen*), knew no one in Tokyo except for Tominaga and Kobayashi. At age sixteen he had left his home in Yamaguchi Prefecture. Intent on a career as a poet he transferred to Ritsumeikan Middle School in Kyoto in 1923 (Hosoya 39-40). He had already become a Dadaist poet³ in Kyoto before he met Tominaga in July 1924. In some fifty pieces of poetry from 1924-25 he challenged elite education and social conformity (Aoki, 54). When Tominaga found Nakahara was interested in Symbolism, he arranged for Nakahara to join him, and later Kobayashi, after he graduated from middle school.⁴

² Dates and accounts are based on Aoki (ed.), "Chronology, A Reader on Nakahara Chûya" (1993).

³ Denotes members of a movement centered in Zurich, Switzerland that "opposed all values" after World War I.

⁴ One of Nakahara's teachers referred him to Tominaga. He lived near Tominaga from September to November 1924, spending every day with him.

Nakahara Chûya arrived in Tokyo in mid-March 1925 at age eighteen accompanied by Hasegawa Yasuko, three years older than he.⁵ Once settled temporarily in Totsuka Town, Nakahara returned to his hometown in Yamaguchi Prefecture to seek financial support for entrance into university.⁶ Upon his return to Tokyo, however, he soon had a change of mind, criticizing university-graduate poets as a group contaminated with “knowledge,” who sought “words from the intellect, not life” (Akiyama, “Nakahara” 46, 69).

Kobayashi helped Nakahara and Yasuko relocate to Nakano before his trip to Ogasawara Island (April 11 to May 1).⁷ Then, after his return, Kobayashi helped Tominaga escape on May 3 from Katase, Kamakura to Tokyo where Tominaga was resolved to “live eternally.” A premonition of death came one night a few weeks later:

“Hey, let’s turn here. A stupid waste to spit blood in a place like this.”— I [Kobayashi] cry remembering the gait of an exiled angel. In this unfortunate century, he [Tominaga] was truly the only poet this contemptibly lowly modern Japan has ever produced. (trans. Hirata 212; KHZ-A 1: 100)

Nakahara remained Tominaga’s constant companion in the few remaining weeks in May with Kobayashi joining them (KHZ-A 13: 187). Kobayashi warned Tominaga about the “coming damp rainy season in June,” but he was

⁵ They lived temporarily in an inn near Waseda University. According to letters from Nakahara to Tominaga, Kobayashi drank with Nakahara on April 2, lent him money on April 7, and took him to see Tominaga in Katase, Kamakura.

⁶ He received the sum of 80-90 yen a month, which was higher than the pay of a company worker. The amount was increased to 100 yen, then to 120 yen a month, which supported him until his death in 1937 (Akiyama, “Nakahara” 47).

⁷ The first Rimbaud-type voyage, financed by an acquaintance (Takamizawa *My Brother* 46), provide scenes which he describes in “*Ogasawara Kikô*” (“Ogasawara Travelogue”). This was later rewritten and renamed “*Kikô Danpen*” (Travelogue Tidbits), publication date also unknown.

hospitalized earlier, on May 24, and denied any visitors until summer (Etô, *Kobayashi* 25).

3.1.1.3 Tominaga's Illness and Yasuko (Summer)

Kobayashi began to take an interest in Yasuko, after she and Nakahara moved early in May from Nakano to Kôenji, nearer to Kobayashi's. Takamizawa describes Nakahara's early visits:

At nights, if he was home, [Hideo] merely spent the time drinking and loudly debating with three or four young writer friends.⁸ In this group, a small, pale-faced young man with his hair cut "bowl style" to his eyebrows joined the literary coterie. This lad was a heavy drinker Spotting our tortoise-shell cat, he would yell out, "Hey, philosopher!" (*My Brother* 45).

Takamizawa adds that: "Two or three times, he [Nakahara] brought a beautiful girl She had her hair cut bowl-style at her forehead like Nakahara's, and her face seemed overly large" (*My Brother* 45).

Kobayashi was attracted to her: "Soon after meeting Nakahara, Kobayashi fell for his lover" (Aoki, ed., "Nakahara" 60). One day Kobayashi found her alone:

In July, when Nakahara had returned to his hometown, Hideo paid Yasuko a visit ... and as she served him tea, he tried to kiss her on the cheek. This apparently was the beginning of their relationship behind Nakahara's back. Nakahara had been neglecting her, leaving her alone at home. When Kobayashi happened to visit and behaved tenderly

⁸ The drinking party no doubt included members of *Yamamayu* (started in December) such as Ishimaru Shigeji and Nagai Tatsuo, who distinctly remembers visiting the house (interview with Nagai, 1988).

towards her, this slowly drew her to Hideo. (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 50-51).

Finally, by that August, he had gained her affection, successfully maneuvered her away from Nakahara while the latter was once again visiting his hometown. Kobayashi told her then, “Your thoughts are like Nakahara’s but your feelings are like mine” (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 53). He does not explain this.

Kobayashi had not forgotten the bedridden Tominaga, whom he visited at his home near Shibuya Station (“Memories of Tominaga Tarô,” KHZ-A 13: 188).

One summer day in the afternoon I visited him on his sick bed. He was lying on his stomach having a meal. I was almost frightened when he turned to me with his wood-worm-like, long-hair hanging down. He appeared like a sick child, his eyes with black circles and large as eye-glasses. However, this impression soon left me. Why? Why wasn’t I aware of his approaching death? I still ask myself this question. (“Rimbaud III” KHZ-A 15: 117)

3.1.2 Second Semester (September 1925 to March 1926)

In the fall semester, Kobayashi is described as a strange fellow in behavior as well in attire. He read Baudelaire and other writers, including Valéry, and planned to take a Rimbaud-type voyage into nature with Yasuko. He fell ill as Tominaga lay dying in November.

3.1.2.1 The “Strange” Kobayashi and Tatsuno Sensei ⁹

Kon Hidemi ¹⁰ describes Kobayashi’s odd appearance that September in the French Section Research Room (Kon had been sick in the first session):

Suddenly someone in a black suit entered the French Section Research Room and I stood up to greet him ... His black suit was worn out, and both coat pockets were stuffed to the seams ... [with] a coverless magazine and a toilet kit or something. The front of his hat had a hole from which locks of hair stuck out He rarely went to the barber’s because his hair hung down long from behind his hat as well (Kon, “Youth” 96)

He came to Kon’s table and pulled at the cover of the book. “So you were reading the book by Baudelaire. I was looking for it” (Kon, “Youth” 97).

Kobayashi then lectured to him in a coarse voice on the topic of French and Japanese literature, which Kon realized that he had memorized from an article in the ruffled magazine. The black suit, tie and hat of Kobayashi¹¹ blended in with the darkness of the room in a make-shift building (Kon, “Youth” 96).¹²

⁹ Tatsuno Yutaka (1888-1964) studied in France, started courses in French literature at Tokyo Imperial University, and in 1929 completed his doctoral dissertation, “*Bôdereru Kenkyû Josetsu* [Introduction to Research on Baudelaire].”

¹⁰ Kon Hidemi (1903-1988) was a critic and writer and Kobayashi’s lifetime friend. In the postwar era, he continued to write prolifically and won the Naoki Literary Award in 1950. He headed the new Cultural Department of the Ministry of Education in 1968.

¹¹ Nishimura explains that Kobayashi’s adaptation of dandyism expressed stoicism (*My Cousin* 176-77). It was his usual black suit (given to him by a student that he tutored) that became a telltale sign of Kobayashi on campus as he always walked, looking straight ahead deep in thought, rarely greeting anyone. The black suit, moreover, clashed in color with the reddish-brown shoes that Tatsuno *sensei* had given him (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 32).

¹² It was a make-shift wooden barrack temporarily built after the earthquake of 1923 (Nakajima 103). One student describes the building as the worst he had ever seen, used by the upper-classmates and the eleven freshmen in the French Section.

In that temporary building, Kobayashi attended only one class, Albert Claude's on the dramatist Racine (1639-99), and occasionally used the research room. Otherwise, he studied by visiting Tatsuno *sensei's* house, where he discussed and borrowed books (Nakajima 103). From these, he studied such authors as the classicizing critic Anatole France.

Kobayashi left hair, dandruff and cigarette ashes between the pages of books he borrowed, a sign that he had thoroughly read the book. When Tatsuno *sensei* began to shake them loose as he held the books out the window, Kobayashi began to intentionally fill the books with hair, dandruff and cigarette ash to impress his *sensei* that he had read the books well. However, one day Tatsuno *sensei* reprimanded him, "Don't you take a bath even once a month!" ("About Valéry" KHZ-A 4: 45-46).

Kobayashi borrowed all the works of Valéry (1871-1945) that *sensei* had in his library, which were "extremely difficult" to find after the earthquake fire that destroyed the university library ("My University Days" KHZ-A 9: 239).

3.1.2.2 Kobayashi's Intensive Reading: Valéry

Kobayashi considered his readings of Valéry as another "event," but Shimizu Takayoshi doubts that Kobayashi had yet grasped the depth of Valéry.¹³ Also his French was still quite limited (Shimizu Tôru 217) for such difficult works as Valéry's *Introduction à la methode de Leonard de Vinci* [*Introduction to the Method of Leonardo da Vinci*] (1895).¹⁴ Tatsuno *sensei*

¹³ One of his main works, *Variété*, for example, was not published until June 1924, which gave Kobayashi less than two years to read it by his second year (Shimizu Takayoshi, *Symbolism* 38).

¹⁴ Valéry explains that da Vinci was guided not by "inspiration" but by technical problems and wisdom. Thus, he stresses the verb "construct" rather than "create" for artistic creation by using all the elements at the disposal of everyone (Fowlie, *Critic* 21).

remarked, “It’s the blind leading the blind,” when he heard that Kobayashi, after a quick review of French grammar, discussed and used [Valéry’s book] as a textbook to home-tutor four or five students (“About Valéry” KHZ-A 4: 44).¹⁵

Some years later, Kobayashi explained that he never did really value Valéry’s poetry but only his criticism:

I was possessed by Baudelaire and Rimbaud, but not at all interested in the poetry of Valéry. At the time I had just started reading Mallarmé’s poems which I found more invigorating, but I found Valéry’s criticism quite captivating, because *it dashed to pieces the notion of thesis-writing that I had held to*. For the first time, I realized the illusions which theories possessed. (“*Valéry no Koto* [About Valéry]” KHZ-A 4: 44) (My italics.)

Kobayashi adopted Valéry’s criticism of the “vain knowledge of methodologies” structured on the deceptions of words and language. This, claims Tsunekawa (132), became Kobayashi’s guiding principle in his writings throughout his life. Kobayashi writes that Valéry saw the deeper problem of the illusions inherent in accurate language: “The most important problem that he revealed is that of evil (*aku*). That is, the destiny of human knowledge (*ningen chisei no shukumei*) ... But I [Kobayashi] have neither the courage nor the confidence to write clearly and simply on this matter” (“About Valéry,” KHZ-A 4: 45).

Kobayashi also expressed interest in Valéry’s view of human consciousness as possessed an endless dual role: the search for an inward-directed self-consciousness and the desire for an outward-directed

¹⁵ Tsunekawa Kunio notes the errors in Kobayashi’s translation of Valéry’s “*Monsieur Teste*” in 1932, which Kobayashi translated without resource material, as merely a means to read the original (Tsunekawa 128).

active life. Kobayashi commented that Valéry relied more on an infinite power of the Mind¹⁶ than did Mallarmé who emphasized the Word (“About Valéry” KHZ-A 4: 44).

3.1.2.3 Illnesses of Both Tominaga and Kobayashi (November)

The desire for an “outer active life” is evident in Kobayashi’s decision to take a trip to Ôshima in October with Yasuko. When she failed to meet him for the trip, however, he left alone for Ôshima Island; and, feeling devastated, considered suicide for a second time.¹⁷ By the end of the month, Kobayashi wrote Nakahara a letter, terminating their friendship (Etô, *Kobayashi* 28), perhaps thinking that Nakahara had reclaimed Yasuko.

That was far from the case. Nakahara was visiting Tominaga in his sick bed and complaining about Kobayashi: “That fellow Kobayashi irritates people with his aberrant life style. So look what happened” (Etô, *Kobayashi* 28). Undoubtedly it pained Tominaga to listen, but Nakahara, a new-comer in Tokyo, had no one else to confide in. Finally, Tominaga reached his physical limits and fell critically ill on November 5.

Kobayashi too had fallen seriously ill that early November. Thoughts of suicide and his continued distress over Yasuko led to an operation for twisted intestines. He sent a card explaining his hospitalization to Tominaga but, preoccupied with only his own pain after the operation, Kobayashi was unaware of Tominaga’s dire condition. Tominaga tried to reply,

¹⁶ Valéry’s second short treatise, *Soiree avec monsieur Teste* (1896) depicts Valéry’s search for pure intelligence.

¹⁷ The first time occurred in higher school after suffering from debt, his mother’s illness, and his own illness.

“Your postcard surprised me,” but passed away on November 12 without completing it (KHZ-A 13:188).

Yasuko heard that Kobayashi was dying¹⁸ and visited him at Izumibashi Hospital in Kyôbashi,¹⁹ when she explained the situation. On the day of the Ôshima trip, she had been delayed by Nakahara and missed Kobayashi, arriving an hour late at the station. Hearing her explanation, Kobayashi reconciled with her, inviting her to live with him from the end of November, which she agreed to. Recovering from his operation, he set up a small household near the Mabashi home on the other side of Kôenji Station by selling the family belongings to the very last item, “even [our father’s] old tools” (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 46-47).

At Tominaga’s funeral Kobayashi read the eulogy.²⁰ He describes his friend:

Slightly inclining his beautiful face tinted with the rouge of exhaustion, breathing in the twilight with his eyes as raw as fresh oysters, the naked body of Tominaga, ... glides over the white dusty pavement. “I [Tominaga] received weariness like a flower.”

The “weariness like a flower” ends a life of “a sincere truth”:

No matter how short a life may be, a sincere truth that lives through it always possesses an absolute [H]e was truly the only poet this contemptibly lowly modern Japan has ever produced. (trans. Hirata, 212; KHZ-A 1:100)

Kobayashi wrote some years later:

¹⁸ Hasegawa Yasuko, *Never* 67.

¹⁹ Takamizawa calls it “a charity hospital in Izumibashi” (*My Brother* 46).

²⁰ Published in *Yamamayu* in November 1926; KHZ-A 1:100.

I burned a copy of this [translation of “A Season of Hell” in the coffin] when Tominaga Tarô died He had a lung illness and was shut up near the ocean. He needed a collection of poems and so he “escaped” [Katase Town] by going home I walked with him in the crowd, and thinking back, I had helped him a great deal in his state. I remember him as a wandering poet. (Preface to his translation of “Season in Hell,” October 1930)

3.1.2.4 The Illness of Yasuko (From November)

After the funeral, illnesses preoccupied Kobayashi: his own, his mother's, and then Yasuko's. Yasuko's serious illness is described by Takamizawa on one of her early visits to their home nearby:

She [Yasuko] always sat formally in one spot on a knee blanket spread on a straw mat. She sat motionless. Our talk was routine, but I was shocked at the disarray of the house. At the entrance, rice bowls, just eaten out of, were stacked high. The room had books, magazines, written manuscripts, scraps of paper and newspapers scattered about, leaving almost nowhere to walk. The alcove served as a closet, with shirts, clothing and odds-and-ends piled up high. The wooden floor of the alcove, where it was visible, had layers of dust that could be seen even from a distance. (*My Brother* 55)

Shirasu places the blame for her illness on Kobayashi's “viciously aggressive” (*hageshii*) traits, not on any weakness of Yasuko.²¹ Indeed Aoyama testifies that he had never met a woman like her before, who talked as an equal to the likes of Nakahara

²¹ Shirasu suggests that Yasuko developed this illness around November when Kobayashi entered her life and recovered from it soon after Kobayashi left her some 2 1/2 years later. (Interview with Shirasu, May 1988) Kon comments that Kobayashi's “viciously aggressive” traits would have made most girls ill (Kon, “Lifetime Friends” 112).

without backing down and tiring, no matter what the topic. Yasuko, he insists, had a “very strong personality” (Aoyama, *Collected* 357).²²

A few months later, in February, no longer able to care for her adequately, Kobayashi returned with Yasuko to live with his mother and sister Junko at the Mabashi house. Takamizawa explains simply that “Yasuko’s illness [also] hampered his work, so he decided to live with us” (*My Brother* 55), but the situation was far more serious.²³ With no improvement in Yasuko’s health,²⁴ the pair moved again (for the third time) to Kamakura in May in the spring, hoping the benign climate would cure her. He also explained the situation with Yasuko to Tatsuno *sensei* around this time.²⁵

In spite of the turmoil in his life at the end of his freshman year (March 1926), he managed to publish his first two articles in the major literary magazine *Bungei Shunjū*: “*Satō Haruo no Jirenma* (Dilemma of Satō Haruo)” (February 1926) and “*Seikaku no Kiseki* (Miracle of Personality)” (March 1926). The first includes the statement, “The existence of all geniuses amounts to an irony in society” (KHZ-A 1: 79); and the second, “For an artist, human character (*seikaku*) means his actions, not his psychology (*shinri*)” (KHZ-A 1:83). Both indicate an interest in the “outer life” that contrasts with the inner gloom of his first two reminiscences: the first centered on death in

²² Takamizawa describes her unusual and eccentric manners: “not in the least sexy” and without the “soft, gentle touch.” “She stood tall and bony, and though she was pretty, she spoke rudely and wore strange clothes” (*My Brother* 50).

²³ Nakahara would visit in Kobayashi’s absence and beat her on occasion, one time so severely that her head went through the window (Hasegawa Yasuko, *Never* 71).

²⁴ Kobayashi’s mother changed her name to Sakiko, hoping this would change her omen, but Yasuko rarely left her room, where she spent her time arguing with Kobayashi (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 55).

²⁵ Hideo told Tatsuno *sensei*, sometime between late November 1925 and early 1926: “I have left home to live with a girl. I need to make a living, so I can’t attend your lectures.” To this, the professor replied, “If you don’t attend classes, I shall have no way of grading you, so just take a test.” Hideo took the test, and Professor Tatsuno said, “If you know this much, you don’t need to attend classes” (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 64).

“Suicide of the Octopus” (1922), the second, on an entrapped consciousness in “One Brain” (1924).

3.2 The Second Year (April 1926 – March 1927)

Other writings in 1926 are important for this study of Kobayashi’s life and works: two by Kobayashi and one by Nakahara. They were Kobayashi’s test-report on Mallarmé (probably in the first semester), his study on Rimbaud (October 1926), and Nakahara’s notable poem “*Asa no Uta*” (“The Morning Song”), which established Nakahara as a new poet par excellence.²⁶

3.2.1 Kobayashi’s Test-Report on Mallarmé (Spring 1926)

Two pieces of writing established Kobayashi at Tokyo Imperial University as an extraordinary student. Kon, a good friend of Kobayashi by the second year, explains that only Kobayashi could express Symbolist writings so well in his own words (“*Wakime mo Furanu* [Without a Sideways Glance]” 25). Another classmate, Sato, concurs that only such a person as Kobayashi, “a born writer ... [who] talked only about literary-arts,” could root Symbolism in Japanese soil (Sato Masaaki, 47). Others studied French literature only as the latest Western fad, while actually seeking careers leading to wealth and success. The story of Kobayashi’s response to the first test of Suzuki *sensei*²⁷ has been told above (see Introduction). Suzuki *sensei*, unable to confirm Kobayashi’s capability, since he never attended his class, had no other recourse but to fail him. Suzuki *sensei* was forced to reconsider

²⁶ Written in May 1926 but not published until 1928.

²⁷ Suzuki Shintarô (1895-1970) studied French Symbolism. He was promoted to Assistant Professor in 1931 based on his study on Mallarmé.

when he saw Kobayashi's second test-report. This, on Mallarmé's "*Le Démon de L'Analogie* (The Demon of Analogy)" (1864) impressed Suzuki (Suzuki Shintarô 94) as more convincing than Albert Thibaudet's 1910 thesis on Mallarmé (Suzuki Shintarô 95).

What amazed Suzuki was Kobayashi's ability to read Mallarmé, a difficult writer who hinted between the lines and compelled his readers to read his poems over and over again. Whereas Baudelaire and Rimbaud's "concern was with the mystery of life; [Mallarmé's] was almost exclusively with the mystery of language"; he did not "wish to express any emotional experience as others did" (Hackett, xxiv). This "mystery" of Mallarmé made him the most "spiritual" French poet, who developed Baudelaire's idea of *correspondances* (of symbolic language) to an almost sacred view of the poetic act, as almost a religious art (Broome and Graham 3-4). Kobayashi wrote on the effects of supernatural instincts on Mallarmé's writings, using Bergson's notion of "false recognition" (*giji kioku*) to explain Mallarmé's last section beginning with: "The unavoidable injection of the transcending nature (*Mais où s'installe l'irrécusable intervention du surnaturel, ...*)." From here, he proceeded to interpret Mallarmé's *daemon* (Suzuki Shintarô 95).

3.2.2 Studying Rimbaud

That fall Tatsuno *sensei* acknowledged Kobayashi's critical essay, "*Jinsei Shakudanka* ["Arthur Rimbaud, Life's Dogmatist"] as the best student research paper.²⁸ In this essay Kobayashi discusses the

²⁸ "*Shakudan*" means to "cut out" everything, including aestheticism and poetry, which finally leaves only one's life in the real world (Shimizu, *Course* 59). For the circumstances of the essay on Rimbaud, in October 1926, see the article by Nakajima (103)

“self-awareness” of destiny (fate) (*shukumei*)²⁹ as an eternal process that “cannot be grasped in total” (Muramatsu 100).³⁰ One’s destiny is never fully comprehended intellectually but better “heard” as a footstep.

All works of genius have hidden within them a self-awareness that is basically eternal, and cannot be grasped in total. We hear it ... as a continuous tune at the instant when we are unable to determine its source. We hear it as a footstep of destiny. For a great poet, destiny means none other than pure consciousness. He[Rimbaud] both discovered it and lost it, this lone tune serving as the source for life. (Muramatsu 100)

For Rimbaud, “Destiny (fate) is nothing more than pure consciousness” (“Rimbaud I” KHZ-A 1), which is traced by Kobayashi to the archetype of man’s individuality. He describes Rimbaud’s particular individuality and “destiny” in terms of, “The shooting star, while glittering with a strange human-hatred”³¹ (“Rimbaud I” KHZ-A 1: 85; Muramatsu 100-01).

Kobayashi’s interest was shifting between Baudelaire and Rimbaud, which may be explained by his reading of Bergson at this time. Kobayashi had probably read most of Bergson’s works by the second semester, commenting later that he was “enamored by Bergson” (KHZ-A 5: 72).³² H.

²⁹ He emphasizes the key word *shukumei* (“destiny”) in this essay more than in an essay the following year, “Muses and Destiny—Akutagawa” (Sept. 1927) or his major essay two years later, “Various Patterns” (Oct. 1929).

³⁰ Muramatsu Takeshi (1929). Professor at Tsukuba University, scholar of comparative cultures, French literature, and international politics.

³¹ A misanthropy (“human-hatred”) directed at the bourgeoisie or the “elite” (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 66-67).

³² Kobayashi describes reading Bergson in university and compares him with Alain (1868-1951) in “*Aran no Koto* [About Alain],” 1934.

Wilden offers a convenient summary of Bergson³³ that partially explains this change in Kobayashi.

Since the universe is becoming, our knowledge of it can only be imperfect. Only the consciousness (that depends on intuition) can direct our attention to that world in process of becoming However, the human mind tends to shape *the changing into unchanging concepts and knowledge*. Thus, humankind as a “living creative evolution,” requires perception of life in change, not matter or the thinking mind [that forms concepts and knowledge] (12-14). (My italics.)

He was also reading Alain, the pen-name of Émile-Auguste Chantier (1868-1951), who attempted the opposite approach to Bergson: “Bergson first captured the difficult-to-grasp idea of life (*seimei*) and destroyed the facile-to-grasp idea of theories (*riron*)” Alain first captured the facile-to-grasp idea, then attempted to rule over the difficult-to-grasp life (KHZ-A 5: 73).

3.2.3 Début of Nakahara as a Symbolist

Kobayashi had successfully converted Nakahara to Symbolism in August 1925 which led to his writing his first major poem, the fourteen-line “*Asa no Uta*” (“Morning Song”) in May 1926.³⁴ This was six months after Kobayashi had stolen Yasuko from him and unknowingly, Akiyama Shun suggests, made a poet of him: the lost love “left an emptiness (*ana*) in him ... deep and dark. Something happened inside him” (Akiyama, “Nakahara” 14-15). The poem formed the basis for Nakahara’s later poetry and, Akiyama

³³ In *Henri Bergson, The Philosophy of Change* (1911), summarizing Bergson’s third book, *L’Évolution créatrice* [*Creative Evolution*], 1907).

³⁴ The poem depicts an awareness of his “riding the wind, passing over the forest, parting from the banks (*dote*), and soaring for the sky” (Aoki ed., “Nakahara” 73).

claims, marked the beginning of modern Japanese poetry (Akiyama, “Nakahara” 78-79).

The poem represented Nakahara’s “experiments in Symbolism” (Thunman 2). That is, Nakahara follows the French Symbolists closely, concentrating on the poet’s self-consciousness and subjectivity: “As a poetic method, it uses suggestion, while seeing a symbol for the soul in nature” (Thunman 85). Thunman claims that Nakahara “fought all his life” to answer such questions as “what relation must exist between subjectivity and the objective world.” He was a solitary poet, very sensitive to changing trends in poetical circles, and struggling all his life with the changes (Thunman 20).

3.3 Last Year in University (April 1927 – March 1928)

In his third year, mass arrests of communists and left-wing sympathizers took place on campus as Japan leaned further toward totalitarianism, but Kobayashi appeared more arrested by his own concerns.³⁵ He needed to care for Yasuko in her illness, submit a graduation thesis by December, and to make a living for two, as he moved a fifth time and sixth time with Yasuko. In the meantime, Kobayashi wearied of Rimbaud’s emphasis on life in the outer world and partially drifted back to Baudelaire’s stress on the inner world.

3.3.1 The First Semester (April to August 1927)

While Kobayashi cared for Yasuko, he was also translating a series on Rimbaud. He struggled with his French, which Kon considered

³⁵ “He [Kobayashi] is too busy dealing with himself to bother with other people’s affairs. In this sense he is a complete egoist” (qtd. Nakamura Mitsuo; trans. Hirata, *Seduction* 214).

inadequate.³⁶ The Rimbaud series was published for a total of eight months from July 1927 through March 1928, the end of his third and last year in university.

3.3.1.1 Caring for Yasuko (Summer 1927)

In August, Kobayashi requested Nakahara to help with Yasuko's condition by his visiting her in Zushi town: "I met Nakahara after [some two years] who impressed me as a passionate fellow. We three cooperated, and formed a strange triangle (a cooperation mixed with mutual hate)" (Nakahara, "Reminiscences"; KHZ-A 17: 123).³⁷

But Kobayashi did not relinquish his care for Yasuko in the summer of 1927.

I [Kobayashi] took her [Yasuko] to Aoyama Brain Neurology Hospital of Dr. Saitô Mokichi for a checkup. I went with an introductory letter from Tatsuno sensei one warm day after Akutagawa's suicide [July 27, 1927]. I had been there many times, each time receiving some medication He recommended that she live a quiet life, taking in nourishing food, such as eggs and eel. (qtd. in Gunji 67)

Kobayashi followed the doctor's instructions, met Yasuko's demands, and paid the hospital bills (which cost him half of his monthly income).³⁸

³⁶ Kon suggests that Kobayashi looked up each word, working in a state of deep concentration as if possessed by Rimbaud, which explains Kobayashi's ability to translate and understand Rimbaud with such ingenuity ("Lifetime Friends" 112).

³⁷ "It is despicable to go and meet a dried-up love. But to talk to a dried-up love might be invigorating. I don't think that renewing this association will be so distasteful," Nakahara wrote about his meeting them in Zushi on August 22 on this one occasion. Nakahara's letters from October reveal that he often met Kobayashi, and Yasuko as well, after Kobayashi returned to Tokyo (Etô, *Kobayashi* 42).

³⁸ "I wanted her to settle down, so I followed the doctor's instructions and tried to satisfy her demands I knew that I couldn't pay the bills for such a well-known hospital The cost was discounted to a reasonable amount, since [Tatsuno sensei] had referred me there" (qtd. in Gunji 67).

Kobayashi writes that jobs were plentiful for a person like himself, so money was not his main concern.³⁹

Few could understand how intensely focused Kobayashi could be. “Kobayashi lived in a one-dimensioned world, that of literature and nothing else. No matter how poor, he merely concentrated on literature, doing and thinking about what he enjoyed doing most” (Nagai, “Ogasawara” 191). He often forgot about money matters.⁴⁰

3.3.1.2 Kobayashi the Thinker

By his third year, Kobayashi’s depth and creativity were far in advance of others, Kon attests:

He spent his life in thinking and rethinking until he comprehended his thoughts in depth It is unimaginable how much he thought just to write one sentence and reconsidered his ideas before he completed his writing. How much effort he put in and how much he read went beyond a sane person’s endeavor. I knew of no other person who used his own head and heart without borrowing from others. (Kon, “Lifetime Friends” 110)

According to Nakajima Kenzô’s diary entry for October 27, 1927, Kobayashi intended to write a reminiscence, “Suicide of *Non-être*.” He recorded that

³⁹ Kobayashi tutored Kawakami and others, and lived frugally. “I paid him ten yen a month, about half of his living costs then,” writes Kawakami. He also saved costs on food. When cucumbers were cheap he ate them for three meals a day: “Cucumbers are only seven for ten *sen*” (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 31). “If I ran out of money, I was able to translate for 25 *sen* a page on such as Maupassant or Flaubert under another person’s name ... I taught French using Valéry’s poems as reading material that I myself did not understand. I also began to teach French to some other new writers writing for *Bungei Shunjû* (“*Bungei Shunjû to Watashi* [*Bungei Shunjû* and I]” KHZ-A 21: 133).

⁴⁰ At times, Kobayashi lived in extreme poverty, going without eating for a few days. “[Kobayashi] in a black suit came bursting into the classroom. ‘Hey, Tatsuno, lend me money!’ Tatsuno replied, ‘I don’t have much, but remember that I’m your *sensei*!’” Tatsuno lent him ten yen. [Kobayashi] left quietly” (Kon, “Lifetime Friends” 111).

“Kobayashi felt pressed to write something, but he preferred to be totally independent” (qtd. in Gunji 67). Evidently, he never wrote this piece, influenced by his reading of three great writers, Dostoevsky, Balzac (1799-1850) and Flaubert (1821-1881)⁴¹ in addition to Symbolist writers. The three are later included in the historical perspective in “*Shishôsetsuron* [Discussions of the I-Novel]” (1935), a creative work itself.

3.3.2 The Second Semester (October 1927 - March 1928)

Hideo moved a fifth time with Yasuko to Shirokane-dai near Kawakami’s home in October. In November, Kobayashi wrote on Baudelaire, a change from Rimbaud, for the French Section Journal, and then submitted his graduation thesis in December. They moved a sixth time in February 1928 to Yato, in Higashi Nakano.⁴² Nakahara lived nearby.

3.3.2.1 Kobayashi Moves to Tokyo

Among several reasons for Kobayashi’s return to Shirokane-dai, the presence of Kawakami looms as most important (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 57). He had graduated, had no family responsibilities, served as a listener, and inspired him. Kawakami recalls the severity of Yasuko’s illness when she visited him with Kobayashi:

She [asked] which ... strand of straw her kimono sleeve touched or the number of rattles he [Kobayashi] heard as he closed the sliding shutters. He had to answer the precise

⁴¹ Kobayashi said, “Dostoevsky knows how to express the sudden changes in the environment, which is his uniqueness. He also said, “Balzac writes following his own reasoning Although Balzac writes by thinking, Flaubert writes by looking.” I listened to Kobayashi’s notion of “*non être*” [‘non-existence’ or ‘non-being’] ... (qtd. in Gunji 68).

⁴² See Appendix A.5.3.2, Tokyo and Kamakura, showing the Yato house in the “Cultural Village” called *Bunka Mura*. See Appendix A.5.4.2, Rental House After Kamakura.

number she had counted in her mind. Listening to their conversation, I felt she spoke like the Goddess of Beauty, or Venus. (qtd. in Etô, *Kobayashi* 36) ⁴³

Kobayashi arranged for Kawakami to look after her when he went out to tutor and picked her up on his return. On leaving, Kobayashi had to help Yasuko put on her shoes, as she feared contamination. Or she fell into hysterical fits without explanation. Once, as they walked the street, Yasuko pushed him toward an oncoming trolley-car, which nearly killed him (Hasegawa Yasuko, *Never* 89). Deeply troubled, Kobayashi sought a listener, visiting Kawakami's home often from the fall of 1927 (Etô, *Kobayashi* 16).⁴⁴

3.3.2.2 Return to Baudelaire (November)

In November 1927, Kobayashi published “*Aku no Hana’ Ichimen*” (“One Aspect of ‘The Flowers of Evil’”) in the French Section journal (Issue Three) (KHZ-A 1:120). He describes two dimensions: “one [Baudelaire aspect] was inside the ‘bubble’ as a performer, and the other [Rimbaud aspect] remained outside the bubble” serving as the audience. This renewed interest in Baudelaire continued into 1928 when Kobayashi began to translate “The Biography of Charles Baudelaire”; it still influenced him in 1929 when Kobayashi quoted Baudelaire rather than Rimbaud in “Various Patterns” (Awazu “Symbolism” 35).

The critic Awazu Norio⁴⁵ suggests that, after his excruciating life with Yasuko, Kobayashi may have reached his limits of leading a

⁴³ At home, Yasuko sat on a tiger hide brought by Kobayashi's father from abroad. She kept everyone at a distance and asked numerous questions, including whether “piss” was filthy. Yasuko feared contamination and made Kobayashi do the housework, including the dirty dishes, tea cups and small dishes, all piled high in the kitchen basin (Etô, *Kobayashi* 37).

⁴⁴ Now 5-Chôme, Gotanda; see Appendix A.5.3.1: Sasabe's Map.

⁴⁵ Awazu Norio (1927-). Professor at Hosei University, literary critic and scholar of French literature.

Rimbaud-type existence and sought a return to Baudelaire's life of the consciousness (35). But Kobayashi continued to waver between Baudelaire (inner consciousness) and Rimbaud (outer realms). Chiba Sen'ichi⁴⁶ comments on this in pointing to a resurgence of Kobayashi's interest in Rimbaud in "Rimbaud II," in October 1930 (KHZ-A 2:146-151).

Awazu also alludes to the problem of the direction of civilization, an idea which is made clear only in his postwar writings. Another sentiment was Kobayashi's idea of a *voyant* (a seer or prophet), summarized by Chiba in the statement, "A poet is essentially a critic of civilization, and poetry must be a world judge" ("Experience" 87). (See chapters 7-9 for Kobayashi's views.)

3.3.2.3 Three Months Before Graduation: Ôoka Shôhei Meets Kobayashi

Kobayashi taught Ôoka Shôhei for ten yen a month using university textbooks. Ôoka, then a high school student, found the lessons difficult, but he also thought Kobayashi's translations bordered on the ridiculous, as indicated by his translation of the title, *Désespoir d'une vieille* as "*Baba no zetsubô* [The Despair of the Aged Crone]⁴⁷." This was to be expected, however, since all in Tatsuno's Research Room had learned French through a direct method of translation.⁴⁸ Despite Ôoka's dissatisfaction with Kobayashi's French lessons, he was nonetheless deeply impressed by Kobayashi's vast knowledge and his articles.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Chiba Sen'ichi (1930-). Professor at Hokkai Gakuen University, scholar of modern Japanese literature, comparative literature, and modern poetry.

⁴⁷ For example, an alternative, more literary translation might be "*Rôfujin no nageki* [Lament of an Elderly Lady]."

⁴⁸ Ôoka desired the more descriptive, literary French taught at a proper French language school (Ôoka, "Taught" 91).

⁴⁹ They included "Dilemma of Satô Haruo" (February 1926) and "Akutagawa Ryûnôsuke's 'Muses and Destiny'" (September, 1927) which appeared in *Bungei Shunjû*. "Arthur Rimbaud, Life's Dogmatist" (October, 1926) and "One Aspect of 'The Flowers of Evil'" (November, 1926), were also published in the French Section Research Journal of Tokyo Imperial University (Ôoka, "Taught" 89).

Ôoka began to understand that his higher-school teacher at Seijo Gakuin High School had been right: “Kobayashi is the sole critic in Japan” (Tominaga, “Circumstances” 36). This became evident to him as Kobayashi discussed Rimbaud, Baudelaire and French philosophers with Ôoka late into the night after his French lessons, partly to avoid going home to Yasuko.⁵⁰ Ôoka considers those first three or four months with Kobayashi as the most memorable ones of his lifetime. Through him, he met Nakahara and Yasuko, then his elders, such as Kon Hidemi, Nakayama Kenzô, and Sato Shôhei. Particularly unforgettable were his times with the normally quiet Nakahara, who invariably attacked people, both verbally and physically, whenever he became drunk.

3.3.2.4 Graduation (March 1928)

“Arthur Rimbaud, Life’s Dogmatist,” translated into French, was submitted with some revisions as his graduation thesis in December.⁵¹ It was subsequently published under the title of “Rimbaud I,” (1926).⁵²

Kobayashi faced an hour-long oral on his thesis, conducted in French by Albert Claude, but it lasted only a few minutes (Tatsuno 402-03). He utterly failed to understand the questions or respond in French.⁵³ He then

⁵⁰ Then he added a second lesson at Kobayashi’s place in Yato, which turned out to be a drinking spree when Nakahara and Yasuko joined them (Ôoka, “Soba Shop” 90).

⁵¹ Equivalent to a master’s thesis today.

⁵² Muramatsu Takeshi describes a change of emphasis in Kobayashi’s writings on Rimbaud. The first article, “Rimbaud I” (published in the French Section journal in 1926) depicts Rimbaud as a passionate young lad, but the version of this article translated into French in 1927 presents Rimbaud as an emotionally wounded poet, reflecting the relationship to Yasuko. In the 1930 article, “Rimbaud II” is portrayed as a man who had “reached his limits” and Kobayashi finds other writers more compatible with his way of life (Muramatsu 102).

⁵³ “When and where was Rimbaud born?” (Silence) / ‘Isn’t your thesis on Rimbaud?’ (Silence) / ‘Do you speak any French?’ / ‘Well ... only a little.’ / ‘What is Rimbaud’s best work?’ / ‘Rimbaud ... Rimbaud. A great poet.’” (Naitô 49).

stood up, bowed and requested in Japanese, “Let me graduate” (Tatsuno 402-03), after which Tatsuno *sensei* said to M. Albert: “What he knows, he knows well. What he doesn’t know, he doesn’t know at all. This is a sign of a genius, so we ought to let him graduate” (Naitô 49).

Kobayashi appeared at the Farewell Party of the French Literature Section, where he “looked like a ‘half-beast’ [decadent] straying in” (Nakajima’s entry on February 25, 1928, qtd. in Gunji 68). He attended perhaps in gratitude to Tatsuno *sensei*, who had paid his tuition fees for three years (Shirasu, “Father” KHZ-A Bekkan II: 188). He also reluctantly attended his graduation ceremony on March 1928 but only to please his mother.

Kobayashi had at long last graduated from Tokyo Imperial University. He had endured seven years of hardship since his higher school days, including his father’s death, financial hardship, and illnesses in the family. The two-and-a-half years of his “season in hell” with Yasuko were coming to an end.

Chapter 4

Year in Kansai (Spring 1928 - Spring 1929)

4.0 Introduction

Kobayashi suddenly left Yasuko in spring 1928, without telling his friends in Tokyo. He took refuge in the Kansai region, where his two uncles lived as well as the writer Shiga Naoya. Gunji Katsuyoshi¹ calls this year in Kansai a period of self-awareness for Kobayashi (38), when he changed from a decadent graduate to a writer determined to make good in society. The turnabout occurred during his “flight” (65), which Powell notes as an ancient tradition, a conduct not entirely new in Japan:

In traditional Japanese thought, mainly due to the influence of Buddhism, isolation, flight and reclusiveness are almost synonymous with purity and stability... . [A] place full of evil and suffering ... suggests that peace of mind can be regained only by the abandonment of worldly affairs. (Powell 45-6)

These “recluses,” however, did not live alone but “drank sake with others ... visited their fellows and traveled with them” (Powell 46), which activities typified Kobayashi’s “flight” in Kansai. Yet the word “flight” is not entirely appropriate, since the period was also for Kobayashi one of personal renewal. After listening to Kobayashi, Gunji wrote that “I definitely wanted to rebuff (*kyozetsu*) stories of his period of wandering” (*Reminiscences* 72). More recently Nishimura explains the year as one that “gave birth to a new life” (*Vita nova*) (*My Cousin* 176).

¹ Gunji Katsuyoshi was a former editor of *Bungei Shunjū*, and in charge of Kobayashi’s manuscripts for thirty years. He lived in Kamakura, traveled with and talked to Kobayashi in 1963 about his Kansai days as well as numerous other matters.

4.1 In Osaka and Kyoto (April 1928)

Gunji's research and interviews (published 1993) and the accounts of Kobayashi's cousin Nishimura Kôji (1996) fill in important gaps during and after the eight pieces of Kansai correspondence that Takamizawa received from Kobayashi.² These three sources provide deep insights into Kobayashi's early anguish, his stay in Osaka, his study of Buddhism, and his recovery in Nara. He shows a vigor in his translation work in May or June, and has thoughts of writing "something big" in July.

4.1.1 From Osaka: Letters to Takamizawa³

In the first letter to his sister,⁴ Hideo reports that he is safe in the Kansai (Osaka) area, so she (Junko) and their mother should not worry. Licking his wounds, he stayed at the temple from where he wrote his letter for probably ten to eleven days (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 71).⁵ He was deeply disturbed, commenting that "I suffered" and "god will punish me."

I finally had to escape, not because of a whim or anything like that — I couldn't help myself. I think you know how much I have suffered, at least to the degree that you can get a faint veiled glimpse. I, in fact, tried to the utmost of my power. What foolish suffering it was! I hope that all will end now... .

² See Appendix A.5.5.1, Takamizawa Collection of Letters.

³ The full translations of the seven letters and one postcard (eight items of correspondences) are found in Takamizawa's *My Brother, Kobayashi Hideo* (1985). See Appendix A.5.2.2: Takamizawa's Collection of Letters.

⁴ Takamizawa's book indicates a date in June (based on the book of Hasegawa Yasuko) but the recent accounts of Gunji and Nishimura favor the month of April.

⁵ The temple was referred to him by his friend Sano, with whom he drank and caused a "scandal" that uncle Shimizu had to smooth over (Gunji 86).

If I have done wrong, god will punish me; if I am innocent, god will be good to me. Anyway, I'm terribly tired. I'm looking into the sunlight and I wonder, is the spring sunlight this color? (qtd. in Takamizawa, *My Brother* 10)⁶

He asked that they believe in him. He is so “mentally tired” that in the postscript he says he can “hardly hold a pen.”

Don't worry about me. Tell mother not to worry. If [Yasuko] should drop by, don't give her a hearing. Don't say anything to others about my leaving her, because this will only lead to trouble. Ignore them, though they may not necessarily blame me

Anyway, don't worry. If it is only your brother you can trust, then believe only in me. I have certainly worried you. I am tired, but I'll write again

Hideo

P.S. At the end of the month, go to the Yato house, without letting [Yasuko] see you. She probably won't be there, anyway. No, I'll write to you about this again. Now, I am tired mentally; I can hardly hold the pen.

Farewell for now. Where in Osaka does Uncle Nishimura live? ⁷

(qtd. in Takamizawa, *My Brother* 10)

He was safe staying in Osaka, but the temple there was an irritating place to live. He planned to move and wanted to rewrite an article, probably “Shiga Naoya” for *Kaizô* magazine.⁸

⁶ Note the general sense of the word “god” used in the same breath as the “spring sunlight.”

⁷ Uncle Nishimura was adopted into the Nishimura family and lived in Kyoto. Uncle Shimizu, his younger brother, lived in Suita, Osaka (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 24-25).

⁸ In 1924, Kobayashi unsuccessfully sought to publish a manuscript on Shiga in the magazine, which had been “rewritten” before Kobayashi left Tokyo, according to Yasuko (Hasegawa, *Never* 101).

Every day I find something irritating. This temple is too big for me. I plan to move to another lodging soon.

Now, I am at a loss how to rewrite the article for *Kaizô* (*Renovation*) magazine ... I want to go to Uncle's place, but I have only the kimono I am wearing. (qtd. in Takamizawa, *My Brother* 59)

4.1.2 Studying Buddhism at Uncle Shimizu's (April 1928)

It was at uncle Shimizu's that he "began an important new, constructive period in [his] life," asserts Gunji (65). Cousin Shimizu Hideo claims that Kobayashi stayed there for up to three weeks (87), which enabled a reader with his skills to read extensively on Buddhism.⁹

4.1.2.1 His Stay at Uncle Shimizu's

Receiving his clothes from Junko after some ten to eleven days at the temple, Kobayashi visited uncle Shimizu, who ran a Buddhist Sutra Bookstore in front of the Nishi-Honganji Temple near Kyoto Station. He explained his problem with Yasuko. A devout Buddhist believer, uncle Shimizu¹⁰ comforted him and then invited him to stay for a while, making an enormous impression on Kobayashi during this and subsequent visits (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 57). He also promised Kobayashi thirty yen a month for support in Nara, in addition to the ten yen provided by uncle Nishimura (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 24). This and his translation fees enabled Kobayashi

⁹ Shimizu Hideo was the son of the youngest brother (Shimizu Iemon) of uncle Shimizu (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 7, 163).

¹⁰ In 1974, Kobayashi mentioned his respect for uncle Shimizu. Though only a primary school graduate, his uncle became a believer in the Shin Jôdo sect of Buddhism by reading the sutra without a priest. "He never [liked to] discuss, attempted to teach others, or boasted. He was an ordinary man, a pleasant, sutra bookstore keeper ... always an agreeable man with a deep faith" (Kobayashi, "To Believe" KHZ-A 26:183).

to send a sum to his mother and to provide for living costs. Kobayashi records the visit in his third letter to Junko:

I went to Uncle Shimizu in Kyoto to explain the entire situation, and asked his help, to which he consented. I plan to stay around here, free of worries (qtd. in Takamizawa, *My Brother* 59-60)

Kobayashi quickly read most of the books on Buddhism on the shelves of uncle Shimizu's bookstore, claims Takamizawa, knowing Kobayashi's insatiable reading habits. After a few weeks he showed a growing interest in the Buddhist faith, including the teachings of Shinran.¹¹ Shinran taught a salvation based on pure faith, not conditional upon doctrinal-based conduct; Kobayashi, however, left no comment on this teaching, except for reliance on the "other power" (*tariki*) (Gunji 112).

During his reading he thought about "nature's way," this time less in terms of French Symbolism but as related to the Buddhist way as found in *Tannishô* [*Lamentations over Divergences*].¹² As Kobayashi wrote:

Man himself invites misfortune by resisting nature's way. It is only for this reason. Because each individual resists in varying ways, so misfortunes appear in varying shades. Man finds happiness by becoming at one with nature. To live a natural life requires a person to become one with nature, no matter who the person is. Nature is nothing dramatic. It is terribly commonplace. And so, happiness is always terribly commonplace. I suggest you read Shinran's *Tannishô*. It's a book of treasures. It reveals nature's secrets. (qtd. in Takamizawa, *My Brother* 60)

¹¹ Shinran (1173-1263) became founder of Jôdo Shinshû ("New Pure Land"), the largest sect in present day Japan. He had parted from his teacher Hônen (1133-1212), the founder of Jôdoshû ("Pure Land") sect of Buddhism.

¹² A collection of Shinran's sermons compiled after his death by his disciple Yuien, which teaches absolute reliance upon the "other power" (*tariki*). Shinran refuted traditional ecclesiastical doctrine which he considered obsolete.

4.1.2.2 Kobayashi's Despair: Fourth and Fifth Letters to Takamizawa¹³

A fourth letter, merely a brief note and almost a duplicate of the third letter, explains that uncle Shimizu had requested Hideo to move to a nearby inn for an extended stay (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 60). He remained there for perhaps a month (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 26).

The important, lengthy (7-page) fifth letter written at the inn explains to Junko his agony over Yasuko for the first time.

I left. That is, I abandoned a girl. I could not make it any more definite, but people have not taken it as final ... I definitely do not intend to return; I am not play acting.

Kobayashi wanted Junko and his mother to understand his “nightmare” and torturous life with Yasuko:

That girl lacks heart, thoroughly so. It's extremely hard to see this in her; only lately have I managed to penetrate into this secret of hers. I have been tormented and forced to bear her antics, which are beyond imagining. Thinking back on it, it was a nightmare ... (qtd. in *My Brother* 62)

He then describes the details. Yasuko had slapped his face, sworn at him, forced him to stay up through the night and barraged him with endless “absurd” demands.

For example, I couldn't recollect what she had said on the train. I couldn't remember what she had asked me, so she slapped my face on the street going home. She swore at me ... We wandered about past midnight. It would have been dreadful if, in a fit of anger, I should try to strike back at her. It took until dawn to soothe her.

¹³ See Takamizawa's *My Brother* (p. 61-63) for the full translation of the letters.

Thousands of absurd, endless demands I carried out (she asking me to close the sliding door twice, to answer her a hundred times, to rewash the towel eighteen times — all of which is probably difficult for you to imagine). (qtd. in *My Brother* 62)

As her illness grew grave, she threatened him with a razor blade and rope, making his life “beyond human forbearance” (*My Brother* 62).¹⁴

Gunji suspects that Kobayashi did not abandon her intentionally but left her out of the dire necessity to protect them both so that neither would permanently injure the other. Yet Kobayashi refused to explain himself to Gunji on two occasions (1976 and 1978) (Gunji 72, 74-75). He told Nishimura Kôji more, and this is discussed below.

4.1.2.3 Kobayashi and Buddhism

Kobayashi’s interest in Buddhism after reading *Tannishô* and other books “in desperation” indicates his state of mind after the “season of hell” with Yasuko.¹⁵ Cousin Shimizu recalls:

I was only 18 or 19 but clearly remember this. Hideo had no place to go, so he came almost daily to the bookstore, sat on a bench and read the books on the shelf He read in desperation, which he himself admitted. Then he took a break and went to Nara In later years, he said, ‘Without Uncle [Shimizu], things might have been different.’ Kobayashi had visited us often from Nara. (Gunji 99)

¹⁴ Refer to full descriptions of Kobayashi’s tortuous life as described by Yasuko (Hasegawa, *Never*, 87-96).

¹⁵ This follows some six years after he had expressed disbelief in religion in “Suicide of the Octopus” (1922). (See above, Chapter 2.)

The words, “Without uncle [Shimizu], things might have been different,” appears to refer to both spiritual and financial support.

Kobayashi expressed his deeper religious “interest” in a fascination for the word “strange” (*fushigi*). According to Cousin Shimizu:

One day, he read *Tannishô*. He remarked, “The word ‘strange’ appears like a wily fox (*kusemono*), which is most important.” This truly surprised me. We all like many others had read this word a dozen times unaware of its significance. (qtd. in Gunji 109)

A small book condensed into thirty pages, *Tannishô* mentions the word “strange” only twice, and associates it with a “mysteriousness” which Kobayashi explained to cousin Shimizu as follows:

The word “strange” (*fushigi*) can be interpreted as a “superstitious belief” (*meishin*). When will you [Cousin Shimizu] begin to understand “strange” to mean “mysteriousness”? ... Isn’t culture comprised of some kind of mysteriousness? It is only human instinct to believe in mysteriousness, isn’t it? If this is categorically denied, Japan will veer off on a tangent. (qtd. in Gunji 111)

Cousin Shimizu Hideo, nephew of uncle Shimizu Seiichirô, provided the only description of Kobayashi’s spiritual state during those weeks, when he summarized his sense of “mysteriousness.” Cousin Shimizu claims that this trait marked Kobayashi throughout his life, which is not surprising considering his interest in the mysteries of Symbolism at university. By Shimizu’s record, Kobayashi’s remark is dated some time in April 1928.¹⁶

¹⁶ After the war, Kobayashi wrote, “Norinaga believed in things mysterious ... Japan has many beliefs in mysterious things ... He believed that such ways of the ancient beliefs were most appropriate” (Kobayashi, “Questions/Answers” 62). Gunji lists other occasions of Kobayashi showing interest in Buddhism through the 1930s and 1940s (113-14).

Some years later, Kobayashi explained to Gunji that he had believed in “self power when looking after Yasuko’s illness,” but later in despair he believed in the “other power.” Nonetheless, he sought a quick return to “the inner power,” a thought that Gunji (112-13) claims influenced Kobayashi’s life to the end.

4.2 In Nara

Kobayashi moved to Nara in early May. Allowing ten to eleven days at the Osaka temple and up to a month’s stay in Kyoto places Kobayashi in Kansai from early April.¹⁷ This refutes Yasuko’s claim that he left Tokyo in late May, which date Kobayashi refused to confirm in 1963 (Gunji 78) and refused to comment on in 1978 (Gunji 72). He preferred to leave it as part of his “secrets,” which Gunji suspects relate to something about Nakahara (124).

4.2.1 Arrival in Nara

An arrival date in May is supported by the account of Shiga Noboru, nephew of Shiga Naoya, who writes that he remembers meeting Kobayashi in early May in Nara:

Indeed, in April 1928 (after entering the Fine Arts Section in Bunka Gakuin) I received a letter [from Nara] that came to my father. [Uncle Shiga Naoya] had invited me to visit Nara in early May since the wisteria flowers and new budding leaves were beautiful, and I could see other painters and Mt. Sawa. (Shiga Noboru 225)

¹⁷ Around December, Kobayashi mentioned to Nishimura, “So eight months have passed. Shiga, uncle Shimizu and your father (uncle Nishimura) have been a big help” (*My Cousin*, 84). “Eight months” places Kobayashi’s arrival in April.

Kobayashi also reports seeing the same kind of beautiful wisteria that Shiga Noburu had seen that early spring:

Though having just graduated from university and wandering like an emaciated beggar, how exhilarated I felt in spirit! I was on my back under a beautiful cluster of wisteria, feeling that I had been in a dream for two thousand years. No matter where, one cannot find such clusters of wisteria hanging in such a beautiful manner. (trans. *My Brother* 72; “*Shoka* [Early Summer],” KHZ-A 3: 202)

Kobayashi saw this scene near the dilapidated hut he rented from the Edo-san Japanese restaurant in the Kasuga Shrine compound. At first, he spent his days there “without any purpose and without money in a state of absent-mindedness” (*My Brother* 71; KHZ-A 13: 170).

4.2.2 Translation and Toward Renewal

Soon after settling in Nara, probably in May or June,¹⁸ he began to translate the first of the fifteen monthly parts of the “*Sharuru Bôdorêru Den*” (“Biography of Charles Baudelaire”).¹⁹ Translation work was a serious matter to him, since Kobayashi always translated with the intention of “embodying” the works (Gunji 198) and he gained much from them. During this period, his thoughts turned to writing “something big,” which began to take shape in July. Some notions of Baudelaire from his translation work appear in the work now believed to be “Various Patterns,” 1929.

¹⁸ Usually manuscripts were submitted two months before publication date, and he had to pay for his mother’s rent in Tokyo. Though his pay (at 25 *sen* per ten pages) was often delayed, it remained his steadiest source of income. His drinking also left him with little savings.

¹⁹ The biography that Kobayashi referred to is not indicated in his translation of 1928. Before leaving Tokyo, he had submitted manuscripts, translations of Gide’s *Paludes* for *Bungei Shunjû*, which were published in three parts from April to June 1928 after his arrival in Nara. These followed other translations of “*Aruchuru Rambô Den*”, anonymously published in eight installments from July 1927 to March 1928.

That month Takamizawa received a postcard (dated July 13, the sixth item of correspondence) from Kobayashi the positive tone of which, contrasting with the gloom of earlier letters, led her to believe that he had recovered (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 67).

People value feelings most of all. Don't worry about the daily thoughts you hold, but rather the daily state of your heart. The same holds true when seeing things. The important thing is to see with the heart. If you want to write novels, continue writing. Unless one writes with that in the heart, one can never write anything worthy. (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 66)

The observation “to see with the heart” rather than think with the mind was related to his response on visiting the national museum in Nara around that time:

Soon after graduating from university, I lived a short while in Nara and familiarized myself with the [Japanese] ancient arts as did others, but in the process I was beset by a nagging anxiety. As I looked at the old temples and Buddhist statues, they appeared like objects for study rather than genuine appreciation. I sensed something false in what was considered beautiful and felt this anxiety. At times, the Buddhist statues appeared as absurd figures. No books on the fine arts and aestheticism could soothe this anxiety. (“One's Age,” KHZ-A 18: 97)²⁰

As well as his developing insight and intuition, these comments indicate the state of his recovery as he entered the summer months. Gunji raises the problem of where Kobayashi found all the books to formulate his ideas, including the books on Baudelaire for translations (Gunji 91), since he had left Tokyo only with the kimono on his back (Gunji 91-92),. Gunji

²⁰ It is perhaps relevant that many art pieces from the Nara Period (eighth century) are of Chinese origin, which reflect a beauty not traditionally Japanese.

contends that Kobayashi used the library of Ibuki,²¹ since Kobayashi himself mentions that he had “visited Ibuki often.” He had probably made Ibuki’s house an “oasis” in the heat of summer (Gunji 90).²²

4.3 Summer to Winter of 1928

Shiga Naoya, “the god of the novel,” had moved to Nara in 1925, where he continued to publish parts of his finest work *An’ya Kôro (Journey Through the Dark Night)*.²³ He remained in Nara until he completed the book in 1937, before returning to Tokyo where he lived to the end. During Kobayashi’s time in Nara, Shiga’s visitors included Fujieda Shizuo (1907-1995). Kobayashi also met the writers Hamamoto Hiroshi (1890-1959) and Takii Kosaku (1894-1984), who lived nearby.²⁴ Surprisingly, few accounts of this important year remain, according to Gunji.²⁵ Fujieda’s article was not written until 1983, and it was left to Gunji in 1993 and Nishimura Kôji in 1995 to fill in the account of Kobayashi’s Nara days.

²¹ Ibuki studied under Kobayashi’s mentor, Tatsuno *sensei*, graduated in March 1925, and obtained a position at the Third Higher School in Kyoto in April, the month Kobayashi entered university. Ibuki enjoyed drinking, making Kobayashi a likely fellow companion.

²² Gunji explains that in an attempt to repay past favors, Kobayashi spoke on two occasions for Ibuki in Kyoto: in the symposium, “*Shinpi to Genjitsu*” (“Mystery and Reality,” March 1948), and a lecture at the Third Higher School in Kyoto (91-92).

²³ The work was begun in 1914 at Onomichi, Hiroshima when a trolley accident forced him to convalesce at Kinoshita Hot Springs. He then lived in Kamakura for awhile, before living in Abiko for seven years. He moved to Kyoto in 1923 and then Nara in 1925 (Keene, *Dawn, Criticism* 458-70).

²⁴ Ozaki Kazuo (1899-1983) visited Shiga after Kobayashi had left.

²⁵ No entries are recorded in Shiga’s diary from April 13, 1926 to December 21, 1929 (Gunji 65).

4.3.1 Fujieda, Hamamoto and Shiga

In 1983 Fujieda Shizuo²⁶ described his two-day visit (August 2 and 3) to Nara. On the first day he met Kobayashi at the home of Shiga, who was about to take Kobayashi for a vacation in Wakayama Prefecture. Shiga introduced Fujieda to a long-haired Kobayashi who looked thirty, not the twenty-six that he actually was. Fujieda spent the day and night with Kobayashi:²⁷

Kobayashi's place was surrounded by thin trees. Branches of a large old tree hovered over the front of the hut. The hut had two rooms of 6-mats and 3-mats with nothing inside. It was a strange place with a closet in one corner covered with dust and made of wooden branches (152)

That August night while drinking beer, Fujieda asked Kobayashi, "What are you writing?" Kobayashi replied in an abandoned tone, "Nothing. I can't write at all," and continued that, "We can perhaps become a Tolstoy, if we develop. But not a Dostoevsky; his mind is far too expansive. And he is far different" (152).

The next day, during a walking tour of Nara, Kobayashi and Fujieda happened upon the writer Hamamoto Hiroshi, and the three had tea together. Kobayashi held up a teacup as he sharply criticized a writer colleague, "Those empty eyes of [Masamune Hakuchô]²⁸ can't see anything," Kobayashi continued.

²⁶ Fujieda Shizuo (1907-1995) was a writer who followed the I-Novels style in the tradition of Shiga Naoya. He was born in Shizuoka Prefecture, graduated from Chiba Medical College and combined his medical practice as an ophthalmologist with a career in writing.

²⁷ Fujieda snapped a picture that he dated August 2, 1928 on the reverse side. Kobayashi is shown seated on the mat with his back to the window (See photo: Fujieda 153).

²⁸ Masamune Hakuchô (1879-1962) was the most distinguished critic among the Naturists, best known for such works as *Bundan Jimbutusu Hyôron* (*A Critique of Figures in the*

When you see the Japanese character ‘bowl,’ what comes to mind? He replied, ‘The ordinary bowl to eat rice with.’ Kobayashi continued, ‘That’s right, but others would visualize something else.’

He held up the tea cup and explained, ‘Some would think of this teacup. So the word “bowl” has a different connotation to different people, doesn’t it? Such is the nature of words. That in one’s mind cannot possibly be explained to others. One can never be confident of understanding outside of understanding [the nature of] words. (qtd. in Fujieda 153)

Fujieda vividly recalls the scene: “I understood Kobayashi’s point, and with what force did he make it!” (153).

Kobayashi undoubtedly learned something about the arts from Shiga, and on this occasion Shiga encouraged him to visit an artist friend with Fujieda. Fujieda writes of other matters, such as Kobayashi’s spending the summer with Shiga’s family at Minoshima Island in Wakayama, or going to an *obon* festival with Shiga (Gunji 94).

Such leisurely times with Shiga, however, undoubtedly left deep impressions on Kobayashi, some of which are recorded in his essay “Shiga Naoya” (December 1929).²⁹ Hirano Ken considered it “the most complete essay on Shiga at the time,” which is understandable since Kobayashi had spent a whole year near Shiga including that summer.

Literary World, 1932) and *Shizen Shugi Seisui Shi* (*The Rise and Fall of Naturalism*, 1948). He also wrote fiction which remained on the whole unendearing (Keene, *Dawn* 182-83).

²⁹ Hasegawa verifies seeing a 1928 draft on the desk just before Kobayashi left her, which she assumes Hideo had taken with him when he left her (*Never* 101). It was in fact his second draft, based on an earlier one in 1926.

4.3.2 Fall: Seventh Letter and First Lecture

In the seventh and final Kansai letter, written to Junko in September, Kobayashi writes that he felt invigorated after the summer, but is still not ready to write “something big”: “I certainly took it easy this summer. It was so hot. Now I feel that I can write. My mind is filled with ideas, but I feel that I have a gap to overcome before I begin writing” (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 69-70).³⁰

Cousin Nishimura, a student of Kwansai Gakuin University in Kobe, visited Kobayashi the following month (October), to request that he speak at the university. Kobayashi agreed to the opportunity to speak, but was not so willing thereafter.³¹ He sent cousin Nishimura a confirmation postcard dated October 22 [1928]:

I accept your invitation to lecture I have no idea regarding the result of my talk I have no intent to meet any of the university teachers. The other day, my mother visited Nara.
(*My Cousin* 44)

According to Kobayashi’s account of the lecture, he arrived on borrowed money for train fares, wearing a borrowed watch, suit, and pair of shoes. He stepped up to lecture but the beer he had drunk before entering the campus caused him to ramble, until two hours later he bowed and left the lectern. Cousin Nishimura reportedly met him with, “No one understood the lecture,” and gave him the fee for his first ever public lecture (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 73-74). In 1995 Nishimura corrected this version: He

³⁰ According to cousin Nishimura Kôji, the “gap” was filled by November. See discussion below.

³¹ Later Kobayashi wrote: “I find lecturing most a displeasure no matter how often I have lectured. I have never spoken unless out of obligation, except once. That was the year after I graduated” (KHZ-A 13:170).

[Nishimura] as organizer of the lecture had not concentrated on the lecture and found it disorganized, but later learned that the thirty to forty students had been impressed (*My Cousin* 46-48).

Still wearing the borrowed suit, Kobayashi took cousin Nishimura to Kobe Bay³² after the lecture, then to the Gion District in Kyoto, known as a geisha district, where they spent the next two days at a house of pleasure womanizing and discussing literature and Bergson (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 48-52). Kobayashi then headed alone to Dôtonbori, another noted night spot in Osaka, perhaps to carouse with the artist friend who had helped him settle in Osaka.³³ No doubt he spent the remainder of the 30 yen (a month's living expenses) that he received for the lecture, as he extended his carousing there to a week (KHZ-A 13: 172).

Kobayashi was extreme in his ways, tempestuous at times but then at other times refined. One day he drank to excess and picked an argument with some ruffians who promptly tossed him off Shinsai Bridge into the river below. Another day, a familiar melody from Mozart that he had listened to in childhood caught his ear as he walked the streets. He later remembered the incident, making that piece the theme of his essay "Mozart" in 1946 (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 73-74). Gunji Katsuyoshi, who knew Kobayashi well, claims that Mozart's music had struck Kobayashi like a "heavenly beam," giving him a "self-awareness" of "nature" that replaced the "intellect" of nihilism (Gunji 38).

³² Kobayashi went there to throw his usual wear into the water.

³³ Takamizawa states that Kobayashi happened upon another person, Kimura Osumu, a friend since childhood (*My Brother* 74).

4.3.3 Eighth Item of Correspondence from Kobayashi

Returning to Nara around the end of October, he replies to Junko that he has received the manuscript of her novel, completed before her marriage in September. He remarks that he was “wandering in Kobe,” concealing the fact of his carousing in Gion and Dôtonbori, and turns to more serious thoughts on “style” and “form”:

As for your style, I'll not mention it either, since I have lost my own “style” In general, ... describe quietly both your inner feelings and outer phenomena as accurately and vividly as possible, and then delete what is unnecessary.

The “flavor” of a work is born from strenuous efforts when a writer is young, after one finds a satisfactory form. (*My Brother* 39)

Kobayashi adds that a genius like Dostoyevsky has no need for paintings and music, but mediocre writers like Junko and himself require them to freshen their mental images. He encourages her to develop a taste for the arts:

You lose out in apparently lacking the culture for the plastic arts and music. So your images tend to become mere concepts
... .

I recommend that you study painting and music. Never forget, writing fiction means to create a beautiful form. (*My Brother* 39)

He writes in the postscript that he has begun to write something, but not entirely to his satisfaction (*My Brother* 40).³⁴

³⁴ What he was writing is not known. Kobayashi expresses interest in writing novels that he intends to enter in the writing contest to be announced on December 19, 1928, but no records remain (Gunji 95).

4.3.4 Cousin Nishimura's Important Visit (November 7)

The next important event recorded by Cousin Nishimura occurred on November 7, 1928, when he and Kobayashi went to a tea room alongside Nigetsudô Temple.³⁵ Here they had some sake (rice wine) and discussed until late (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 53).

Kobayashi first explained his ideas in full for a manuscript, which Nishimura realized a year later when he read the essay, comprised the whole of "Various Patterns" (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 53). He also realized then that the year in Nara had served as a constructive, creative thinking period for Kobayashi, not merely as a period of "escape."

More surprising to cousin Nishimura at the time was that Kobayashi began to unburden himself about Yasuko: "I was about to be killed. What would you do?" (*My Cousin* 78). Kobayashi explained that he wanted to stay and not admit defeat by abandoning her. But Yasuko was upon his chest with a knife raised when he awoke that morning. Sure that she would kill him this time,³⁶ he knocked her down and fled for his life. He had no choice, but to leave her, since "life [survival] is everything" (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 79).

This account is important, as it relieves him of the accusation that he had abandoned her, as others (particularly Nakahara) believed after hearing Yasuko's account (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 57). This accusation is what Gunji sought to rectify in his talk with Kobayashi in 1978.

³⁵ Another, similar day at the temple is described in the essay "*Aki* (Autumn)" January 1950 (KHZ-A 17: 199-204).

³⁶ This was at least the fourth time: once by pushing him into an oncoming trolley in Shirokane, a second time with a rope, and a third time with a razor.

4.3.5 Winter Months in Nara³⁷

Nishimura visited Kobayashi at the end of the year, on a very cold day, according to his entry. Kobayashi expressed his gratitude for the eight-month support of Shiga and Kobayashi's two uncles (*My Cousin* 84-88). Then Kobayashi gave his first account of becoming "nationalistic" (*kokusui-ha*) as a natural process of maturity. He explains it as pouring "old wine" into a "new bag" of the society in which he now seeks acceptance.

What is so wrong with them [Kafû, Jun'ichirô, and Haruo] and even myself [becoming a nationalist as we mature]. Isn't it appropriate that we should develop that way, if it is part of a natural flow? Moreover in order to "rise in society" in the Japanese literary circle, we have to be accepted by the government bureaus (*kannai sho*) and the Japan Broadcasting Association (*Nihon Hôso Kyoku*) as 'government products.' That means 'knowing the ropes' (*kotsu*) to 'filling old [traditional] wine into a new [modern] goat-skin bag.' [Although] I may or may not 'rise in society.' (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 87-88)

Their discussion at the temple ended at that point, but Kobayashi later explains the problem of the "nationalism" of "slogans" as against "individual images" in the essay, "*Nihonteki na mono' no Mondai, II*" ("The Problem of 'Things Japanese II'" (April 1937):

Writers are powerless so long as they rely on *slogans* like "Japanism" or "patriotism." There is not a single example in our literary history of a great work whose greatness was

³⁷ Kobayashi described to Shiga his uncomfortable life that winter: "That Edo-san hut is extremely cold, so cold with no heating. The owner doesn't provide anything, so I have slept with the light bulb inside the bedding. That has kept me warm. Nara is freezing. The Edo-san hut is full of cracks. There's nothing one can do about it. It's the same as keeping the door open I asked Shiga's wife for some bedding, which I was sleeping in when they almost caught on fire. I had turned my bedding over. It caught fire on the mosquito-repellent incense nearby that was left burning all night. I panicked when everything almost caught on fire" (Gunji 94).

owing to “nationalism” [*kokka-shugi*]. The literary idea of “things Japanese” can be meaningful only if it enables writers to grasp a personal, *individual image* of something Japanese. (trans. Anderer 144; KHZ-A 9:122) (My italics.)³⁸

Cousin Nishimura paid a New Year’s visit to Kobayashi in Nara in January 1929. At this last visit Kobayashi once again expressed gratitude for the help of Shiga Naoya and his two uncles in Kansai, and credited Kawakami for bringing “a romantic” like him down to earth (*My Cousin* 98), a comment which remains unexplained.

Kobayashi prepared to leave Nara in February 1929 with his sights set on becoming a writer, and determined to win the first prize of 300 yen announced by *Kaizô* magazine on December 19, 1928. He returned to Tokyo about April to write “something big” (“Various Patterns”), which Gunji claims is the most important essay in the early Shôwa Period of modern Japanese literature (Gunji 96-97).

Kobayashi blossomed into maturity in the one year in Kansai. He was blessed with a mentor, Shiga, and with friends, relatives, and books. He renewed himself and began to formulate some of the most enduring ideas in his writings. Takamizawa comments that, “From his higher school days, Hideo had always felt the urge to find deeper, more challenging, more exacting work” (*My Brother* 68). She describes a “spiritual development” that seemed to mark Kobayashi for his lifetime, beginning with the time at Nara: “Kobayashi continued to seek perfection. Always true to his feelings and himself, he probed deeply into each idea, cherishing each truth and seeking *spiritual development* as he tackled each painstaking task” (*My Brother* 78). (My italics.)

³⁸ The issue of “nationalism” is discussed in more detail below in Chapter 7.

Chapter 5

The Literary Critic (1929 -1932)

Focal Point One: “Behind literature, see the man.”

5.0 Introduction

The first part of this study (chapters 1-4) has reviewed the early life of Kobayashi from his family background through his school, university, and Kansai days. The second part (chapters 5-9) discusses the first half of his career as critic and essayist, from his debut in 1929 to the end of the war (1945) in five stages.¹ Chapters 5 and 6 describe the first two stages of Kobayashi’s career, the progress from a literary critic (1929-32) to a social critic (1933-37).

The first stage focuses on the concept, “Behind literature, see the man,” beginning with the first major essay, “Various Patterns” (1929). Kajihara Osamu² considers that the principles (*genri*) of “Various Patterns” first appeared in the essay “Shiga Naoya” (Kajihara, “Memorandum” 47). This study considers the two essays as two “performances”: the “front-stage” scene (*butai*) and the “offstage” scene (*rakuya*) of “the man.” Kobayashi wrote that, “What happens offstage, behind the scenes as it were, is of greater interest to me than the visible [front stage] spectacle” (trans. Anderer 19). This chapter (1) discusses the first volume of Kobayashi *Geijutsuron* (Discussions of Literary Criticism), placing “Various Patterns” in perspective to the whole, then (2) presses towards the offstage scenes of “the man,” as seen in Shiga Naoya,³ Aoyama Jirô and finally Kobayashi himself.

¹ Kobayashi ceased writing for a year after the U.S. occupation of Japan.

² Kajihara Osamu. Professor at Hiroshima University.

³ Seidensticker discusses Shiga at length in his two important articles on Kobayashi (1971, 1979).

5.1 *Geijutsuron* (Discussions of Literary Criticism, 1931)

Kobayashi's first volume of essays, *Discussions of Literary Criticism*, places the essay "Deception" (February 1930) first, as the introduction, and "Various Patterns" second. Next in order is the series of five (April to August 1930), "*Ashiruu to Kame no Kō*" ("Achilles and the Tortoise").⁴ After several other essays, "Critics' Failure I" and "Critics' Failure II" (November 1930 and February 1931) end the volume. To make the point, "Behind literature, see the man," this study considers the two essays on "critics failures" as the conclusion to "Various Patterns" as well.

5.1.1. "Deceptions" and Critics' Failures

Few understood "Various Patterns" in 1929. They began to understand this essay after such essays as "Deceptions" (February 1930), "Critics' Failure I" (November 1930) and "Critics' Failure II" (February 1931) were published. (Ôoka suggests the importance of these essays. See Appendix A.5.6, Ôoka Notes.)

5.1.1.1 "Deceptions"

In "Deceptions" (1930), the first essay of *Discussions of Literary Criticism*, Kobayashi watches the movie *Tseppulin Hakugô Sekai Isshû* [*Around the World on the Hearst Zeppelin*]⁵ and concludes that modern society is full of contrivances, including the tricks of movie making. The narrator describes the "vague black clumps" in the ocean as two sinking

⁴ They discuss the problem of language, a subject since then exhaustively discussed.

⁵ The film was first screened on December 31, 1929 in the U.S. It was distributed by MGM in eight reels and sponsored by Hearst Newspapers. The film was shown in Japan in 1930 (Shôwa 5).

steamers after a collision; “wart-like spots” as patches of the great Siberian forest; the “rows of potatoes” as the Rocky Mountains. The narrator concludes, “At first glance, the movie included nothing complex, but I believe the audience has found it absorbing.”

As the lights are turned on, Kobayashi realizes that movies are one of many kinds of contrivances. The real problem of deception, he concludes, is rooted in the word “spectator” (*kanshōsha*) of aesthetics. The person is a passive and uninvolved observer, thus open and susceptible to the “vanity of all conscious signs.”

It is strange that only the vanity of all conscious signs (*kigō*) of humankind under the name of aesthetics has deceived me so imperceptibly I recognize mentally that an authentic art is a genuine art, just as a pig’s tail is a pig’s tail, and again that ... a genuine pig’s tail is neither superior nor inferior to a genuine aesthetic work. But this recognition neither decreases nor increases my bitter feelings. (“Deceptions,” KHZ-A 1:176)

Kobayashi sees that Valéry (1871-1945) and Breton (1896-1966) discovered in their own way the “mechanism of misfortune” (*fukō no karakuri*) entangled with the “mechanism of fortune” in their [brain] cells (*saibō*). This reminds Kobayashi of the possibility of his wandering lost in his own “maze of misfortune” (*fukō no meiro*). He had once been deceived, believing the “staircase of analysis” led to “the broad road to good fortune” (*kōfuku no ōdori*). He concludes: “Wait! To be deceived does not mean to live. To live means to become deceived [on the broad road to good fortune]”⁶ (“Deceptions,” KHZ-A 1:178).

⁶ 誑かされるのが生きる事ではない。生きる事が誑かされる事なのた。

In “Deceptions,” written four months after “Various Patterns,” Kobayashi cautions himself about the danger of climbing the “spiraling staircase of analyses” (*kaisetsu no rakai*) (“Deceptions,” KHZ-A: 1:177). Placed first in the volume *Discussions on Literary Criticism* (1931), the essay “Deceptions” serves as an appropriate introduction to the essay “Various Patterns,” which is then reassessed in terms of “critics’ failures.”

5.1.1.2 “Critics’ Failures I’: Focusing on Humankind

The two essays of “Critics’ Failures I” (November 1930) and “Critics’ Failures II” (February 1931), not only conclude the volume but indicate the need for “objectivity” to offset the abstractness of analyses.

In the first half of “Critics’ Failures I,” Kobayashi attacks critics who are entrapped by their reason. Until “reason” is connected to the heart, everyone is alike, like “surplus light disconnected from its source.” He continues, “I do not desire any objective standards. I desire objectivity”⁷ [the real art items and not abstract standards regarding them](KHZ-A 2: 172).

Kobayashi ridicules Japanese writers and critics of the early 1930s with the remark, “To talk of art for real life (I don’t consider works with the object of entertainment and relaxation as strategy art!) is like [talking of] a fart ...”⁸ (KHZ-A 2: 173). Two writers express contrasting but dangerous truisms, which are actually disengaged from life: “An extraordinary writer once stated that, ‘Through the arts, one can understand (*ryōkai*) human life, but through human life one cannot possibly understand the arts.’ The

⁷ 私は客観的な尺度などちっとも欲しくない。客観が欲しいの。

⁸ 実生活にとって芸術とは(私は人々の号楽或いは休息或いは政策を目的とした作物を芸術とは心得ない) 屁の様なもの...

ordinary artist, however, would say, ‘The arts are but one way to understand human life,’ which is a more humble expression, not proud and boastful” (KHZ-A 2: 173). But, Kobayashi suggests, both writers express the same thing and are equally detached from real life, except that the first is more inflexible (KHZ-A 2: 174).

Kobayashi proposes a clearer and more distinctive explanation: that, “What people learn from their actual lives is far more certain. In fact that is what they do” (KHZ-A 2: 174).⁹ Therefore, “How can a heart tested in actual life (*jisseikatsu*) enjoy matters of the arts in depth?” Hence Kobayashi claims that people mistrust the arts: “They have every right to ‘turn up’ their nose at the arts”¹⁰ (KHZ-A 2: 174).

That is, the ordinary person naturally understands life differently from an artist:

It is not that people pressed for a livelihood fail to look at the arts, or that those lives permeated by hardships are bored by the immaturity (*seishun*) of the arts.

From the onset, [the ordinary] people live a different method of understanding this world [from the artists]. They believe in a contrasting make up of the world. Actual life and the arts emit contrasting electric charges (KHZ-A 2: 174).

⁹ それより人々は実生活から学ぶ方がよっぽど確かだ。事実人々はそうしている。

¹⁰ 鼻であしらうのは彼等当然の権利である。

5.1.1.3 “Critics’ Failures II”: Focus on the Humankind of Nature

In “Critics’ Failures II” Kobayashi prioritizes the true artist as the handiwork or creature of nature, not as the result of his arts. “Humankind is inferior to nature, and artistic works are inferior to humankind”¹¹ (KHZ-A 3: 31). That is, Kobayashi credits great artistic works to the person [of nature]: “Any masterpiece resembles the light of the [artist’s] eye. Conservatively stated, the masterpiece is but the person who created it” (KHZ-A 3: 31).

Kobayashi makes another startling statement: “I have no need to read an intimate friend’s works. When one knows everything about that hand of nature who wrote the [works], to read the works is a boring substitute” (KHZ-A 3: 32). Yet Kobayashi writes that he reads the works of modern writers as “hands of nature” (*shizen no te*) simply to save time in meeting them all. “For good or for bad, I lack such time to know them all. So I read their works to save time” (KHZ-A 3: 32).

Caught in the “spiraling staircase” of analyses described in “Various Patterns,” Kobayashi sought to return himself and his readers to the realm of humankind and nature. The “critics’ failures” point to what this study considers the essential message of stage one, “Behind literature, see the man (as the handiwork of nature).”

¹¹ 人間は、自然よりも遥に見すばらしい、芸術作品は人間より遥かに見すばらしい。

5.1.2 “Various Patterns”: “Rule of Innate Tendencies” (人生論)¹² and “Theory of Destiny” (宿命の理論)

With the essential points of “Critics’ Failures I” and “Critics’ Failures II” established, we now proceed to some key terms in the order they appear in the all-important essay “Various Patterns.” They are (1) *ishô* (“design” or “patterns”) in the title; (2) *jinkeiron* (“rule of innate tendencies”) early in Part 1; (3) *shukumei* (“destiny” or “fate”),¹³ as an “awareness that circulates with one’s blood” and as related to *kokumin-teki* (“national”) in Part 2; (4) *shukumei no riron* (“theory of destiny”). This is closely associated with *ji-ishiki* (“self-awareness” of that “destiny” or “fate”) in Part 3.

Kobayashi wrote the essay “Various Patterns” in September 1929, confident of its winning first-prize, but lost to Miyamoto Kenji, later Chairman of Japan’s Communist Party.¹⁴ Keene writes that Kobayashi’s innovative idea negated all forms of “measuring rod” (*shakudo*) or any fixed standards of critical system, dismissing them as mere “designs,”¹⁵ what are here called “patterns.”¹⁶ Keene indicates one problem. Kobayashi came close to claiming that, “there was no ‘design’ that matched the one he had formed from French literature” (Keene, “Dawn, Criticism” 586). This suggests that

¹² The footnote of the annotated version of Kobayashi’s *Collected Works* explains *jinkeiron* as “innate tendencies” (KHZ-A 1: 136).

¹³ Differing interpretations are listed in the Glossary A.3.

¹⁴ Miyamoto Kenji (1908-) won with the proletarian essay, “*Haiboku no Bungaku* [Literature of Defeat]” (1929), which blamed the death of Akutagawa Ryûnosuke on a sentimental type of humanism of the Taishô Period, a bankrupt sort of “*petite bourgeois* ego.” It was based on a socialist ethics that ended in the early Shôwa period. Kobayashi’s ideas of the self-consciousness of humankind continued well into the postwar (Aeba, “Beginning” 6-7).

¹⁵ Kobayashi included all the important writings, both proletarian and opposing forms, *Shin Kankaku-ha* (the “New Sensationalists”) and the popular forms of “mass literature.”

¹⁶ Anderer writes: “[Kobayashi] detected *patterns* within much that barely cohered ... and saw through these *patterns*, into the irreducible actuality of modern Japanese cultural life” (Anderer. 14). (My italics.) This study considers “the man,” society, history, nature, and beautiful literature as comprising the “irreducible actuality.”

other approaches to criticism must surely exist. In 1937 Kobayashi clarified a “relativism” (Chapter 6) that explained his writing on “society” and “history” and later on “nature” and “beautiful literature.”

5.1.2.1 Key Term: “Designs” (Patterns) in the Title and Epigraph

Keene introduces the word “designs” (from the title) as part of his interpretation of the epigraph, a quotation from André Gide (1869-1951): “Doubt¹⁷ [of all designs] may mark the beginning of wisdom. But where wisdom begins, [all designs of] art end.”¹⁸ Keene suggests that Kobayashi doubted all the “designs” then claimed as the basis for literature, particularly the approach of “scientism and objectivism” then in fashion among proletarian and modernist writers (Keene, *Dawn, Criticism* 185).

Seidensticker, however, declines to use the word “designs,” changing his first title “All Sorts of Designs” or “*Samazama Naru Ishō*” in 1971 to “Various Garbs” in 1979 (“Kobayashi” [1979] 149). The word “garb” suggests a pun: schools of literature are but garments which clothe literature’s essence, the person and life in nature hidden underneath.

This study adopts Seidensticker’s view of “garb” and focuses on the life of the ordinary person preferred over the arts as discussed in “critics’ failures.” This makes the epitaph read, “But where wisdom begins [all] art ends.” That is, the ordinary person has “the right to ‘turn up his nose’ at the arts.” Kobayashi also wrote in 1935 in “*Shishōsetsuron*”: “[Gide] revealed an awareness that literature could not be trusted unconditionally, and that

¹⁷ Gide’s notion of “doubt” is not meant in a negative sense but as a spirit of investigation, beginning with a process of “self-awareness” (Aeba, “Beginning” 9).

¹⁸ From Gide’s *Nouveaux Pretextes* (1911) (Shimizu Takayoshi, *Course* 79).

self-consciousness could not exist in servitude to literature” (trans. Anderer, “Discourse” 83). A maturing self-consciousness took place in life, not in the arts.

5.1.2.2 Key Term: “Rule of Innate Tendencies”

What one writes can only be a pattern (or design) of what comprises one’s own “innate tendencies,” or one’s self. Part I of “Various Patterns” introduces a “rule of innate tendencies” (*jinseiron*) to avoid the problem of the “magic” power of language.¹⁹

Language, a gift conferred on humanity along with consciousness — our sole weapon in the advance of our ideas — retains its magical power as of old. (trans. Anderer 19; KHZ-A 1: 135)

The importance of “innate tendencies” is established when Kobayashi presses “from behind the scene (*karame-te*)” of literary language to the “offstage” scene of humankind (Anderer 87). “And if certain tactics are required to expose our literary situation,²⁰ I choose to attack from the rear,”²¹ which seems to me the strategy most suited to any study of [a rule of innate tendencies]²² (trans. Anderer 19; KHZ-A 1: 35).

¹⁹ “In the same sense that mere commodities have no meaning, words have no meaning. They take meaning only when humankind interacts. When humankind interacts, the *magic tricks* of commodities are simple compared to those of words” (“Achilles and the Tortoise II” KHZ-A 1: 218-19). (My italics.) “The mind(*seishin*) is no more than a factory for producing language, and the society to instill language as a part of an individual Then our minds (*seishin*) become [part of] society accustomed to language to be deceived by its *magic*” (“Achilles and the Tortoise IV” KHZ-A 1:233).

²⁰ Kobayshi comments on falsities of language: “As society developed, a literary movement attempted to free language (*kotoba*) of social falsities in the nineteenth century. This tragic task fell upon three geniuses ... Poe, Baudelaire and Mallarmé” (KHZ-A 1:254).

²¹ Derived from the original meaning of an “attack from the rear to the center of the castle” (Aeba, “Beginning” 7).

²² Anderer translates *jinseiron* as “principles of human behavior.”

5.1.2.3 Key Term: “Destiny” (as that which “circulates with one’s blood”)

The term “destiny” as introduced in Part 2 to describe a part of the critics’ task which is “rife with paradox”:

The poet’s desire is to create a poem, a storyteller’s to write fiction. Does the literary critic have an analogous wish — to write literary criticism? This is a question *rife with paradox*. (trans. Anderer 20, “Various,” KHZ-A 1:136) (My italics.)

The first step of the paradox requires the critics “to wait with patience” before they write until they become aware of (“hear”) the “destiny” (fate) of the object or subject of criticism.

I ... hear [as a process of self-awareness] the bass chords²³ of the author’s *fate* (*shukumei*) resounding And I regard with suspicion ... [critics’] inability *to be patient and allow the object of criticism to make clear its destiny* (*shukumei*), its particular characteristics (trans. Anderer 22; KHZ-A 1: 139). (My italics.)

The second step of the paradox is to recognize that an awareness of the subject (or object) must include an awareness of the self:

But the magical power of Baudelaire’s criticism derives from his awareness that to write criticism is *to make oneself conscious*. To say that the subject of criticism is the self and the other is to say there is but a single subject, not two. For is not criticism finally the skeptical narration of our dreams [of self awareness] ? (trans. Anderer 21)” (My italics.)

The third step of the paradox is to realize that *the most universal writers are, at the same time, the most “national”* (*kokumin-teki*), that is, the

²³ This refers to the idea of the “pure self” and “self-consciousness” in tune with the cosmos, as found in Valéry’s “*Introduction à la méthode de Leonard de Vinci*,” (1895) (Shimizu Takayoshi, *Course* 88-89).

most individual: “The origin of Goethe’s universality lies in his having been a splendid [national] writer.²⁴ And the origins of his having been a [national] writer lie in his having been splendidly [an individual] (*kosei-teki*).²⁵ “Quality criticism always reveals the individual” (trans. Anderer 21; KHZ-A 1: 138).

Kobayashi associates “the individual” with national characteristics, which he describes as that which “circulates with one’s blood” as part of one’s “destiny”, and which replaces the conceptualized thoughts of intellectuals.

The environment makes humankind, and humankind makes environment. This is to say, if this dialectically unified truth is the actual meaning of so-called destiny, then this one truth circulates with one’s blood in his body and is another name for destiny. (KHZ-A 1: 139) (My italics.)

Kobayashi defines an objective aspect of “destiny”:

A person is born into this world embracing various possibilities. He may wish to become a scientist, a soldier, or a novelist, but he can never become other than who he is — a marvelous human fact. (trans. Anderer 21; KHZ-A 1:138)

Ultimately, “destiny” is not an abstract, conceptual term, but intrinsically related to what one is or becomes.

To summarize, the paradox of criticism lies in having (1) to wait with patience until the subject’s destiny reveals itself, (2) to become aware of the critic’s own “destiny” that is at one with the subject’s “destiny,” and (3) to realize that a universal work is always most national and individualistic.

²⁴ Anderer translates *kokumin-teki* as “German” writer.

²⁵ Anderer translates *kosei-teki* as “personal.”

5.1.2.4 Key Term: “Theory of Destiny (as “Purposeful Consciousness”)

Part 3 of “Various Patterns” discusses what this study considers crucial: “[There can] be nothing other than the defining theory (*riron*) of his [the artist’s] destiny. The true artist cannot but be faithful to the theory of his particular [destiny]”²⁶ (trans. Anderer 24; KHZ-A 1:142).

Kobayashi further defines this by arguing for artists to possess a purposeful consciousness (*moku-teki ji-ishiki*), as all people believe in some form of religion (KHZ-A 1:142). Kobayashi argues for a commonality of life that gives direction to a “purposeful consciousness” and the individual’s destiny.²⁷ Thus, Kobayashi returns the “theory of destiny” to the life of an artist. That is, he uses “theory” to explain or clarify “destiny” in terms of self-awareness, which he claims “derives from a perception of life” (trans. Anderer 24).²⁸

5.2 Accounts of “the Man” of Three Geniuses

“Various Patterns” presented the “front stage” ideas of the “rule of innate tendencies” and the “theory of destiny.” This study will now discuss how these terms relate to three geniuses behind the scene: Shiga Naoya, Aoyama Jirô, and Kobayashi Hideo himself.

²⁶ Anderer translates “destiny” as “fate.”

²⁷ Yoshimoto Taka’aki claims that Kobayashi places importance on the two terms of “human life” (*seikatsusha*) and “destiny” as constants throughout his writing career (Yoshimoto, “Method” 208).

²⁸ 創造の理論とは彼の宿命の理論以外の何物でもない。そうして、芸術家等が各自各様の宿命の理論に忠実である事を如何ともし難いのである。

As mentioned above, Kajihara suggests that the concept of “innate tendencies” of “the man” emerges in the 1929 essay on Shiga Naoya.²⁹ In this, Kobayashi admitted that he needed to avoid the abstractions that Shiga managed to avoid so well, although this is “terribly difficult” to achieve.

Nonetheless, as long as I write criticism, it is *terribly difficult not to introduce some sort of abstractions*, regardless of how raw his [Shiga’s] spirit is. Shiga, the writer, however, did not allow such abstractions. (“Shiga,” KHZ-A 1:165) (My italics.)

5.2.1 “The Man” of Shiga

Seidensticker writes extensively on Shiga and his influence on Kobayashi in his two articles (1971, 1979). Because of this, the focus here will be on Parts 4 and 5 of the essay “Shiga Naoya,” pointing out how Kobayashi applied to “Shiga Naoya” the “rule of innate tendencies” and “theory of destiny” as explained in “Various Patterns.”

²⁹ “*Shiga Naoya — Sekai no Wakaku, Atarashii Hitobito e*” (“Shiga Naoya — to the Young New People of the World”) (KHZ-A 1: 156-172). See partial translations in Anderer’s and Seidensticker’s works.

5.2.1.1 Shiga, A Man of Life

Part 4 begins by describing the person of Shiga.

The problem of Shiga Naoya is the problem of the ultra-egoist (the English word is used). His fascination lies in the most individual acts of the most individual self-awareness (*ji-ishiki*). He is not important for having harvested a world view. His importance lies rather in a harvest of acts. (trans. Seidensticker [1971] 425)

“The man” of Shiga Naoya never saw any gap between thought and conduct: “To think is to act, and to act is to think.” When he did detect a gap, he considered the “thought an immature and ... undeveloped one, since he equated his thoughts with conduct, and his conduct with thoughts” (KHZ-A 1:162).

Part 5 begins as follows: “Shiga is the writer who most adamantly refutes abstractions I [Kobayashi] affirm this not because he is a friend but because his writings radically represent *his flesh and blood*”³⁰ (“Shiga” KHZ-A 1: 165). (My italics.) Kobayashi continues:

His soul is the soul of a doer. All the talent [that] he possesses has not the slightest meaning outside the context of real life. (trans. Anderer 1995: 104; “Shiga Naoya,” KHZ-A : 165)

Kobayashi sees Shiga refining to perfection that tension between art and real life.

³⁰ 志賀は抽象を最も許さない作家である。… これは私が氏に面識あるが為では断じてなく、氏の作品が極端に氏の血肉であるが為だ。

5.2.1.2 Shiga, a “Primitive” Man of Benign Nature

In Part 4, Kobayashi continues to compare Shiga as the “primitive man” (*kodaijin*) of nature with the “modern man” (*kindaijin*) of culture. Shiga’s sensitivities resemble the “primitive” eyes and ears of the ancients who directed their biological sensitivities toward things of nature (including their emotions, actions and physical self): “What is destroying our nervous systems is not morbid neurosis but an excess of concept” (trans. Seidensticker [1979] 162). Biologically humankind is unchanged, but the excess of concepts entering the modern mind has disrupted and numbed the network of humankind’s sensitivity system (KHZ-A 1:163).

At the end of the essay, Kobayashi concludes that Shiga did not separate himself from the flow of nature, nor did he attempt to analyse his various psychological states. Shiga viewed nature as a flow (“benign”) which enabled him to move quietly and to harmonize himself thoroughly with nature: “Shiga’s soul knew no drama. He suffered in life as a maturing tree” (KHZ-A 1:171).

5.2.2 “The Man” of Aoyama Jirô (1901-79) ³¹

Aoyama Jirô deeply influenced Kobayashi, especially in his early career, as his mentor in understanding life and art. Shirasu Masako stresses his importance to Kobayashi: “Kobayashi would not have been the same person had it not been for Aoyama” (interview with Shirasu, Sept. 1988). Kobayashi looked up to Aoyama, saying: “We are highly gifted, but Aoyama

³¹ Aoyama Jirô (1901-79) was an art connoisseur, critic, cover designer, etc. who fostered young writer/critics, including Kobayashi Hideo (the most prominent), Kawakami Tetsutarô, Ôoka Shôhei, and Shirasu Masako (also a prominent art essayist). The accounts of Nonogami Keiichi’s *High Quality Friendship* (1989) and Shirasu Masako’s *Why Aoyama Jirô Today?* (1991) provide biographical evidence supplementing Aoyama’s article “Thirty Years with Kobayashi.”

is a genius” (Shirasu, *Why Today* 60). Nonogami Keiichi, an editor of *Bungakkai*, claims Aoyama as a leader in the early years, but equates the two when viewing their lives as a whole: “Such notables as Aoyama and Kobayashi appear once in a century, but to find them side by side is indeed rare” (Nonogami, *Friendship* 16). Most recently, in 2005, Kawai Hayao³² suggests that Aoyama used Kobayashi as his spokesperson.³³ Kawai writes: “Aoyama’s genius affected Kobayashi ... and Kobayashi wrote numerous essays in lieu of Aoyama (“The Person of Kobayashi Hideo,” KHZ-A BIII:25).

5.2.2.1 Background: Aoyama and Kobayashi

Aoyama set the standards of “perfection” (*kansei*) and “maturity” (*seijuku*) for Kobayashi in the early 1930s, instilling in him an insight into the genuineness of art items as well as people, society and civilization. Other young writers looked up to Aoyama’s kind of insight, but apparently only Kobayashi could keep pace with Aoyama’s frequent, all-night drinking and carousing (Mori, ed., *True Face* 51-53).³⁴

Aoyama had gained an instant reputation at age 18 when he walked into the noted Konchûkyo (壺中居) Curio Shop, and bought the most exquisite Chinese ware in Japan. It was estimated to be worth between half a million and a million dollars (at 1991 value) (Shirasu, *Why Today* 8). A celebrated name since 1921 in the arts (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 36),

³² Kawai Hayao (1928 -) is Honorary Professor of Tokyo University and International Japanese Culture Research Center. He is a scholar of Jung Psychology and recipient of numerous awards. He has also studied the Japanese mind and folk stories, and Kobayashi’s interest in Jung psychology.

³³ The present author has suspected this relationship for a number of years.

³⁴ By this means, Aoyama sought to toughen the gentleman-type of people (like Kawakami) into a disciplined samurai-type writer (Shirasu, *Why Today* 30).

Aoyama became a leading spokesman for seeing the “soul of beauty”³⁵ in objets d’art (Shirasu, *Why Today* 9) until he realized the ineptitude of organizations and movements that sought secondary values. It was then that Aoyama joined the coterie magazine *Yamamayu* in 1924 as a cover designer and met Kobayashi, Tominaga (1924-25) and later Nakahara (1925-28).

Kawakami claims that Aoyama began to “enlighten” (*keihatsu*) Kobayashi from 1929 (*Kobayashi* 33-34), as Kobayashi needed someone to discuss his thoughts (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 185), particularly when he was writing “Various Patterns.” They enjoyed their nights of drinking and “leisure play” (*asobi*) in Asakusa from 1929-32 (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 35), activities which peaked in 1933-34 before Aoyama lost all parental financial support.

Aoyama affected Kobayashi in what appears as four progressive steps, as: (1) a teacher and molder of people, (2) a destroyer of concepts, (3) a trainer of “feeling beautiful forms,” and (4) a seer of the “soul of beauty.”³⁶ This chapter discusses the first two steps (1929-33), Chapter 6 the third step (1934-37), and Chapter 7 the fourth (1938-41).

³⁵ He was one of the few who discovered something new in the traditional tea-ceremony wares, a world of “*wabi*” (“simple quietness”) and “*sabi*” (“rustic elegance”). “Seeing old wares with a new view” required a creativity in one’s way of seeing (Shirasu, *Why Today* 9).

³⁶ Aoyama explained the enduring effort required “to detach the eyes from the head (concepts)” that is, “to see without thinking” (qtd. in Shirasu, *Why Today* 13). This implied that “to see (*mieru*) meant to make genuine discoveries” (qtd. in Shirasu 19), which distinguished the last step from “feeling for” and merely “seeing” (Shirasu, *Why Today* 37).

5.2.2.2 Aoyama as Teacher and Molder

Aoyama's keen eyes saw through any false pretense in those who were caught up in fads and fashions (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 36). As he detected "the best in each of them" (Shirasu, *Why Today* 10), Aoyama led them in learning "how to live" in the chaotic 1930s. His "lessons" attracted the likes of Nakahara, Kawakami, Nagai Tatsuo and Ôoka Shôhei (Nonogami, *Certain Memories, Kobayashi* 30-31). The salon-type group became known as "Aoyama Gakuin."³⁷ It was formed in 1931 by a group of former coterie members of *Yamamayu* (Aoyama, *Collected* 407).

Aoyama molded them by having them argue with "sincerity" (*seijitsu*) throughout the night, requiring them to mercilessly attack any signs of a façade (called "insincerity") in the others. They criticized each other to their faces as their samurai spirit³⁸ considered back-biting (or stabbing one in the back) an act of cowardice. Then they honored the victor in the late hours in a spirit of a samurai (Nonogami, *Kobayashi* 101).

³⁷ The group was named by Ôoka Shôhei, a graduate of Aoyama Gakuin Higher School (1925). Ôoka was a student at Kyoto University at the time (1929-32), but, nonetheless, had ample time to participate during the long holidays and vacations. In 1932 the name followed Aoyama to Akasaka-mitsuke, and in 1934 to a cheap, old wooden-framed called Hanaen Apartments near Ichigaya Station in Yotsuya, where Aoyama lived until 1940.

³⁸ Gunji describes the members as the "*Samurai no Sekai*" ("The World of Samurai") (*Reminiscences*, 215-304).

As the most “sincere,” Kobayashi argued viciously, taking on two or three at a time.³⁹ He boasted that, “I think best when I drink” and drank at a quick rate, saying what others dared not to as proof of his “sincerity.” He drank and attacked so intently that he often forgot to eat and had a simple *chazuke* (rice in tea) at home (Nonogami, *Friendship* 103-04). Aoyama alone could wound Kobayashi with his few “quiet” but cutting remarks, leaving Kobayashi in tears (Nonogami, *Friendship* 27).

Kobayashi was the most feared during debates while drinking, since no one could match him in discussions. It was only Aoyama who occasionally upset and overturned Kobayashi. Aoyama, of course, was to be feared too, for another reason, his fewer and more gentle remarks penetrated all the more deeply into a person. (Ôoka, *Verification* 103)

5.2.2.3 Aoyama: Destroyer of Concepts

After the sessions of critical attacks, drinking and womanizing at “houses of pleasure” were pursued in an attempt to *destroy all concepts* regarding the arts or any intellectual endeavour. Aoyama sought a vacuum into which new ideas or forms would flow (interview with Shirasu). Regarding “beauty,” Aoyama explained simply: “What one does not possess (as his own), he does not truly love,” whether the beauty of a woman or objects d’art. Aoyama also taught that, “This kind of quest must be renewed ... [and] experienced when one is young (Shirasu, *Why Today* 41).

³⁹ They often met at Hasegawa Restaurant in Ginza and at a tempura restaurant in Shimbashi (Nonogami, *Certain Memories, Kobayashi* 103).

That year in 1931, Kobayashi found a girl called M.S. (short for Mukô Sakamoto) to possess (as Aoyama instructed) and successfully proposed marriage to her. Plans for marriage were discussed but ended when she ran off with an Olympic decathlon athlete on a trip to Osaka. But Kobayashi still longed for M.S., which is made clear in the last paragraph of the essay “Letter to X” (1932).

5.2.3 “The Man” of Kobayashi: “Letter to X”

The reminiscence “*Ekusu e no Tegami* [Letter to X],” published in September 1932, first discusses Yasuko, followed by numerous seeds for thought. Particularly important is his objection to the brutal repression of proletarian writers after the Manchurian Incident in 1931.

5.2.3.1 Two Halves of the “Letter to X”

Kobayashi began the first half by writing from a personal standpoint on love and womanhood, using himself and Yasuko as examples. He describes the role of love in process of maturing and the lust of women as seen in his experiences with Yasuko.

Women shape the sole realm where I mature. Women shattered at one stroke the impudent dream I had of understanding the world by annotating books I have thought of killing her and actually she tried to kill me. We looked at each wondering whether we loved or hated each other. (“Letter,” KHZ-A 4: 71)

Then Mr. X (closely resembling Kobayashi himself) describes the lust hidden behind a woman's tears, which appears childish but is actually a sign of maturity:

When things grow a little more complicated, she begins to cry. This is the right thing to do: with her tears, she resolves everything. She recognizes her lust. The man becomes involved in the discomfort of her tears and nothing is resolved. ("Letter," KHZ-A 4:74).

The topic of "Letter to X" suddenly changes in the second half, which describes many of Kobayashi's germinal ideas and how some of them relate to society. He discusses the problem of language being manipulated by the authorities to empower ideologies and slogans for controlling people's thoughts, which occurred most noticeably after the Manchuria Incident in 1931: "There is no such thing as ideology (*shisô*). It exists only to the degree that people accept it. Only when ideas are married with words, do the dangers of ideology emerge" ("Letter," KHZ-A 4: 78).

Kobayashi then probes the true source of ideas, including words charged with spiritual meaning like "gods" or "eternity." "Ideas are instinctive," not rationally strung together.

They [ideas] are clearly felt, but form a maze when one attempts to explain the ideas. If this is the task of man, it is not entirely in vain. It represents a realistic aspect of man's life and existence. Words like "god" or "eternity" despised today have lasted longer than any others in human history. (KHZ-A 4: 78-9)

Throughout history many ideas preoccupying human minds have referred to no clear object, but are labeled with descriptive words (79). Although Kobayashi is not explicit here, he is perhaps suggesting a more wholesome approach in reaction to the fusion of Emperor worship with State Shintoism by the 1930s.⁴⁰

He realizes the need to compromise with society and declares that, in the history of ideas, “Anyone who wishes to leave his mark in the world must gain the good-will of society. That is, he must make compromises with society.”

Society is always victorious over individuals. The history of ideas merely reflects the history of a society that is victorious over individuals The serious anecdote is: “Why does the dog [society] wag the tail [individual]?” “Because the tail [individual] cannot wag the dog [society].” (“Letter,” KHZ-A 4: 79)

He clearly knew in 1932 that he lived in a totalitarian state which was tightening its grip.

Kobayashi expresses his distaste for politics, nonetheless, which he claims ignores any value of the individual:

So I remain cool to all political ideas and activities. I do not care about political party movements. I do not want to kill anyone or be killed by anyone Some may call me a skeptic, but I am simply innocent. Some may call me an escapist, *but I am only putting up with the situation. No one can thwart me from disliking politics.* (KHZ-A 4: 83) (My italics.)

⁴⁰ Before 1946 Kobayashi mentioned the Shōwa Emperor only twice, briefly. He refused to accept the political discussions regarding the Emperor (Gunji 179-80). In a postwar symposium (1946), he dismissed the imperial system as being politically used and ended the discussion (“*Literarie*,” KHZ-A 15: 32).

Kobayashi is fatigued and seeks a woman, undoubtedly M.S, who will come to listen to him:

I cannot find someone to listen to me This is my greatest difficulty When you return from your trip, first meet me and spend the night. I will go early to meet you But you must by all means come to me. (KHZ-A 4: 88)

“Letter to X” proves to be Kobayashi’s last essay in the mode of reminiscence, as he joins the growing ranks of social critics alarmed at the direction Japan is headed. The killing of proletarian leader Kobayashi Takii (1903-33) in February 1933 shocked even some of those formerly unsympathetic to the movement (Keene, *Dawn* 846).

5.2.3.2 Non-conformist Instructor at Meiji University (1932)

After the Manchurian Incident (1931) Kobayashi faced a turning point in his life at age 30. He joined fifteen lecturers to staff the new Literary-Arts Section at Meiji University from April 1932 and lectured on Dostoevsky for two years. His unorthodox way of lecturing, however, soon sparked rumors that he was teaching under the influence of alcohol (Akiyama 144).

Deep in thought, Kobayashi rambled on about whatever came to his mind and assigned topics such as “Know Thyself,” “On the Genroku Period,” or “Your Thoughts,” which were unrelated to his lectures. He explained that, “Teaching what I know bores me, so I teach what I don’t know,” and “I’m just not the teacher type” (Akiyama 144).

Kobayashi rushed into the classroom, leaned the lectern chair against the blackboard, swung his feet on the lectern table, and lit a cigarette. He lectured without notes, looking down at the floor or out the

window and rarely at students. “In Russia their concept of nihilism is different. In Dostoevsky’s diary” Then he would pause and ask himself, “Isn’t that true? No, maybe not. Yes, it must be ... but” He struggled, questioned himself, and formulated his thoughts for himself, not for the students (Akiyama 144).

Then he suddenly left the class, dropping another Bat-brand cigarette (today renamed Peace cigarettes), which the students rushed to pick up and smoke. Akiyama recalled how his lectures on Dostoevsky became popular and led the students to think and understand the depth of life of Dostoevsky (Akiyama 145).⁴¹

As Kobayashi began lecturing on Dostoevsky in September (the same month “Letter to X” was published), and unknown to his students, Kobayashi reached the first major crossroad in his career. He decided to become a social critic at heart, after only three years as a literary critic (1929-32).

Kawakami explains that Kobayashi parted (at heart) from writing literary criticism after three years (1929-1932) just as Rimbaud quit poetry after three years. The stormy period of the early 1930s demanded that Kobayashi cease writing subjective reminiscences and take the path of a social critic (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 39).

In “Various Patterns” (October 1929) Kobayashi expressed a “rule of innate tendencies” and a “theory of destiny” (October 1929), which requires self-awareness of that which “circulates with one’s blood.” In writing

⁴¹ As a result of his lectures, he published his first article on Dostoevsky, “*Techô: Eien no Rônin* [Notes: Eternal Wanderer],” in January 1933; “*Techô: Miseinen* [Notes: The Adolescent]” in December 1933 in *Bungei Shunjû*. Series of notes followed on *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot* in 1934 (Yoshida and Horiuchi 32-37). The lectures on Dostoevsky prepared him for his next major work, the series on “The Life of Dostoevsky” (1935-1937).

“Shiga Naoya” (December 1929), he realized that Shiga’s life and thought were at one with awareness of life in nature (fused with humankind). In subsequent essays, Kobayashi reassessed himself in “Deceptions” (February 1930) and the series “critics’ failures” (November 1930 and February 1931), as he did in his association with Aoyama and M.S. These achievements mark the period expressed as stage one, “Behind literature, see the man” (1929-32).

Chapter 6

The Social Critic (1933 - 1937)

Focal Point Two: “Behind the man, see society.”

6.0 Introduction

Chapter 5 centered on focal point one, “Behind literature, see the man” as the handiwork of nature (1929-32), but after the Manchurian Incident (September 1931), a sudden political shift affected Kobayashi: “[P]olitics ... always ends with physical violence that looks down on humankind” (“Letter to X,” 1932) (KHZ-A 4:83).

Kobayashi’s response to this situation can be summarized as, “Behind the man, see society,” a new focal point that had the deepest implications in this darkest period of Japan’s history. Social distortions were affecting individual writers, the “proletarians” in particular, who were being brutalized into a submission called “conversion” (*tenkô*),¹ with some even killed.² One of Kobayashi’s closest friends, the critic Kawakami Tetsutarô, clarified Kobayashi’s deepest concerns after the war, when the censorship was lifted. He was highly critical of intellectuals who condoned the direction the authorities were taking.

Kobayashi saw the repression and killings as symptomatic of a decaying civilization. That is, he saw the nineteenth- and twentieth-century “spirit of decay,” the result of excessive conceptualization and analysis by

¹ Almost 95 percent of those imprisoned made declarations of *tenkô* (Keene, *Dawn* 847).

² Kobayashi Takaji (1903-33) was killed probably under torture in February 1933, and Sano Manabu and Nabeyama Sadachika, two prominent Communist leaders, recanted in June 1933 (Keene, *Dawn* 845-46).

elite intellectuals, as producing Bakunin,³ Lenin,⁴ and then Hitler. Illusions about the “progress of history” in particular concealed the darkness, deaths and evil pervading the world (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 68,70). Furthermore, Kobayashi came to believe in 1932 that an increase of entropy would be the doom of all civilizations:⁵ “It is clear that maximum entropy is analogous to the process of dying” (trans. Anderer 37; KHZ-A 4:112).⁶ Ôoka writes in 1935 that Kobayashi preoccupied himself in lecturing to him and Aoyama about the danger of entropy (*Evidences* 38-39). This was the same year he became chief editor of *Bungakkai*, aware that all societies, not just that of Japan, risked survival. In 1937, he faced another moral crisis in his writing, over the question of whether humankind can comprehend a dark society saturated with slogans and propaganda.

6.1 “See society” and *Bungakkai*

Kobayashi sensed these threats at a time when intellectuals and writers felt what Powell describes as a “feeling of powerlessness and hate towards the mechanism of society” (129). There was a mounting spiritual isolation of scholars and writers in the years 1928 to 1936.⁷ What is more

³ M. A. Bakunin (1814-76) was a Russian anarchist and opponent of Marx who developed the idea that society must be destroyed and replaced by one based on complete freedom. In 1847 he called on the Poles to join with Russians to overthrow the Russian government ruling over them. Another attempt to spark a revolution in Poland failed in 1863.

⁴ V. I. Lenin (1870-1924) was the leader of the international Communist movement along with Marx and Engels, who helped to shape 20th-century history. To many advocates of freedom and human rights, however, he was considered a destroyer.

⁵ This belief was based on his reading in 1932 of the book *The Nature of the Physical World* (1928) by Sir Arthur Stanley (1882-1944). Entropy is based on the second principle of thermodynamics which stipulates that energy transformed by heat is lost in the atmosphere. Kobayashi believed this would lead to the disruption and death of the cosmos. Kobayashi held to this view into the 1960s (Ôoka, *Evidences* 40).

⁶ From “*Gendai Bungaku no Fuan*” (“The Anxiety of Modern Literature”)

⁷ As in Nazi Germany, the industrialization of Japan for its military machine enabled the country to emerge out of the depression earlier than most Western countries.

important, “[I]t was impossible to publish anything which would convey an [open] criticism of the real situation ... [so] their novels [and writings] tended all the more toward popular literature” (Powell 129).

Yet Kobayashi chose to involve himself in the “modern world,”⁸ as Paul Anderer comments: “[T]hrough the 1930s, Kobayashi persistently *immersed himself in the modern world*. This [world] provoked anxiety, to be sure, even a sense of chaos (Anderer 13). (My italics.) Yet, at what point did Kobayashi actually “immerse himself” in the modern world? This study contends that his process of immersion began in 1932 with the statement: “But now, truly the time has come when we must engage Dostoevsky” (trans. Anderer, “The Anxiety of Modern Literature” 43). In Dostoevsky Kobayashi sought a model for his own conduct.

In September 1932, Kobayashi began lecturing on Dostoevsky, which helped inspire him to found the magazine *Bungakkai* along the lines of Dostoevsky’s journals in 1933.⁹ This was two years before he wrote the major essay, “*Shishôsetsuron*” (1935), which Keene suggests “should be read as a preface to ‘The Life of Dostoevsky’” (1935-37) (Keene, *Dawn, Criticism* 592). The two works are bridged by the term the “socialized I,” as suggested by Powell’s remark: “[A] new individualism as a way out of the I-Novel ... [was] expressed as the “socialized [I]” (125). The “way out” led to “The Life of Dostoevsky.”

⁸ “We go into the streets full of anxiety... . Anxiety—the greatest drama on stage within the modern spirit (“*Gendai Bungaku no Fuan* [The Anxiety of Modern Literature, 1932]... .” Anderer, 38-39).

⁹ In the journal, he contributed the essays “*Kokyô o Ushinatta Bungaku*” (“Literature of the Lost Home,” 1933), “*Bungaku no Konnan*” (“Chaos in the Literary World,” 1934), then the series, “The Life of Dostoevsky” (1935-37).

6.1.1 Early Beginnings of *Bungakkai* (1933 -1934)

It was a perilous time that reminded Kobayashi of Dostoevsky's period. He had befriended two political prisoners, the "converted" Communists, Shimaki Kensaku (1903-43) and Hayashi Fusao (1903-1975)¹⁰ after their release in 1932.¹¹ It was probably for this reason that Hayashi Fusao, with fellow proletarian writer, Takeda Rintarô (1904-1946), approached Kobayashi to begin a new magazine.

That February 1933, proletarian leader Kobayashi Takiji (1903-1933) had been tortured to death and all leftist magazines were banned from publication. Thus to publish a quality journal, Takeda [Rintarô] and Hayashi [Fusao] sought out particularly [prominent writers] Kawabata and Kobayashi to lead in joining hands with them. (Ninomiya 276)

Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972) summarized the urgency of the situation: "The time requires the literati to protect their independent stance" (Hayashi 209).

However, it was the more aggressive Kobayashi who became the driving force, motivated by the threat to quality literature as well as an underlying concern for culture and civilization. In October 1933, he began by enlisting seven quality aesthetic writers, then organized them and began publishing the magazine (Hayashi 209). Beset by financial problems after four issues, Kobayashi insisted that the publication continue (Nonogami,

¹⁰ Kobayashi became one the best friends of *tenkô* writer Hayashi Fusao ("Hayashi Fusao", KHZ-A 13: 233) who refused to recant to the end. Kobayashi's sympathy for Hayashi is seen in November 1934 when he accompanied Hayashi to prison who was to begin his second sentence for a year (KHZ-A 13:236).

¹¹ Kobayashi remembered Dostoevsky's five-years' imprisonment and had Shimaki live across the street from him.

“*Bungakkai*” 61), and buttressed the magazine’s quality by recruiting three well-established, non-proletarian writers.¹² By the next issue (February 1934) *Bungakkai* had become the most representative of important writers and the highest quality journal of literature in Japan (Hayashi 210).

Another financial crisis in September 1934 threatened the journal, however, and after six additional monthly issues in the Great Depression, Kobayashi passionately appealed to his readers thus: “Writers must write when they desire to and publish without any obligations I want such a journal for myself and also for others” (Nonogami “*Bungakkai*” 61). Few could resist when Kobayashi offered to contribute his most ambitious and important series of writings on Dostoevsky without pay.

6.1.2 Kobayashi’s Alter-ego, Dostoevsky (1935-37)

Keene claims that Kobayashi made Dostoevsky his alter-ego (*Dawn, Criticism* 592), which seems particularly relevant to the period when Kobayashi became chief editor of *Bungakkai* in 1935 (KHZ-A 9: 193).¹³ This required him to chair every editors’ meeting and participate in the monthly symposiums sponsored by *Bungakkai* (Hayashi 210) in addition to his extensive research for his writings on Dostoevsky. Kobayashi’s effort and devotion¹⁴ appear to be inspired by Dostoevsky’s example.

With the launching of *Time*, the routine of Dostoevsky’s life was immutably established for the next five years. All of his energies were absorbed by his work both as editor and

¹² Satomi Ton (1888-1983), Yokomitsu Riichi (1889-1947) and Fujisawa Takeo (1901-1989).

¹³ In 1935, Kobayashi found Dostoevsky’s most interesting period to be his five years as editor of *Time* (1860-62) and *Epoch* (1864-65). This comment was published in May in Part 5 of the series “The Life of Dostoevsky.”

¹⁴ Witnessed by Nishimura, who visited Kobayashi almost weekly from 1935 (Nishimura *Cousin* 35).

contributor, and it is impossible to dissociate his private existence from the quotidian task of running the magazine. (Frank 48)

Dostoevsky's inspiration as an alter-ego is also apparent in the direction that Kobayashi sought for *Bungakkai*. Dostoevsky's journals, *Time* and *Epoch*, served "their place in Russian literature as the mouth-pieces of an independent social-cultural tendency, based on the tradition of Russia" (Frank 34).¹⁵

Dostoevsky's understanding of "tradition" rejected the words "national" (*kokumin*) and "race" (*minzoku*) as Western European ideas (KHZ-A 9:19). Kobayashi noticed that Dostoevsky used the term "the masses" (*minshû*) (KHZ-A 9:29) which was intricately identified with their religion, unlike Western Europeans.¹⁶ Starting from this viewpoint, Kobayashi sought the essence of the Japanese people during his travels in 1938 (Chapter 7), and discovered the Japanese expressing their sense of "destiny" and "national" in "silence" (See chapter 7).

6.1.3 Kobayashi as Advisor of *Bungakkai* and Sôgen Press (1936-40s)

Before Kobayashi's term as chief editor (1935-36) ended, he reminded the coterie of *Bungakkai's* policy of "freedom of expression"¹⁷ (Ninomiya 280) as well as the need for "new ideas" and a "new force" for a period of change:

¹⁵ The primary task lay in "helping to forward a new Russian cultural synthesis based on a 'return to the soil,' a fusion of the people and their more sophisticated superiors, the intelligentsia" (Frank 35).

¹⁶ "*Dosutoebusuki no Jidai Kankaku*" ("An Awareness of Period)," (January 1937).

¹⁷ Dostoevsky learned in prison of "the ineradicable need for the human personality to express itself through the exercise of its own free will" (Frank, *Prophet* 72).

I [Kobayashi] discussed the new members with Hayashi [Fusao] during the year that I served as chief editor. The magazine dropped in quality and nothing went smoothly. Without *new ideas* all seemed doomed. It needed *a new force*. (Editor's postscript: January issue of *Bungakkai*, 1936; Nonogami, "*Bungakkai*" 63) (My italics.)

He daringly dismissed writers who were ten years his elder, when he was still thirty-four,¹⁸ a bold leadership move for which only Kobayashi could gain in reputation without being ostracized.¹⁹

Under such determined leadership, Kobayashi led *Bungakkai* to become "a dominant power in the literary world in protecting literature from a growing fascist movement" (*Kodansha Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4). Then he stepped down, after resolving a recurrent financial crisis in 1936.²⁰ He asked Kawakami, also a leading critic, to serve as chief editor from July 1936, and requested Kikuchi Kan to publish *Bungakkai* through *Bungei Shunjû*, relieving the chief editor of the latter task (Nonogami, "*Bungakkai*" 63).

The magazine maintained to the end its legacy of two basic principles – independence of spirit and respect for others—an achievement attributable to one man, Kobayashi Hideo. This legacy marks what Kobayashi meant by becoming "immersed in the modern world," as a means to experiment with the "socialized I" as a "modern individual." The number of coterie members continued to increase, reaching twenty-nine in the period

¹⁸ He dismissed the older coterie writers, Satomi Ton (1888-1983), Uno Kôji (1891-1961), Toyoshima Yoshio (1890-1955) and Hirotsu Kazuo (1891-1968) (Nonogami, "*Bungakkai*" 62).

¹⁹ Kobayashi also became noted for the debates "*Shisô to Jisseikatsu* [Thoughts or Real Life]" with Masamune Hakuchô, published later in April (1936), and a continued debate with the leftist Nakano Shigeharu from 1935, comprising the series of "*Nakano Shigeharu e* [Letter to Nakano Shigeharu]" (published later in April 1936).

²⁰ Thereafter he preferred to support *Bungakkai* from a distance (Ninomiya 284), serving as advisor until 1940, contributing numerous articles, participating in symposia, and helping to plan with Kawakami a symposium such as "Overcoming Modernity."

1940-44. In April 1944, *Bungakkai* temporarily ceased publication after publishing a hundred and nineteen issues over a ten-year period, no small feat in the days of depression and war (Ninomiya 282).²¹ Kobayashi continued to be involved in publishing, producing quality books through the struggling Sôgen Press.²² He noted the parallel with Dostoevsky who became an editor again, of *The Citizen* from 1872 to 1974, when he faced censorship and a two-day imprisonment for infringements.

6.2 “*Shishôsetsuron*,” the “Socialized I,” and “Form”

The term, the “socialized I,” is used in “*Shishôsetsuron*” (1935) but Kobayashi’s understanding of the concept had developed in 1933, two years before, when he established *Bungakkai*. With this term, Kobayashi attempted to transform the impoverished state of the I-Novel and its concern with the trivialities of inner emotions. The essay “*Shishôsetsuron*” has continued to be a matter of academic discussion for over sixty years with the “socialized I” often being considered outside of life, or so it seems. This study prefers to return the idea to life by discussing Shimaki Kensaku who, like Kobayashi himself, also attempted to live the “socialized I.”

6.2.1 “*Shishôsetsuron*” and the Life of Shimaki Kensaku (1903-45)

Kobayashi’s important term, the “socialized I” (*shakaika shita watakushi*) that Powell also sees important (125), appears only once near

²¹ It re-emerged as a prominent literary journal in the postwar years, and continues to this day.

²² The Sôgen Press was a small independent press committed to publishing important quality books on Japanese culture, including literature, philosophy, anthropology, and archeology. Kobayashi began as Editorial Advisor in 1936. He contributed to Sôgen Press for twenty years (1936-1956) as editor and advisor (Kobayashi S. 105). In 1948 he served as executive (*torishimari*) of Sôgen Press with Aoyama.

the beginning of “*Shishôsetsuron*” (Part I), perhaps as a “fragment” (as discussed in the Introduction).

We see ... in Barrès and later Gide and Proust Regardless of the pinnacle of achievement each of these writers attained, they were all motivated by the desire to regenerate a human nature rendered stiff and conventional of the pressures of nineteenth-century Naturalist thought. And they were not mistaken to undertake a literary investigation of the self to achieve this, because already by that time their “I” was a fully *socialized [I]* (*shakaika shita watakushi*). (trans. Anderer; KHZ-A 6: 161) (My italics.)

Though feudal elements discouraged the participation of people as individuals in Japanese society,²³ Kobayashi called for experimentation with the “I” (including himself), which was not yet “socialized” in Japan. Janet Walker notes the persistence of the traditional sense of the “I” in the I-Novel:

... the *shishôsetsu* appears to be an heir of the traditional genre of the *zuihitsu* (“random notes”), an essay-like genre in which the author’s subjectivity was the focus; and history, society, and action were absorbed in the memories and reflections of the organizing “I.” (Walker 103)

Kobayashi’s argument in “*Shishôsetsuron*” is best clarified by discussing the concluding remarks first. “*Shishôsetsuron*” ends with two unanswered questions which focus upon the problem of the “I”: “Will they [writers] come to believe that an unvanquished ‘I’ (*watakushi*) still exists within them?” The other is, “[B]ut have we really disposed of the self?” (trans. Anderer, 93; KHZ-A 190). Yet Kobayashi does suggest a possible answer to

²³ At the time, the two powerful social forces of military rule and popular literature made it difficult for people to develop as individuals or writers to follow their consciences (Powell 121-22).

his questions: “In the aftermath of our recent *tenko* controversy,²⁴ it is too soon to tell what type of literature our writers will produce” (trans. Anderer 93: KHZ-A 6: 190).

Whose “type of literature” did Kobayashi have in mind when he referred to “our recent *tenkô* controversy”? In 1932 Kobayashi had befriended a new writer, Shimaki Kensaku, one the best known of the *tenkô* writers, according to Keene (*Dawn* 848).²⁵ He also became a coterie member of *Bungakkai* in 1934 in the interests of diversity, and on the condition that he could freely express himself as a proletarian writer:

Some of the [coterie members] are men whose literary position is incompatible with my own. There are also proletarian authors and critics among [them], though we do not necessarily agree on every point As a soldier of proletarian literature I should like, insofar as possible, to make *Bungakkai* serve as a forum for our literature. (qtd. in Keene, *Dawn* 851-52)

Shimaki remained committed to the proletariat, claiming that he had converted under pressure in 1932. This is seen in his story “*Daiichigi no Michi*” (“The Way of First Principles, 1936).²⁶

6.2.2 A New “T”: Affirmation of Life (1938)

Kobayashi saw a new sense of the “T” emerging in Shimaki’s second major book, *Seikatsu no Tankyû* (*Quest for Life*), published two years

²⁴ This is customarily dated as 1933 when two prominent Communist leaders, Sano Manabu and Nabeyama Sadachika, renounced Communism (Keene, *Dawn* 847).

²⁵ Shimaki had written the story “*Rai*” (“Leprosy”) and his collection *Goku* (Prison) in 1934, a year before Kobayashi wrote “*Shishôsetsuron*.”

²⁶ However, he soon expressed his disappointment with (presumably) the Communist party in the story “*Tenkôsha no Hitotsu no Baa*” (“The Case of a Convert,” 1936) (Keene, *Dawn* 852).

after “*Shishosetsuron*,” and confirmed in the book’s sequel. In 1938, commenting on “*Zoku Seikatsu no Tankyû*,” the sequel to *Quest for Life*, Kobayshi states that Shimaki Kensaku has understood the “I” that is “burdened by forces of society and history” (KHZ-A 10: 203). He announces that “as I expected, a new type of *shishôsetsu* has been completed” (KHZ-A 10: 199), and a new I-Novel has emerged. The “I” (*jiko*) of Shimaki has “lived through the storm of history, bore its burden ... and became an original writer by being true to his self” (KHZ-A 10:202-03).²⁷

“Being true” was the defining principle of his life. Shimaki was born in dire poverty, and raised by his mother when his father died when he was two. He entered Tohoku University in Sendai City through self-study including Marxist readings. He helped form the first labor union there and joined the Communist Party in 1927, for which he was imprisoned in 1928 for five years.²⁸ Agreeing not to participate in political activities, he was released in March 1932, but he could find no job and felt deeply shamed for betraying the cause (Keene *Dawn* 852). In this state of isolation, not unlike that of Dostoevsky, he was befriended by Kobayashi.

Shimaki wrote of his own experiences, and the novel ran “through nearly one hundred printings in a few years” (Keene *Dawn* 857).²⁹ Its tone was subdued because of the censorship, a predicament his readers

²⁷ Shimaki wrote of his experiences in his novel *Quest for Life* that ran “through nearly one hundred printings in a few years” (Keene *Dawn* 857), which “engendered one of the literary controversies of the 1930s” in the form of *tenkô* literature (Keene, *Dawn* 858). Moreover, it depicted “an *affirmation of life* that was precious in a period of warfare and a model on which to conduct their own lives” and remained popular long after Japan’s defeat in 1945 (Keene, *Dawn* 858). (My italics.)

²⁸ He was confined for three years of his sentence in a cell next to a leper, in an isolation ward for prisoners with contagious diseases, as he coughed up blood almost daily.

²⁹ As an instance of *tenkô* literature the novel “engendered one of the literary controversies of the 1930s” (Keene, *Dawn* 858). Shimaki’s first novel, *Saiken* (*Reconstruction*, June 1937), had been banned; the shock of this and loss of income could have led to his suicide (Keene, *Dawn* 855).

understood. While the “characters are unmemorable the incidents are quite ordinary” (Keene, *Dawn* 857), *Quest for Life* depicted “an *affirmation of life* that was precious in a period of warfare and a model on which to conduct their own lives” (Keene, *Dawn* 858). (My italics.) It remained popular long after Japan’s defeat in 1945, since many had suffered the shame of *tenkô*.

6.2.3 The Critical Impasse

Kobayashi’s description of the “I” of Shimaki, “burdened by forces of society and history,” has been lost in the discussions of critics. The important symposium, “*Shishôsetsuron o Megutte* [Surrounding *Shishôsetsuron*]” (*Kokubungaku*, February 1980),³⁰ concludes that the essay “*Shishôsetsuron*” is well thought out but extremely difficult to follow. Part 1 includes too many writers³¹ as do parts 2 and 3, which discuss Yokomitsu, Dostoevsky and Gide, then branch out further in various directions (61). The participants agreed on the following summary of “*Shishôsetsuron*”: (1) The proletarian method of literature decidedly killed off the tradition of the I-Novel. (2) The “I-Novel would probably emerge anew someday,” but the form of the “I” is unclear (64). (3) The term “tradition” may be expanded to include one’s “existence,” which means ideas gained in the actual life (*jisseikatsu*) that empowers the ideas (65). The article ends, however, without specifying how the “existence” of “the socialized I” applies, or what “existence” means in a particular society and period in history.

Another discussion of “*Shishôsetsuron*” is Hashikawa’s article, “Surrounding the ‘Socialized I.’” This neglects altogether the terms

³⁰ Consisting of Yoshida Hiroô (professor), Miyoshi Yukio (professor), and Takahashi Hideo (literary critic).

³¹ From Kafû to Tôson, and Japanese naturalist and realist writings relating to “*Shishôsetsuron*.”

“existence” and “socialized,” and concentrates on the “I” as *jiga*, re-defining it as a “traditional I” (Hashikawa 116-119).³² Hashikawa’s approach is dubious, nonetheless, as he replaces Kobayashi’s “*watakushi*” (the modern “I”) with *jiga* (a traditional self), which makes the “socialized I (*watakushi*)” read “socialized self (*jiga*)” (Hashikawa 111). He identifies the “I” as *jiga* but this is clearly stated as *watakushi* in the concluding question in “*Shishosetsuron*”: “Will they [writers] not admit that they have an “I” [*watakushi*] that they have been unable to vanquish?” Despite his lengthy discussion, Hashikawa fails to notice that Kobayashi did not intend the “I” to be understood in critical analyses but in real life (as in the case of Shimaki).

Discussions on “*Shishôsetsuron*” continued into the 1990s. Hijiya-Kirschnereit helps to clarify Kobayashi’s vocabulary by noting that the recent reading of *shishôsetsu* is more useful, permitting the abstract form of the “I” to mean “central author-hero” of the novel whether written in first or third person.³³ She then attributes the enormous difficulty of the essay to Kobayashi’s language or style:

His brilliant and cryptic style, rich in paradox, is a barrier to anyone who expects logical, deductive argument. Kobayashi does not argue, he states; he does not analyze, but presents thoughts that take their inner coherence from the subject itself. (Hijiya-Kirschnereit 82)

She fails to clarify, however, what she means by “[his thoughts] take their inner coherence from the subject itself.” For example, she writes that,

³² Hashikawa dismisses what he considers as Kobayashi’s modern “I” (*watakushi*) or “socialized I” as a failed expression of a Marxist ideal in the 1930s. Kobayashi defines *jiga* as a concept of “I” and *onore* as the “I” based on experience or “existence” (see Glossary for source).

³³ The older term *watakushishôsetsu* had limited application to the first-person “I” when some of the best “I-Novels” were written in the third person. Thus the term *shishôsetsu* won out over the term *watakushishôsetsu* for its comprehensiveness, when discussing the “I-Novel” as a separate new genre (Hijiya-Kirschnereit 2).

“Kobayashi developed his central argument using the term [the] “socialized I” (81), but concludes that “his concept of the “socialized ego [I]” evades any kind of definition” (82). Suzuki Tomi too fails to discuss the problematic areas of “*Shishôsetsuron*,” including the term “socialized I.” Though she credits Kobayashi’s essay as the most influential essay on the Japanese I-Novel, and on modern Japanese literature in general (Suzuki 56), she does not explain what makes the work so important.

That is, scholarly discussions neglect the struggles in Kobayashi’s life, his experimenting with his own “socialized I” in a time of censorship as he completed “*Shishôsetsuron*” (1935). Modern scholars have failed to understand what Kobayashi detested most—conceptualization and analyses (Kawakami *Kobayashi* 66). It is worth paying heed to Seidensticker’s words. “The problem of the ‘socialized I’ in literature may not be as important as that of striving to be such a person *in real life*” (1971, 438). (My italics.)

Kobayashi again warns against concepts and the need for “social sensitivity” (as of the “socialized I”) a month after writing “*Shishôsetsuron*.” He claims that a new I-Novel must be closely associated with the sufferings and joys of life (“*Shinjin Ekusu e* [Letter to the New X],” 1935).

Even the minds of the illiterate have a memory common to all humankind to remember the sufferings and joys of life. This memory provides the indispensable wisdom (*chie*) regarding literature describing people: This wisdom always *cautions against literature, originally produced by concepts*, that is spurred on by conceptual irritation. I believe [the idea] consists of a kind of *social sensitivity nurtured in wisdom*. (KHZ-A 6: 211-12) (My italics.)

The true source for a new “*Shishôsetsu*” lie in the kind of “wisdom” he refers to here, as discussed in Chapter 5 in the epigraph of “Various Patterns” and

in “critics’ failures” regarding “the ordinary person.” The next chapter explores this “wisdom” in the context of Kobayashi’s understanding of “destiny and history,” although express “in silence.”

6.3 Aoyama Jirô, M.S. and Marriage

Kobayashi struggled to rid himself of these “conceptual irritations,” with his first step occurring under Aoyama’s training in 1931 (as discussed in Chapter 5). A second step began in 1934, a year before Kobayashi wrote “*Shishôsetsuron*,” with Aoyama developing in him a “feeling” for forms of beauty that would replace conceptualization.

Central to the second step was the nineteen-year-old girl mentioned in Chapter 5, who continued to be part of Kobayashi’s training in a “feeling for” beauty the year before he began writing “The Life of Dostoevsky.” Kobayashi, however, was unaware of her importance until one day in 1937.

6.3.1 “Forms of Beauty” and M.S.

By all accounts, Sakamoto “Mûchan” Keiko (or M.S.) became that “form” of beauty for Kobayashi.³⁴ She was an honest, attractive and innocent looking girl of nineteen. Kobayashi and numerous others³⁵ sought a liaison

³⁴ She was working at the Rainbow Grill Restaurant in the basement of Osaka Building located near Hibiya Park near the Bungei Shunjû office, where word spread of her affair with a well-known writer at age 16 or 17, then numerous other writers. (Nonogami, *Memories* 17). There is a portrayal of M.S. in David C. Stahl’s book *The Burdens of Survival* (2003), pp. 186-210 (University of Hawaii Press). See also Ôoka’s depiction of M.S in his novel *Kaei* [*In the Shadow of Cherry Blossoms*] (trans. 1998).

³⁵ In addition to Ôoka and Kobayashi, other writers entered her life – such as Kikuchi Kan (1888-1948), Sakaguchi Ango (1906-1955), Kon Hidemi, Nakajima Kenzô (1903-1979), Ibuki Takehisa (1901-1982) and Nakahara Chûya — as well as critics, editors, noted musicians and drama performers (Nonogami, *Memories* 16-17).

with her, charmed by her sense of naivety as well as a boldness in her relationship with men (Shirasu, *Why Today* 106-08).³⁶ Kobayashi had planned to marry M.S. in 1931 and his passion for her remained, even as he met and married Mōri Kiyomi in 1934.³⁷ In 1937, three years after his marriage, Kobayashi discovered M.S. one night in the arms of his long-time friend Kawakami (Nonogami, *Memories* 22). The devastated Kobayashi explained to Nonogami, “You know I have a wife and child [born 1937], but I can’t forget M.S. I still like her, but I’ll forget her. I’ll treasure my friendship with Kawakami over anything else” (Nonogami, *Memories* 26).³⁸

Soon afterwards, Kobayashi began to purchase *objets d’art*, which Nonogami believes was “triggered” by his lost love (Nonogami *Memories* 15). Aoyama is more emphatic, claiming that Kobayashi’s training in the arts required his passion for the beauty of M.S. This rid Kobayashi of concepts regarding beauty that enabled him to transfer an embodied spirit of beauty to *objets d’arts*, beyond that confined only to the flesh.

³⁶ Chapter 9 of Shirasu’s *Why Aoyama Today* is devoted to M.S., a colorful portrait by someone who knew her intimately. Nonogami provides a more objective, narrative account.

³⁷ No doubt Kobayashi visited M.S. when she was working from 1935 in Ginza as a hostess (*jokyū*, “a girl who serves drinks and entertains”), where she remained popular among many, male and female.

³⁸ M.S. is a character in the novels *Saikai* [Meeting Again] (1951) and *Kaei* [In the Shadow of Cherry Blossoms], both written by Ōoka Shōhei. Shirasu claims these works fail to depict the deeper aspects of M.S. whom she knew well (Shirasu, *Why Today* 102). She attempted suicide numerous times as other men continued to enter her life, before finally taking her life in 1958 (Shirasu, *Why Today* 196).

6.3.2 The Second Step — a Feeling for a New Form

Nothing escaped Aoyama's eyes as he recognized the best of anything genuine including people and forms of traditional beauty (Shirasu, *Why Today* 22). Aoyama boasted that he lived the culture ("soul") of Japan. Aoyama, a legendary figure by 1934, attracted writers, painters, musicians, publishers, editors, curio shop owners, ceramists, barmaids, and even owners of "houses of pleasure" to his Hanaen apartments near Ichigaya Station in the Yotsuya area (Nonogami, *Friendship* 28).³⁹

Involved with *Bungakkai* and writing, Kobayashi had little time after 1934 to visit Aoyama at Hanaen Apartments, except for a few times a year (Shirasu *Why Today* 58). Instead, he accompanied Aoyama almost daily to curio shops and exhibitions for the next four to five years, though he showed little interest, but read busily in adjacent rooms.⁴⁰ Then one day in 1937, only a few months after he realized he had lost M.S., he "got that feeling" to make his first purchase. The owner of Konchûkyo Curio Shop supports the claims of Aoyama, "Only one who has suffered over a woman can understand beauty" (qtd. Nonogami *Memories* 15).

³⁹ Other notables included writers Kawakami, Ôoka, Nakamura M., and Nakahara Chûya. Kobayashi, in particular, seemed impressed with Aoyama, even moving into Hanaen Apartments for a brief period after his marriage in 1935, as had Nakahara in December of 1933 after his marriage. See chapter 5 for accounts of arguing all night with "sincerity," drinking, and visiting "houses of pleasure" to initiate young men into adulthood.

⁴⁰ Few of those around Aoyama could purchase objets d' art, as he advocated. They could not match his extravagance, and only the most devoted and self-sacrificing (everything for art) followed his instructions. Kobayashi and Nonogami attempted to do so (Nonogami, *Friendship* 37-38).

Aoyama had long urged the commonality of beauty, whether that of a woman or of the arts:

What the perceptive eyes are seeing are neither 'things' nor 'beauty.' They see the figures (*sugata*) of those things themselves. That [the perceptive] eyes see means not that a woman appears beautiful. It means the figures of things that reflect only in those who could not see them without the figures (Aoyama, "Thirty Years" 214).

Aoyama sees "figures" (outer forms) of beauty as intrinsic, whether regarding that of a woman or an objets d'art.

6.3.3 Kobayashi's Marriage

In 1934 Kobayashi married the non-distinguished Mori Kiyomi. This caused a stir in Kamakura, as her background was a quite unexpected one for a match with the most celebrated critic of the time. Without a college degree, she was rebuffed by the well-educated wives of the notable writers there (Nishimura, *My Cousin* 64). Uncle and aunt Jôya in Kamakura had aided Kobayashi's mother in finding a girl appropriate for her now reputable son, but she finally gave up in exasperation, writing to her daughter Junko: "We took pains to introduce several girls to him, but Hideo claimed mother was unable to find anyone to his liking, so I'll keep quiet and let him find someone himself" (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 89)

Some doubts surrounded the marriage.⁴¹ Rumors spread about the character of Kiyomi, whom Kobayashi had met working in a "café" as a

⁴¹ At first Kiyomi's father in Matsumoto, Nagano Prefecture, refused to allow the marriage, wanting an heir to the family, but Kiyomi finally managed to convince him. On the wedding day itself, Kobayashi began drinking with Aoyama during the wedding reception, and they both disappeared into the night, leaving the bride alone for the duration of the night. This was typical of Kobayashi. When he drank and discussed, he forgot all else, on this occasion his bride on his wedding day (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 95).

“*jokyû*,” (a girl who serves drinks and “entertains half-drunk men”).⁴² Nishimura, however, claims that despite rumors “*no one* doubts that Kobayashi truly considered her his true wife” (*My Cousin* 65). (My italics.) Another close friend, Kon Hidemi, makes a stronger statement, this time regarding Kiyomi’s character. Only she could “make Kobayashi a respectable man, husband and father” in all three categories. He further claims that Kobayashi’s “aggressive traits” (*hageshi*) would have “crazed” any other women who tried to have a close relationship with him (Kon “Friendship” 112). (Kobayashi, nonetheless, finds himself caught between three women: Kiyomi, M.S., and his mother.)

6.4 A New Form in “The Life of Dostoevsky”

Kobayashi sought a new form for Japanese literature that he considered lagged behind European literature by a hundred years about the time of his marriage. He sought to make an impact by instilling a new understanding of beauty and form in Japanese literature of a kind he learned under the influence of Aoyama. He chose Dostoevsky as a model.

6.4.1 Reasons for Writing on Dostoevsky

He specifies the reasons for choosing Dostoevsky. In 1934 he describes Dostoevsky’s writings as “*the richest, most fertile field wherein to explore issues of the I-Novel*,” and planned “to engage the secrets of this writer” (“Chaos in the Literary World,” January 1934) (trans. Anderer 66;

⁴² Nishimura Kôji explains in a letter to the author (Jan. 7, 1990) that he heard Kiyomi was working in a “café” around 1932-33 in Hanaen-machi in Shinjuku Ward. (See A.5.5.2 Nishimura Letters.) He continues that in those days a “café” meant a type of cabaret, which fact Takamizawa failed to mention in her book *My Brother Kobayashi Hideo*. Hanaen-machi is in the same town where Aoyama’s Hanaen Apartment was located.

KHZ-A 5:22-23). (My italics.) In 1935, he saw the project of “a lengthy criticism of Dostoevsky” as something he would profit from in terms of my *maturity (seichô)* (“*Futatabi Bungei Jihyo ni Tsuite* [On Literary Current Criticism, Once Again],” March 1935; KHZ-A 6:138-39). (My italics.) By 1936 he further formulated his reasons for selecting Dostoevsky in more detail :

I have chosen Dostoevsky as my “writing material” for a critical-type of creative writing; because in modern literary history, I believe that no other writer has given birth to so many enriching riddles The more I read his works, the more I sense his figure boldly alive, the more I lose interest in my ability to write criticism [My effort is] not to lose grasp of Dostoevsky's utterly magnificent but indescribable humanity. I find a new source of ultimate support I embrace the vague hope that *I can depict the impact that he left behind him.* (“*Shishin* [Personal Letter],” 1936; KHZ-A 7: 41). (My italics.)

For a form and style to write on Dostoevsky, Kobayashi first learned from the master critic, Sainte-Beuve (1804-69), who had created a “new form” of criticism in Europe, of a kind that Kobayashi sought for Japan in the 1930s. His method, according to Fowlie, expresses the characteristics of the mind or “*la forme de l'esprit*” that determines the writer's works (*French Literature* 174). In his twenty-four articles on “The Life of Dostoevsky” in *Bungakkai* (1935-1937), Kobayashi practiced this “form of art.” He reflected on this choice in the postwar period:

In short, literature is not literature to the extent that most people believe it to be. Literature is a *form of art*, of which I became more and more convinced ... I became dissatisfied with literary criticism and felt it had to be creative. Creative writing had to take *the form of beauty*. This urge became stronger and stronger. Writing clever analyses and conclusions became a total bore. (*Ara et al* 49) (My italics.)

Kobayashi experimented with “*la forme de l’esprit*” by including the objective aspects of a writer’s circumstances. He found it a more creative process than the purely subjective I-Novel in Japan based on confessions and descriptions of the self. It had lacked any force to discuss the individual and society (Yoshida Sei’ichiro, “For Those Readers of Modern Criticism”; Tanizawa ed. *Modern Criticism* 337).

6.4.2 Echoes in “The Life of Dostoevsky”

To clarify how Kobayashi sought to combine the life and works of Dostoevsky as a new form for Japan, this section returns to focal point one (“see the man”) to show its connections with focal point two (“see society”). Kobayashi was unaware how deeply Dostoevsky would affect him after 1935 (Keene, *Dawn, Criticism* 592). He discovered that all great writers, including Dostoevsky, wrote of man in conflict with the forces of society, history and nature.

6.4.2.1 Dostoevsky, the Man (“Behind literature, see the man.”)

Kobayashi saw Dostoevsky as “a man of spirit” and “conviction,” as expressed in his essay “*J.M. Mari ‘Dosutoebusuki II’*” (“J. M. Murry’s Dostoevsky II,” 1937):

Amidst the ideological anxieties following World War I, Murry concluded that the questions “how to live” and “how to comprehend Dostoevsky” consisted of one and the same question. Murry writes that, in the process of understanding Dostoevsky, he, for the first time, had understood the meaning of *conviction* (*kakushin*) as an inner, revolutionary-type experience. (KHZ-A 9: 52) (My italics.)

He also comments that, “Dostoevsky [in *Letters from the Underground*] recognized at depth an indescribable flow of a chaotic life ... and became aware that he [and humankind] must question how one should live in this type of world once he saw how awesome it actually was” (“*Dosutoebusuki no koto* [About Dostoevsky],” 1946; KHZ-A: 15:42).

Kobayashi saw Dostoevsky as fully engaged in life: he had taken part in writing literature and in political discussions (age 22-27); been imprisoned and sentenced to serve in the military in Siberia for ten years (age 28-38); struggled to write journalism and novels, and engaged in foreign travels, romantic affairs, and gambling sprees (age 39-50). Only in this last period did his insights deeply mature to enable him to begin writing his masterpieces, *Crime and Punishment* (1866, age 45), *The Idiot* (1868, age 47), and *The Devils* (1871, age 50). Then a year before his death he completed his final great work, *Brothers Karamazov* (1879-80, age 59).⁴³

Kobayashi contends that it was Dostoevsky's last work, *A Writer's Diary* (1881), written at age sixty, that best served to reveal his person. Of this work, Kobayashi remarks: “In what an irritating and contradictory form it was that [the person of Dostoevsky] dealt with the assortment of events [that make up] ... the chaos of modern Russia” (“The Life of Dostoevsky” (Part 9): “*Sakka no Nikki* [Diary of the Writer],” KHZ-A 11: 296-7). The “irritating and contradictory form” of Dostoevsky is important since it is asymmetrical, or disorganized, allowing for readers to fill in and imagine what is missing in the organization. In this respect Japanese art forms

⁴³ Kobayashi made statements that often lacked scholarship, i.e. without providing adequate explanations and sufficient evidence. This was particularly true of such remarks as, “Dostoevsky was a thinking Raskonikov type, not the simple, peasant Marey type,” without clarifying what he meant by the “Marey type” (KHZ-A 11:297).

differed from Chinese art forms which seek the perfection of symmetry. (See Chapter 9, Shirasu's description of art.)

6.4.2.2 The Problem of Evil

For Dostoevsky the question of "how one should live" this "chaotic life" inevitably raised the problem of evil. Kobayashi had gained a new insight into beauty in 1937. In the same year he confronted the problem of evil in the figure of Nicholas Stavrogin from Dostoevsky's *The Devils*.⁴⁴ The important essay "*Akurei*" ("The Devils," 1937) was toned down to pass the censorship, and only in the postwar period did Kawakami clarify what Kobayashi had attempted to depict. It was the spirit of Stavrogin: a brutality rooted in the spirit of Western civilization that Japan had imported.

Dostoevsky began to see more of the character of Stavrogin as part of himself:

[Stavrogin] was to be a 'man with [a great] idea,' which absorbs [Dostoevsky] completely, though not so much intellectually as by becoming *embodied* in him and *merging with his own nature*, always accompanied by suffering and unrest. (Magarshak, *The Devils* ix) (My italics.)

Kobayashi's interest in the problem of evil was pointed out by Kawakami Tetsutarô's 1955 essay "*Kobayashiron* [Discussions on Kobayashi Hideo]," then again in another essay of the same title in 1964 that discusses more extensively the problem of evil and civilization.⁴⁵ In a similar vein, Hosea Hirata provides the first discussion in English of this aspect of Kobayashi's writings, in *Discourses of Seduction—History, Evil, Desire, and*

⁴⁴ Stavrogin was Kobayashi's favorite Dostoevskian figure (Kawakami, *Kobayashi* 69).

⁴⁵ Kawakawa was one of the closest to Kobayashi during the war years as they published and sponsored symposia together in the latter 1930s through the early 1940s.

Modern Japanese Literature (2005). He argues that Kobayashi, like the Symbolists, traced “evil” to the inability of the human consciousness to see reality because of the excess of abstract concepts and deceptive images.

6.4.2.3 The Man in Society (“Behind the man, see society.”)

As discussed above, Kobayashi stressed in “*Shishôsetsuron*” the need for a writer to engage in society (the “socialized I”), a task Kobayashi “experimented on himself [in life],” unable to dissociate himself from the personal circumstances pressing upon him in the mid-1930s (Honda 151-52). Writing about Dostoevsky’s life in oppressive Czarist Russia reminded him of his own situation in militaristic Japan (Awazu, “Kobayashi” 178), and the need for *Bungakkai* as a journal of “free expression” in an oppressive Japan.

Kobayashi had early grown weary of the façade and oppression of Japanese society, and disenchanted with the trivial descriptions of the inner self as seen in the I-Novels. In the works of Dostoevsky, he sought something more substantial by which he could glean an understanding of the social, political, economic and historical milieu (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 118-19).⁴⁶ Dostoevsky asked his singular question, “How should I live?” in the chaos (turmoil) of modernity. Kobayashi found Dostoevsky’s essential answer in the word *shinnen* (beliefs) and in commitment (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 161).

⁴⁶ Beginning in 1931 Kobayashi found Dostoevsky’s writings so fascinating that he reread everything that he had read earlier in middle school, higher school and university.

Chapter 7

The Early Cultural Critic (1938 - 1939)

Focal Point Three: “Behind society, see the duality of history”

7.0 Introduction

Chapter 6 examined Kobayashi’s second focal point, “Behind the man, see society” (1933-37), describing Kobayashi the social critic who focused on the need for a “new individual.” It followed the Manchurian Incident (1931)¹ in the context of an increasingly regimented media, and an escapist mass literature that helped create a population prepared to blindly follow government dictates.

Then the China or Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July 1937 forced him to explain the nature of war, turning Kobayashi into an early cultural critic.² His words, “bright eyes, but a dark heart,” expressed his views on the China War in his essay “*Zakki*” (“Miscellaneous Writings” KHZ-A 10:126) composed just before his foreign travels in 1938.³ He does not fully resolve this expression until his third monumental writing, “On History” (1938-39), which propounds focal point three, “Behind society, see the duality of history.”

He faced two facts. First, the Japanese were unable to alter the historical and economic forces that led to the China Incident (War). Second, ordinary Japanese were responding to an unalterable course of events in

¹ The Japanese name was Manshûkoku, and officially Manchoukuo (north-east China) following the Chinese pronunciation of the characters.

² Kobayashi and Kawakami decided to turn *Bungakkai* into a general culture magazine (*bunka sogo zasshi*) in the spring of 1937 (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 222).

³ In spring, he went as special correspondent to Shanghai and presented Hino Ashihei (1907-60) with the sixth Akutagawa Prize for Literature in Hangchow on March 27. He returned to Japan a month later on April 28. His fall trip lasted from October to December.

“silence,” which signified their inability to clearly express a vague “belief” called “inevitability” and “destiny” or “fate”.

This chapter traces the years leading to the China Incident (1937), his two trips to the Continent (1938), his writing on the trips including the “expression of silence” and the subtlety of the Japanese language.

7.1 The Years Before the First Trip (1933-37)

In 1933, Japan walked out of the League of Nations to pursue its own mission in China, to “liberate” it. Dorsey quotes Najita and Harootunian and assesses their words:

‘[T]he new culturalism of the 1930s proposed that Japan was appointed to lead the world to a higher level of cultural synthesis that surpassed Western modernism itself’ (Najita, qtd. in Dorsey, 167). This is a fair depiction of the overall trend, and it is easy to see how this *sense of destiny* prompted even many Marxists and liberal thinkers to adjust their oppositional stance concerning Japan’s national agenda first in China and later through war with the West. (Dorsey 168-69). (My italics.)

In this context, Kobayashi expressed views in 1936-37 which seem to fluctuate. In 1936, he states that the Japanese culture is like a “frog in the well.”⁴ Then in 1937 he expresses his view that a Japanese indebted to Japan for a livelihood could not consider his life his own in time of war (“*Sensô ni tsuite* [On War, 1937],” KHZ-A 10: 15). By April 1938, he describes his doubts after seeing censorship in force and gaining first hand experience of China.

⁴ “Frog in the well knows nothing of the great ocean” (*I no naka no kawazu taikai o shirazu.* 井の中の蛙、大海を知らず。)

7.1.1 “A Frog in the Well” (March 1936)

Two years before his first trip abroad, Kishida Kunio⁵ asked at a farewell party for Yokomitsu (who was preparing for his trip to France): “Is Japan a civilized country?” Kobayashi replied, describing Japanese culture as still “a frog in the well,” having just read that France had over three-hundred cultural awards compared to Japan’s two or three. Kobayashi simply advised Yokomitsu before his trip on the need for an *éducation sensationnelle* (“education of one’s sensitivities or feelings”) for anyone reared as a “frog in the well” (“Frog,” KHZ-A 7: 57). Culturally speaking, Kobayashi saw Japan as a self-assured, inward-looking, island country that was ignorant of the outer world.

Kobayashi longed to travel abroad not only to expose himself to the outside world, but also to see the continent and the façade of modern Japanese society from the outside. Kobayashi suggests that Western modernization has rendered Japanese society unable to reflect the whole face of Japanese culture (“Frog,” KHZ-A 7: 54).

Kobayashi looked for an *éducation sensationnelle* of his own within the thoughts and emotions of the ordinary people, noting that Dostoevsky asked not about exotic sites, but human-oriented questions as he traveled: “What is freedom?” and “What is love for one’s fellow beings?” (KHZ-A 11: 207). He had written this a year before in February 1935 in “The Life of Dostoevsky.”

Thus, on his trip in 1938, Kobayashi wrote about the faces of Japanese volunteer youths, a village head, civilians and even Russians, but

⁵ Kishida Kunio (1890-1954) was a dramatist and one of the founders of Bungaku-za (Literary Theatre) in 1937, which gave attention to works of literary value like those he saw in Paris. He served as head of a major patriotic organizations during the war when he stopped writing plays (1936-48) (Keene, *Dawn, Criticism* 471-477).

not about dramatic war scenes. Unfortunately, however, he found the faces of the Chinese difficult to understand, which he likened to his inability to find quality literature by modern Chinese writers, except for Lu Xun. (Kobayashi later promoted Chinese quality writing on his two trips to China in 1943-44, as is made clear by new evidence published in 2000, discussed in Chapter 9.)

7.1.2 Five Months Before: “Fate,” “Reactionary,” and “Contradictions”

Five months before his first trip abroad, Kobayashi wrote what appeared to be a reactionary article, “On War” (November 1937), which actually had been submitted for publication soon after the China Incident. He wrote, “It is our fate (*unmei*) to be born as a Japanese We must consider the current war as a trial for Japanese capitalism and all Japanese” (“On War,” KHZ-A 10: 15).⁶ Yet he writes that he was not a “fatalist” blindly accepting the idea of “fate”: “We should not concede ourselves to be fatalists and defeatists and abandon effort” (KHZ-A 10: 15).

He continues in the same essay with a statement that sounds almost naïve:

I was asked about my resolution (*kakugo*) about the war by a magazine. I had never considered any special resolution reserved for the literati. If the time came to bear a rifle, I would gladly die for the country. I can think of no other resolution. It makes no sense to bear a rifle as a member of the literati. Anyone would fight as a soldier. (“On War,” KHZ-A 10: 13-14)

⁶ Similar remarks are made in “Literature and Myself,” 1940 (KHZ-A 13: 140).

Tanizawa Ei'ichi,⁷ claims that particularly after Kobayashi saw China in 1938 he altered his views regarding the China War and his desire to fight “as a soldier” (*Current Criticism* 34). This is not entirely correct, as Kobayashi made a similar statement in 1940 (“Literature and Myself” 141-42).

In the same essay “On War,” Kobayashi further explains that his views were far from absolute: “All hold a ‘wisdom’ (*chie*) regarding fate,” and, “[I]t is all important that this wisdom⁸ be slowly developed” (KHZ-A 10:15). He was aware of the contradiction of fighting a war for the sake of peace, that is, “the means justifying the end.” Living with this contradiction, he concludes: “Who can hope to live his life without contradictions? If I must die for my countrymen, I must die. I am only human ... ” (“On War,” KHZ-A 10: 18).

7.1.3 Two Months Before: “Demagogues” and “Doubts”

Two months before his trip abroad in January 1938, Kobayashi saw the political effects of war, an increase in censorship. The government banned the sale of the 1938 New Year issue of *Bungakkai* “for featuring the article *Shina o Kataru*” (“Reports from China”), by coterie members, Hayashi Fusao⁹ and Kishida Kunio. They reported on the China situation in a symposium form.¹⁰ The censorship clearly upset the coterie writers (Etô,

⁷ Tanizawa Ei'ichi (1929-). Professor at Kwansei University and scholar of modern Japanese literature.

⁸ The word “wisdom,” unclear here, was discussed in Chapter 6 as that which “developed in the sufferings and joys of life.” It appears in a new form in “Impressions of Manchuria,” January 1939, as will be discussed.

⁹ Hayashi Fusao (1903-75) was a *tenkô* writer (imprisoned in 1930-32) who advocated Japanese expansionism in “his love of Japan and hatred of the Western colonial presence in Asia” (Keene, *Dawn* 889).

¹⁰ Either the reports’ critical remarks of the war or the *Bungakkai*’s “uncooperative policy” announced in the December issue led to the censorship.

Kobayashi 216), which led to Kobayashi criticizing the banning of the January issue of *Bungakkai* in January.¹¹

Kobayashi lambasted the authorities, calling them “demagogues” in a February essay: “At this time, nothing can be worse than the demagogues that control thoughts” (KHZ-A 10: 122).¹² Kobayashi was scathing about the government’s controls, knowing well about the harm arising from the long-term ban on Dostoevsky’s ideas in his journals.

Then just before his travel departure in March 1938, Kobayashi expressed his “doubt” (that tended to “solidify”) regarding the Incident based on the reports from China.

I have always lived dissatisfied. It is true now and unfortunately it will be true in the future. Some claim that I believed in some idea (*shisô*), but this is not so.

A basic doubt (*kaigi*) [regarding ideas] has not changed in the least from the past, but far from it, it (*kaigi*) has tended only to further solidify. “I have *bright eyes, but a dark heart*,”... (“*Zakki* [Miscellaneous Writings, March 1938],” KHZ-A 10: 126). (My italics.)

He expressed his ability to somehow brighten his eyes but not in any way his “dark heart.”

Kobayashi’s protest did little to prevent his own report (spring 1938) wired in from China from being censored (“*Jûgunsha no Kansô* [Afterthoughts of a War Correspondent],” July 1938; KHZ-A 190). Furthermore, parts of another essay, “Soochow” (“Soshû,” 1938), were

¹¹ Kobayashi comments on the censorship that Dostoevsky suffered in his article on Dostoevsky in *Bungakkai* in November 1935.

¹² “*Shisô Tôsei to Dema*” (“Thought Control and Demagogue,” 1938; KHZ-A 10:122).

censored, according to Yoshida and Horiuchi (*Bibliography: Kobayashi Hideo*, 81)

7.1.4 The Third Stage under Aoyama: From “Feeling” to “Seeing (Eyes)”

In the following months and years Kobayashi wrote two full volumes reporting on the war, far beyond the total hundred pages¹³ of other reporters, claims Shimaki (254). Shimaki credits this to Kobayashi’s seeing (and hearing) much on the Continent with the certainty and liveliness of an artist’s eyes. Shimaki describes Kobayashi’s words then: “Seeing is thinking, and thinking is seeing. The eyes and the mind function as if one entity” (rpt. in KHZ-A 10:255).¹⁴

The previous year, 1937, Kobayashi had yelled out, “I’ll buy it!” and begun a buying spree of objets d’art that even Aoyama could not control (Aoyama, “Thirty Years” 209)¹⁵. The final stage of “seeing” the soul of beauty was a most difficult task, explains Aoyama (“Thirty Years,” 211). “To see” enabled one to distinguish in the life cycle of objets d’art between a period of “spontaneity” of creative beauty and that of “stagnation” of mimetic beauty.¹⁶ Typical of Kobayashi, he struggled beyond the limits of others, determined as an artistic writer to develop his ability “to see” (“Thirty Years” 212-13).¹⁷

¹³ “Pages” referred to here exclude novels.

¹⁴ Shimaki, “*Kobayashi Hideo no Ryokôki* (Record of Kobayashi Hideo’s Travels),” August 1940.

¹⁵ Aoyama claims that Kobayashi made his first purchase in 1937 in “Thirty Years with Kobayashi,” and Nonogami argues it was in 1938 in *Certain Memories*.

¹⁶ Kobayashi began to recognize at first glance the period and place of a beautiful item as readily as identifying a person’s country and generation from a person’s face. (“Thirty Years” 213).

¹⁷ This last period corresponded with a new interest in Kobayashi in the tradition of classical Japanese literature, whose importance Kobayashi then accepts in his essay “*Taema*,” as noted by Shirasu (*Playful* 56).

7.2 The First Trip (March 25 - April 26 and after, 1938)

This section describes what transpired a few months after Kobayashi heard of “an awesome situation”(“*mô taihen na koto*”) following the Incident of July 1937. He considered that writing about that kind of “situation” should be reserved only for writers who possessed the feeling (*kankaku*) of awe, a disposition which most journalists lack (“Return” KHZ-A 10:171). Kobayashi arrived in southern China soon after the atrocities in Nanking¹⁸ as a special war correspondent¹⁹ for the *Bungei Shunjû* magazine. His first trip (a month long) took him to the southern part of China and ended in Shanghai, where he reconsidered the direction of his career as he rewrote his work on Dostoevsky.

7.2.1 First Trip and After: “A Dark Heart” and “Seed of Culture”

Kobayashi first spent a few days in Kanchow, Soochow, and Nanking (the then capital, ravaged in January) before stopping in Shanghai (see Appendix A.5.3.3, Trips to the Continent). In the first article that he wired in he wrote, “I became neither a pessimist nor an optimist.” He continues that “It is foolish to think that one’s basic thinking would change by merely observing the after-effects of war” (qtd. in Etô, *Kobayashi* 217; “*Zakki* [Miscellaneous Writings],” June, 1938; KHZ-A 10: 174). For the most part, Kobayashi blandly describes the cultural scenes of China in the late 1930s, mixing in sights of beauty with the scenes of a war-torn country.²⁰ The trip ended in Shanghai where Kobayashi’s thoughts were absorbed in

¹⁸ The massacre and atrocities took place during a six week period from mid-December to the end of January 1938, causing 350,000 deaths.

¹⁹ See a list of five sent in 1937 and of twenty-three sent in 1938 (Hosoya 115).

²⁰ James Dorsey’s dissertation (p. 224 - 237) well describes Kobayashi’s tour-like trips.

rewriting his manuscript, “The Life of Dostoevsky,” an important task (1938-39) in that period.

Kobayashi summarized his “lingering feelings” when he returned from the first trip.²¹ He writes that, “Of course, I cannot express this darkness in me in a concrete way. I can only relate what I feel as a writer” (“Return” KHZ-A 10: 169). Though he found the situation in China “awesome,” he felt that he had profited by “gaining something in sensibilities” in 1938: “Gaining the sensibilities (*kankaku*) was worth the trip. Such ‘sensibility’ is most precious to us literati” (“Return” KHZ-A 10: 171), an indication that he had gained what he earlier called an “*éducation sensationnelle*.” Etô claims that the lingering “dark heart” continued to dominate his “bright eyes,” and that his term “something invigorating” consisting of a “beauty”²² had helped him bear his “dark heart” (*Kobayashi* 218-19).²³

Kobayashi introduces the idea of a “seed of culture” in May 1938:

A seed of culture that attempts to see through this crisis and to the next period resides in the culture developed (since the Meiji Period) by the Japanese I believe that with *this resolution*, we must deal with this crisis. (“Return” KHZ-A 10: 171) (My italics.)

He refers to this “seed of culture” again in “Impressions of Manchuria” (January 1939).

²¹ Kobayashi drank all night with Saitô, his friend since middle-school, who was sent in December 1937 to Shanghai as an *Asahi Shimbun* reporter to cover the attack on Nanking, which ended in mid-January (KHZ-Bekkan II, 203). Kobayashi talked to him in spring and probably heard something then that he could not publish.

²² Found in the art work of Chinese youths, for example.

²³ Refer to the essay “*Kôshû*” (“Hangchow,” May 1938; KHZ-A 10:134).

7.2.2 Sense of “Isolation” and “Decay of Civilization”

At the end of his first trip Kobayashi described a “sense of isolation” in Shanghai, which he recalls in the postwar symposium “*Comédie Littéraire—Kobayashi Hideo o Kakonde*”(1946):

I was traveling around China [March-April,1938] without doing any serious writing. But I was deep in thought only about my work on Dostoevsky. I had written over a thousand manuscript pages about to be published but couldn't send it in after rereading the manuscript. I still felt like rewriting it. I also longed for Japan to be victorious [in 1938] as long as Japan was at war, and an optimist (*rakutenka*) like me abhorred defeat. *However I would enter a separate realm from the war when I did work on Dostoevsky.* I always returned to this state when I felt entirely *isolated*. (My italics.) (Ara *et al*, KHZ-A 15:60) (My italics.)

It is clear that from 1938 Kobayashi was no longer in the mainstream thought of the *bundan* (literary circle). Kobayashi and a few other writers who returned from China became “exiles within Japan” (*kokunai bômeisha*) (Tanizawa 34). Kobayashi finally ended his ties with the *bundan* in 1940, resigning as “permanent advisory member” of *Bungakkai* (Tanizawa 32).²⁴

Few Japanese intellectuals had understood Kobayashi's thoughts as expressed in the figure of Stavrogin in his series “The Devils” (July-November 1937), given the ambiguous way it was written. Kawakami explained in the postwar period that Kobayashi attempted in the series to criticize their inability to detect Hitler as a source of evil, the culmination of a long process of a degrading culture and civilization (*My Kobayashi* 68).

²⁴ A year later in 1941, he began to enter the realm of classical Japanese literature by writing “Tradition” (“*Dentô*”) and finally completed the shift by writing “*Taema*” in 1942.

7.3 “Wisdom of Silence” on the China War: The Second Trip (October - December 1938)

Kobayashi completed five or six essays between May and September after his first trip. He then departed on his second trip (from October to December), this time an extensive one to the northern part, Korea, Manchuria and northern China. (See Appendix A.5.3.3: First Two Trips Abroad.) He went by boat from Shimonoseki to Pusan with the writer Hayashi Fusao and a sculptor. The latter arranged the trip and accompanied Kobayashi up through Korea to north of Manchuria.²⁵ He appears to have returned alone by way of Peking.

7.3.1 Cultural Affinity and Distance

Kobayashi’s essay “Impression of Manchuria” (January 1939), first reads like a travelogue but then expresses a deeper dimension. Kobayashi encounters Japanese youths who are poorly clothed and housed at a training camp for the Manchurian-Mongolian Colonization Volunteer Youth Corps (*Manmô Takushoku Shônen Giyûtai*). He visits the colonial settlement Mizuho, where the village head explains life in that area.

Later on the trip, Kobayashi claims that he could identify with the numerous Russians in Manchuria much better than any foreign diplomat because of his love of Russian literature.²⁶ Kobayashi felt that, from his

²⁵ The train took them all the way north to Heilong City on the Amur River which divides Manchuria from Russia. They then returned south on the same railroad up to Luitiaogou. From there he traveled alone to Tianjin City southeast of Beijing, then to Beijing and toward the Great Wall.

²⁶ I experienced something quite mysterious gazing at the Russians in Manchuria... . [I]n Harbin, the faces of the beggar, the driver, the barmaid, and the hotel bellhop all brought back the names of characters from the Russian novels I once adored. (trans. Dorsey 238; “Manchuria”; KHZ-A 11: 11).

reading, he could identify with even an old man in the street (“Manchuria,” KHZ-A 11: 12). However, he explains that he found identifying with the Chinese difficult due to the lack of quality writing in modern Chinese literature, with the exception of Lu Xun (Rogin, 1881-1936, critic and novelist). “Still, it is much harder for me to pick out Ah Q’s face in the streets of Peking” (“Manchuria,” KHZ-A 11: 12). Kobayashi finds China an enigmatic country and the people difficult to understand—and Japan a nation with a subtle culture.

7.3 2 “Japanese Manner,” “Wisdom,” and “Subtlety”

Kobayashi describes various responses of the Japanese since the Meiji Period as synthesized with Western thought in “a very Japanese manner” (*Nihonjin-rashii*).

We have never ceased being Japanese. We have but thought from time to time we have done so. To be sure, such ideologies as liberalism and Marxism are Occidental (*seio*), but when we look back upon ideologies and isms and the like, we must be struck with the *very Japanese manner* in which we have accepted them. (“Impressions of Manchuria,” January 1939; trans. Seidensticker [1971] 419; KHZ-A 11:14) (My italics.)

Seidensticker claims that Kobayashi argues for a “broader cultural history” as practiced in the earlier periods against the narrowness of “the radical nationalists who rejected all Occidental thought, which [Kobayashi] suggests led them to an impasse” (“Kobayashi” [1979] 178).

“[W]e have failed to capture the unchanging image of the Japanese that is there. It can never be said that the ideology of the West has poisoned us. To treat so simply of the past ... is to insult the life one lives now, both in the case of the

individual and in matters of *broader cultural history*
(trans. Seidensticker 1971: 419-20; KHZ-A 11:14-15)
(My italics.)

Kobayashi points out the dual failure of Japanese intellectuals: their inability to see and then to express the “subtlety” (“*bimyô-sa*”) of the “Japanese manner” of accepting Western thought.

He who believes that Western thought has obliterated the Japanese spirit sees only the form and *has overlooked* the subtle workings of the spirit under Westernization. In the subtlety is the modern Japanese The modern Japanese, however, *has failed* to give accurate description of the subtlety. This is *the greatest lack* of modern culture. (KHZ-A 11: 15) (My italics.)

7.3.3 “Lack of Expression”

Kobayashi blames the chaotic state of modern culture for the “lack of expression” in the Japanese language:

The *fixed modes of expressions* have failed to clarify *the vague wisdom* expressed by the Japanese What poverty of language the Japanese possess to provide ideological expressions We have merely been lackadaisical, not wanting to somehow complete this difficult task [of providing expression]. (KHZ-A 11: 16) (My italics.)

Then he attacks the “facile forms of expressions” resorted to by Japanese politicians, military men, and scholars — the very people who control the media of language and culture.

Politicians and military men and scholars talk with all their might of the virtues of the Japanese people. Alas, the virtues of the Japanese people are subtle affairs that refuse to submit to their pat formulations. (trans. Seidensticker [1971], 451: KHZ-A 11: 17)

Kobayashi looks to find alternatives for “pat formulations” and “slogans.” He finally sees the subtlety of the other silent, modern Japanese, a realm no Japanese intellectual had hitherto attempted to explain:

The mutual understanding that lies behind the silence of “the other Japanese” supports but slight[ly] the confusion of words on the surface. (trans. Seidensticker [1971], 451: KHZ-A 11: 17)

Kobayashi later writes of this “silence”²⁷ in August 1939 in the essay “Doubt II,” but only in terms of a vague kind of “wisdom,” which he claims requires “a new philosophical expression.”

The people of this nation have *coped with the war in silence* The fact that they have coped in silence is a defining characteristic of our war with China The wisdom whereby the people have responded unerringly and effectively at this juncture has not yet taken shape as *a new philosophical expression*. [T]his wisdom has not had the leisure to assume some facile form of expression. As a critic I relish the work of sniffing out this wisdom scattered about the landscape. Everything else is trivial. (trans. Dorsey 256; KHZ-A 12: 201: 68) (My italics.)

Kobayashi admits the term “wisdom,” is difficult to express, but similarly difficult to define are the terms “nationalism” and “inevitability” to define. To

²⁷ Dorsey claims that coping with the war in silence led to Kobayashi expressing “full support even of censorship and thought control” (Dorsey 256). This study holds that “silence” expresses an attitude of “fate.” The majority of Issei (first generation) Japanese interned in the U.S. during WWII, for example, used the term *shikata ga nai* (“It can’t be helped”), when faced with a situation beyond their control. The Nisei (second generation) Japanese, however, were not as passive in accepting “fate” (Niiya 311).

refute the rhetoric of meaningless ideology, Kobayashi came to believe not in the definitions of words, but in the form (*katachi*) of “words expressed in silence”²⁸ (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 70).

7.3.4 An Approach to “Nationalism”: Common Sense

In 1937, Kobayashi had warned against haphazard slogans, which lead to an “overfeeding on ideology.” (See Section 4.3.5 for “nationalism.”)

I am no blind believer in nation and race, but I want above all to avoid the malady called historical inevitability [of ideology]. Let persons of leisure go on arguing forever that Japanese nationalism is mystical and anti-rational. I expect nothing at all from the intellectuals, sick on overfeeding on ideology (trans. Seidensticker [1979] 178); “On War,” KHZ-A 10:15)

Kobayashi attacks such “blind believers” although he admits to his own inability to properly express the Incident with any “powerful idea.” Thus to deal with the crisis, he refers to the need for “common sense,” which term too has not yet been clearly defined.

We have a policy to deal with the “period of crisis” but actually no ideology for it. A powerful idea is always considered for all times, and such idea is most effective for a “period in crisis” People have carefully constructed the idea of *common sense* for all times for the longest period. Take notice how the *common sense* of the people will cope with this “period of crisis” with impact and strength. (“Return,” May 1938, KHZ-A 10: 170) (My italics.)

Kobayashi associates the idea of “common sense”²⁹ with “a seed of culture,” mentioned earlier in referring to the essay “Return from China” (May 1938)

²⁸ Paraphrased from Kawakami's words “words become silent” (*kotoba ga chinmoku suru*).

7.3.5 Missionary Christie: “Personal Impressions” (March 1939)

Regarding the term “common sense,” perhaps the missionary Dugald Christie provides a clue, based on his claim to have freed himself from preconceptions in order to see reality as it is — an approach that he no doubt sought for Japanese leaders and intellectuals in the late 1930s.

During his long train trip through Manchuria on his second visit to China, Kobayashi read a book by Dugald Christie, *Thirty Years in Mukden: 1883-1913*³⁰ (published in 1914) which included impressions of this medical missionary, free of detailed analyses of purposes and intent. He writes in the preface of the book that it is neither a history nor a detailed autobiography:

[T]here are other books about Manchuria, the war, and missionary activities there. The book comprises *personal impressions*. It attempts to describe [my] life in the midst of the Far East in full change from the past and the rapid developments in the Far East which has resulted into the Incident. (“*Kurisuti no Hôten Sanjunen* [Thirty Years in Mukden],” KHZ-A 7: 62) (My italics.)

Christie’s attitude never changed in his thirty years. He was always quietly confident that he would live among the “suffering of the innocent people” of Manchuria in floods and pestilence (KHZ-A 11:63). He was also there during political events, such as the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), and the Popular Revolution of

²⁹ See Appendix A.5.6.1, where Ôoka notes an understanding of “common sense” based on “innocence” (*muku*), “self awareness,” “life’s secrets,” etc.

³⁰ The new translation of *Hôten Sanjunen* was published by Iwanami Shoten in 1938. Hôten today is known as Shenyang. Christie from Scotland died in 1922 after forty years of work, thirty years in Mukden (also Moukden), the former name of Manchuria.

China (1911). Kobayashi comments that the approach of this genuine missionary vastly differed from the Japanese ambitions in Manchuria.

The book merely depicts that he found *the ordinary human figure deep in the customs and manners of the Manchurians* that contrasted from those of his own, and he steadily grasped and refused to relinquish this figure This reminds us that an idealist is one who perhaps refuses to speak of ideals ... and how rare to find not overcome by one's own ideals.. ("Christie," KHZ-A 11: 63-64) (My italics.)

Christie did not need "evangelism" (*dendô*) as he wrote, "I do not write of important evangelistic activities" (KHZ-A 11:64). In Kobayashi's view, Christie was thus a religious man who understood the essence of religion — that is, a person emptied of pre-determined purposes who truly saw the genuine situation of a people.

Christie had also become concerned about the lost opportunity after the Russo-Japanese War when the Japanese civilians came.

The Japanese lost the golden opportunity [to join hands] with the Manchurian people due to [the arrogance of] Japanese civilians during peace time. The civilians of a victorious country planted hatred and doubt among the Manchurian people. ("Christie," KHZ-A 11: 64)

Kobayashi further criticizes the Japanese for failing to inform Western readers about the Japanese heart and soul. Their intellectual volumes were limited to political analyses and the China War, which did little to improve Westerners' cultural understanding of the Japanese ("Impressions" KHZ-A 11: 12). This need undoubtedly drove Kobayashi to write about "history" as the culture of the "heart and soul" of the Japanese, not for the Westerner but for himself and his readers. This he did after his return in December 1938, writing not only "On History" in 1938-39 and

“History and Literature” in 1941, but also working on the publication of *The Life of Dostoevsky*.

7.3.6 “Makers of History”

The same year, Kobayashi’s new approach to “seeing” history led to the term the “living eye” in an essay of November 1939: “That living eye for history ... [is] to beat the discipline of history into a new shape” (*Rekishino Katsugan* [The Living Eye for History, November 1939],” KHZ-A 12: 259). Kobayashi came to prefer “makers of history” as the war [WWII] approached, “over searchers for patterns ... in historical materials (*shiryô*)” (Seidensticker “Kobayashi” [1971] 441). That is, only those who live in and “make” history are able to “see” history. (See Chapter 8.)

Before his trips abroad, Kobayashi acquainted himself with the writings of Lu Xun or Rojin (1881-1936), the great Chinese critic and poet who early resisted the Japanese intrusion into Manchuria (KHZ-A 11: 14).³¹ Kobayashi considered him not the greatest writer, but a magnificent performer of life, a kind of writer China needed to produce more of (KHK-A 15: 37).

Kobayashi also saw the novelist Shimaki Kensaku as a creator of history, not only as the creator of a new I-Novel. He remarked in 1939): “The writer is moved by history, moves history, and truly understands history within the self (*jiko*) that is living in the present. Understanding a generalized history [in studies] contrasts with comprehending [in life] an actual process of history. [History] involves the ego (*jiga*) of the writer The writer only grasps his own truth [in history] (KHZ-A “Quest”

³¹ He had sojourned in Japan for nine years (1902-11) including part of his education as a medical student.

10:202-03).³² He wrote the essay “On History” (1938-39) as his own attempt to beat history “into a new shape.”

7.4 “On History” (1938 - 39)

Iris Chang writes of the “Rape of Nanking” that millennia of history make clear that no race or culture is free of “wartime cruelty.” “The veneer of civilization seems to be exceedingly thin — one that can be easily stripped away, especially by the stresses of war” (*Rape* 55). Her statement challenges readers to face the problem of the “cultural forces” which tend to “make devils of us all.”³³ It is in this context, that this study discusses Kobayashi’s essay “On History,” written a year after his series “The Devils” (1937).

Kobayashi’s first major expression of his idea of history occurs in parts 1 and 2 (October 1938) of “On History,” to which he added parts 3 and 4 after his second trip in May 1939. Then he arranged for “On History” to be published as the Preface of *The Life of Dostoevsky* as its introduction.

7.4.1 The Inevitable

Seidensticker comments on the differences between “On History” (1938-39) and “History and Literature” (1941):

In the earlier work two forces are seen in opposition, nature trying to obliterate man and ... man trying to humanize nature. In the latter work, the dehumanizing force [of

³² “*Shimazaki Kensaku no ‘Zoku Seikatsu no Tansaku’ o Megutte* [Surrounding Shimazaki Kensaku’s ‘Sequel, Quest into Life],” August 1938.

³³ Chang does not specify, but Samuel P. Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996) warns against conflicts at the fault line of civilizations: “Islam and the West” and “Asia, China, and America” (*The Clash* 207-238).

nature] seems to have disappeared, and history becomes the weeping mother and her awareness of the unique event [of the child's death]. (Seidensticker, "Kobayashi" [1971] 448)

The earlier essay "On History" (Part 1 and 2) was written in China during his first two trips in 1938, where Kobayashi had seen forces "trying to obliterate man." This contrasts with the latter essay in 1941, when Kobayashi saw in Japan an endless number of young soldiers headed to death in an unwinnable war, inspiring the image of the "weeping mother."

A few months after publishing "On History" he refers to Charles Lyell (1797-1875) to explain nature and its destructive force as if illustrative of human history.³⁴ Lyell claims that the movement of the earth's crust is a graduating process of imperceptible changes rather than a chain of spectacular eruptions as scientists had earlier believed ("*Jihen to Bungaku* [Incident and Literature]" (1939) KHZ-A 12: 181-82). Applying Lyell's idea, Kobayashi envisaged the changes in world history (and civilization) occurring as a result of pressures imperceptibly accumulating over vast periods of time, which erupted into a major catastrophe as in the case of the "Incident." He refers to such unalterable and unpredictable events as a form of "fate" or "destiny" in human life and history.³⁵

³⁴ A Scottish geologist who reacted against the Genesis interpretation of the "creation of the earth" and postulated a gradual process of "creation." His most famous work, the *Principles of Geology* (1830-1833) studied the observable processes of such as the sea, rain, volcanoes, and earthquakes to explain the geological history of the ancient past. The method later influenced Charles Darwin and many others.

³⁵ Kobayashi called history a "strange entity" since humankind was unable to predict, control or stop that movement of such pressures in history often accumulating unperceived.

7.4.2 The “Duality” of “All will pass away forever”

Kobayashi also explains the other aspect of history — the creative aspect of humankind that yearns for history. He begins by saying that the statement that “all will pass away forever” (KHZ-A 11:109) bears a far deeper meaning than the fact that all men are destined to die. From this situation which man cannot escape, history originates under a certain order of nature. That is, man innately feels threatened by nature and yearns to dissipate the feeling that life is forever being forgotten, or turning to “dust,” by recording life as history. Kobayashi summarizes this idea in Part 2:

All things end. No one can doubt this, but it is possible to act as if it were not so. The pretense that nothing ends means in reality that I am alive. It is a pretense only; it is actually not so. History is born from this pretense.³⁶ (“On History,” KHZ-A 11: 110)

Part 2 continues to describe the duality. He calls the first process “naturalizing man” (*ningen no shizenka*), the task of humankind to alter the properties of nature for self-preservation and protection from natural hazards, i.e. like firing clay to provide roof tiles. At the same time, the tiles create a cultural history, retaining the spiritual past of humankind in terms of shape, texture, and color, which Kobayashi calls the process of “humanizing nature” (*shizen no ningenka*) (KHZ-A 11:111).

Kobayashi examines the duality more closely, claiming that both inclinations not only move in diametrically opposite directions but contrast in traits (“On History,” KHZ-A 11:112). That is, the scientific inclinations of

³⁶ 凡ては永久に過ぎる。誰もこれを疑う事は出来ないが、疑う振りをする事は出来る。いや何一つ過ぎ去るものはない積りでいる事が、取りも直さず僕などが生きている事だとも言える。つもりでいるので本当はそうではない。この積もりから生まれた。

humankind explain material evidences (such as ancient temple tiles) in terms of their physical properties, expressed in numerical figures. The *cultural* inclinations of humankind, however, seek material sources (such as tiles and rocks for hieroglyphics) the memories of other living beings, which are expressed in words.

History is, in fact, a myth when a person reminisces and records in words or hieroglyphics. Myths must then “accept, more or less, the limitations [provided by] historical materials,” i.e. scientific factual evidences which remind humankind of the fictitious imagination, the absurdity of moderns befriending the seventeenth century general Oda Nobunaga or being born in the glacial age (KHZ-A 11:113).

7.4.3 What is (Human) History?

Part 3 answers the question “What is (human) history?” as opposed to natural history. Kobayashi concludes that human history results from the process of a “weeping mother” who revives her cherished, irreplaceable lost child by reminiscences inspired by objective items (“On History,” KHZ-A 11: 115).

What confirms for the mother that the death of her child is a singular, irreplaceable event in history is her very sorrow And perhaps it is around the mother’s heart, framed by the small articles left behind by her beloved child, that will find the wellspring of whatever *wisdom* we have about history We do not see historical facts ... as we *create* historical facts out of particular historical materials. (trans. Anderer 153) (My italics.)

Part 4 calls this process the “eternal present,” a process of reviving “the past according to our expectations”(KHZ-A 11: 117) that defies natural

time. That is, “what is recalled does not belong to the present” (KHZ-A 11:118), which is a contradiction and a riddle of humankind.³⁷

Part 5 of “On History” discusses this “logic” of history. Kobayashi sought something other than bringing to life the historical Dostoevsky as recorded in historical sources (*shiryō*) (KHZ-A 11:121). That is, Kobayashi sought his own image of Dostoevsky in his series, “The Life of Dostoevsky,” describing Dostoevsky’s writings with the artistry of a “weeping mother.”

Again, I have no intention to write history by adhering to a fixed method All historical materials are but empty husks left behind by those who were once alive. The regeneration of human character requires no more nor no less artistry and craft than that of a mother The mother’s artistry is minimal [The task] is never to forget ... the irreducible simplicity of a mother’s artistry. (trans. Anderer 154)

In *The Life of Dostoevsky* (1939) Kobayashi struggled with the “strange entity” called history in Japan’s darkest years. In such a shadow, he lived in and wrote of the duality of destruction and creativity in history. This is his stage three, “Behind society, see the duality of history.”

³⁷ Kobayashi explains this riddle at the end of Part 4: “Only a history [of humankind like Dostoevsky] that truly lives and dies provides the greatest nourishment for history [in the form of reminiscing]” (KHZ-A 11:121).

Chapter 8 A “Maturing” Cultural Critic (1940-41 and after)

Focal Point Four:

Behind history, see nature (fused with humankind).”

8.0 Introduction

Chapter 7 discussed the essay “On History” (1938-39) as related to Kobayashi’s work on Dostoevsky. It summarized his view of history as a duality: the first force, “naturalizing humankind,” described the destructive aspect, and the second, “humanizing nature,” the creative aspect. Since Kobayashi’s ideas were formed soon after the China Incident (1937), the destructive aspect appeared to dominate as a “theory of destiny” expressed in silence.

This chapter turns to the other aspect of history, the creative one. In Kobayashi’s reading of Japanese literature and classical Japanese history, he sees nature fused with humankind, which is the source of “history” and “tradition” in (“*Jibun to Bungaku* [Literature and Myself]” 1940). With this understanding, Kobayashi visited the Continent a third time, and he wrote “History and Literature” (March - April 1941). His first-hand experiences on the Continent reinforced his need to make a personal engagement with historical realities. This insight is described as focal point four, “Behind history, see nature (fused with humankind).”

Then another crisis hit the world, Japan’s surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 that spread destruction throughout the Pacific. The Japanese, including Kobayashi, responded to this action as natural and

inevitable—they used the term “as expected” (*naruhodo*) in an essay of January 1941 that was not republished until 2002.

This chapter discusses essays depicting Kobayashi’s developing belief in “the physical body of nature,” then the fourth monumental essay, “History and Literature” (April 1941), that broke with the official approach to history. In his essays on Dostoevsky’s beliefs Kobayashi saw essentials for a wholesome civilization. Then followed a postwar debate on how his own beliefs in “destiny” applies for today (2006) in the continuing discussion of Japan’s entering WWII.

8.1 Third Trip (August 1940) and After

Kobayashi appears unafraid to express his views during his third trip, a series of lectures in eight cities in Korea and Manchuria.¹ He undertook the trip under “obligation” (*giru*)² to the tour leader, Kikuchi Kan, Kobayashi’s long-time patron, but spoke out despite Kikuchi’s conservative views.

8.1.1 Third Trip (August 1940)

Kobayashi expresses his growing belief in the “physical body of nature” (*shintai to iu shizen*) as the force of history, a philosophical pronouncement in the last of his three main lectures “*Bungaku to Watashi* [Literature and Myself]” (KHZ-A 15:153.)

¹ In twenty-five days from August 2, he spoke about fifteen times.

² He disliked speaking as a means of expression, except on one occasion during his Nara days in 1928 (KHZ-A 15:170).

It followed his first lecture “*Jihen no Atarashisa* [Newness of Incident]” in which Kobayashi predicts that Japan’s military efforts are doomed to fail unless adaptable to the “newness” of the China incident. Japan is over-extended in a no-win war in China, plagued by the problems of logistics and language in a new land of Korea and China, which suggests a need for a change of strategy.³

Etô claims that only the second lecture, “*Makiaveri ni tsuite* [On Machiavelli]” (October 1940) is important during the lecture tour. In it, according to Etô’s summary, Kobayashi criticizes the Machiavellian politics of the day, which he likens to a monstrous force usurping the livelihood of the ordinary people (Etô, *Kobayashi* 223). He knows of the situation from the book *Manshûô Kiko* (*Manchurian Journey*), written by his friend Shimaki in the year previous in 1939. In the book, Shimaki attacks the Japanese authorities discriminating against the Chinese and others in Manchuria, contrary to official dictates (Keene, *Dawn* 858).

In the third lecture, “Literature and Myself,” Kobayashi explains an aspect of nature fused with humankind: “the eyes can see and the ears can hear the entities of nature and human life (*jinsei*) as figures [outward forms] as they exist. Nature’s essence resides in its figure (*sugata*); and life’s essence in its figure”⁴ (KHZ-A 13: 145). Kobayashi appears not to distinguish between the Japanese or Koreans or Manchurians as entities of the “objective world.”

³ On these problems, see also Seidensticker’s articles of 1971 (p. 442), and of 1979 (pp. 149-50, 171-73).

⁴ 自然も人生も眼に見え耳に聞こえる、まさにその通りの姿以外のものではない。あるがままの姿こそ自然の真髄であり、人生の真髄である。

He elaborates on his phrase “physical body of nature” (*nikutai to iu shizen*) in the essay ‘Literature and Myself’: “Nature [fused with humankind] enwraps me. Or, the nature in the form of my body enwraps me, completely watertight. This concrete, objective world [including himself] exists not just because I desire it. How much less likely is it then that the world can comply with my every wish” (“Literature and Myself,” KHZ-A 13: 153).⁵

In the same essay, Kobayashi, whose eyes are in training under Aoyama, claims that as an artist he attempts to see his face in history: “A work is a deep impression of the way an artist empties one’s self and accepts nature This is true with history. It is correct to empty myself and accept the flow of history [with my “physical body”] at each moment. In this flow of history I *see my own face*” (KHZ-A 13: 154). (My italics.) Kobayashi suggests here that. “All are extremely worried that Japanese history has taken such a form” (KHZ-A 13:154-55), which words this author understands to mean that all who regard “Japan as fighting a just war know nothing about history” (KHZ-A 13:155).

8.1.2 “The physical body called nature”

Gunze, however, suggests that such explanations integrating nature with humankind are often confusing, and best understood in a question period following a lecture of 1973 (Gunze 62).

First, Kobayashi describes a genuine historian:

⁵ 自然が僕を取り巻いているのです。又、僕の肉体という自然が、水も漏らさぬ様に僕を取り巻いているのです。この賢固の世界は僕が望んだから在るものではないのだ、まして僕の望み通りにどうでもなる様な世界ではないのである。

A historian's task is not to conduct research of the past. A genuine historian is one who revives the past with skill. Thus, what a genuine historian writes becomes thoroughly fascinating. The reason is, this historian revives a bygone history in the self of the present. Because the historian lives in it and writes history as he lives it, it captivates us. So history aims at what is brought to life in our hearts. (Kobayashi, "Question" 66; qtd. in Gunze 62)

Next, Kobayashi writes of the readers' task.

For this [kind of reading], your hearts in the present must be open to accept those [figures in the past]. We misunderstand history because the idea that nature and history are fused has unconsciously confused us. We are apt to think that the bygone past exists exterior to us [not within as reminiscences]⁶ (Kobayashi, "Question" 66; qtd. in Gunze 62).

Kobayashi then explains that history is more than knowledge when it inspires action in people in the present (Kobayashi, "Question" 66). One is the skill for research [of objective resource] and the other is the matter of the heart that moves people.

Then, what [degree of] interest I accept that being investigated belongs the realm of my heart⁷ With such a view of history, [you students] investigating the capital of Fujiwara or your own childhood days are basically the same. Both belong to the past [as reminiscences]. ("To Believe and to Know Questions and Answers," Kobayashi, "Question" 66; qtd. in Gunze 62-63)

⁶ 歴史が誤解されているのは、自然と歴史が混同してる考えが、無意識のうちに、僕らを惑はしていますからね、過去は、僕らの外に、昔、あったんだって、どうしてみ考えるんですよ。

⁷ で、調べた事を現在の僕はどういう関心を持って迎えるかっていう、僕自身の心です。そういうふうに歴史をかんがえますと、諸君は藤原の都の時と、諸君の子供の時代を調べるのが本質的に同じになるでしょう。両方とも過去です、...

Kobayashi concludes that when students reminisce (*omoi dasu*) about their childhood or the immediate past, this process makes them a true historian. Subjective reminiscences turn into an objective presence when turned into action, and even into responsibility when conducted in “beliefs.” (See Conclusion, page 247.)

8.1.3: Return to *Rape of Nanking*

Chang describes the reports of Japanese soldiers on the front, strictly censored by the Japanese authorities at the time. A veteran officer claimed after the war that when he met his men for the first time, “They had evil eyes.” Day after day young recruits were trained to kill.

Good sons, good daddies, good elder brothers at home were brought to the front to kill Human beings turned into murdering demons. Everyone became a demon within three months. (Chang 58)

It was among these officers and soldiers that Kobayashi knew he had readership, or their mothers, fathers and relatives who knew little of the atrocities. Some of those who read Kobayashi’s essays, only knew that their sons, nephews, and cousins were not expected to return alive. To them too Kobayashi addressed himself.

One soldier explains: he was taught that “loyalty is heavier than a mountain, and our life is lighter than a feather.” He recalled that the highest honor a soldier could achieve during war was to come back dead: to die for the emperor was the greatest glory, ... (qtd. in Chang 58).

The soldier concludes that, “If my life is not important, an enemy’s life became inevitably less important ... “ (qtd. in Change 58).

Kobayashi claims that the intellectuals who remain outside the “nature in the form of the body” (*nikutai to ui shizen*) in their analyses and conceptualizations are no longer able to sense a “concrete history” and create words in the inevitable flow of history (Literature and Myself,” KHZ 7: 153).

Kawakami claims that Kobayashi in his own way, attempted to “create a new history and culture,” as he saw his own face in the ancients (“Literature and Myself,” 1940). In his expressions he sought to free himself of the “slogans” of scholars’ theories and government control, which he could no longer condone, especially after the China Incident (July 1937) and after his writings on “The Devils” (June – November 1937).

Efforts [of the government] to forcibly gain from the literary and intellectual minds some trends and theories and to adopt them to official policy, in short order, is a completely fruitless and damaging thing. (Kato, “*Shina yori Kaerite* [Returning from China, May 1938],” KHZ-10 10: 169)

Which Japanese historical figures Kobayashi centered his reminiscences on, is often unclear, although Fukuzawa Yûkichi, a liberal thinker, is certainly one of them.

8.1.4 Fukuzawa and “Beliefs” in History (January 1941)

In Fukuzawa Yûkichi’s understanding of civilization, Kobayashi saw a moment of optimism that he discussed in the essay “Afterthoughts” (January 1941): “All saw the upheaval and chaos taking place [in the Meiji Period, 1868-1911],” but it was only Fukuzawa who penetratingly saw that, “After one generation, all will change” (KHZ-A 13: 180).

Only Fukuzawa discussed the radical upheaval of the Meiji Period as a process of “converting fire into water or nothing into something,” continues Kobayashi. The radical change took place not only in history but also within each Japanese, which Fukuzawa describes: “As if in a person flowed two lives,” one of the old Japanese civilization and the other of the new Western civilization. Only Fukuzawa’s “refined eyes” enabled him to properly analyze the “two lives,” claims Kobayashi, “as a mirror” (“Afterthoughts,” KHZ-A 13: 179):

He continued to look at the intricate implications. He held the scene before him as a mirror to clarify the scene and its hues. He had to rely on his refined eyes. This made all the difference (“Afterthoughts,” KHZ-A 13: 180)

Kobayashi sees in Fukuzawa’s views a new civilization emerging from the old civilization, not only in history, but also in the spirit of “two lives” in each Japanese. Kobayashi believes both aspects indicate “a new opportunity” for a new understanding of civilization (Symposium : “*Jiken Seishin* [Spirit of Experimentation]” (1941) (KHZ-A 14:65).

The same article, “Afterthoughts,” after discussing Fukuzawa, describes Kobayashi’s “belief” in history as a “religious belief” (*shinko*) that enables “man to recall into ‘existence’ [something of the past which] does not exist” (KHZ-A 13: 177). That is, he senses a deep loneliness (*kodokukan*) that yearns for that “something alive” (*ikimono*) to emerge again in the present. Kobayashi concludes that humankind is unable to divest itself of that yearning, emerging from the loneliness of a “troublesome living entity”⁸ (KHZ-A 13:177).

He returned from his third trip in fall 1940 and wrote of his own yearning for bygone figures in his fourth monumental essay, “History and Literature.” Kobayashi formulates his “beliefs” completing his journey from “theory” to “belief” in this fourth stage of his life: “Behind history, see nature (fused with humankind).”

8.2 Comments on “History and Literature” (March-April 1941)

This section describes Kobayashi’s reading of medieval classical writings in which he notes the problem of “human pride” and the need for “polishing the mirror of our heart.” Kobayashi explains again that, “One needs only think of a mother’s feelings toward a historical fact” to realize what a true image is ([1971] 443).

⁸ Takahashi explains that Kobayashi found a “basic attraction” in his yearning or “desire” for the past or history (Takahashi, *Walking* 189).

8.2.1 History as Human Pride

Kobayashi replies to the question of “What is history?” by referring to the author of *The Tale of Heike*.⁹ Kobayashi quotes, “Pride comes before a fall like a dream of a night in spring”¹⁰ (“History and Literature,” KHZ-A: 13: 216) without specifying whom he applies the word “pride” to. Perhaps Kobayashi had no need to explain since he had two years earlier targeted bureaucrats and academics¹¹ in his essay “*Gakusha to Kanryo* [Scholars and Bureaucrats]” (1939). He criticized the proud scholars and the arrogant bureaucrats, whom he felt it was impossible to change: “[T]o change the bureaucracy was just as formidable as to create a new species of fly” (KHZ 7: 80).

Kobayashi harps on the academic historians who, proud in their research of “views” of history, have failed to experience some basic human truths regarding the burden of history. The myriad of “views” have blinded them “to the one simple statement” of history (KHZ-A 13: 217), the “pride” of man leads to a fall. That is, they failed to understand the author of *The Tales of Heike*: as a “man of life” who expressed the burden of history without intellectual embellishment.

⁹ *Heike Monogatari* (early thirteenth century): one of a collection of prose tales from the Kamakura (1185-1333) and Muromachi (1333-1568) periods. Known also as *Gunji Monogatari* (*War Tales*).

¹⁰ These words begin Chapter 1: “The bell of the Gion Temple tolls into every man’s heart to warn him that all is vanity and evanescence Yes, pride must have its fall” (trans. Kitagawa and Tsuchida 5).

¹¹ Refer to Dorsey’s Chapter 4 that discusses the direction that Japanese historians took to make Japan the rightful heir to China.

8.2.2 History as the “Beliefs” of a “Weeping Mother”

Kobayashi saw the true creators of history personified in ordinary, burdened Japanese mothers, not in the intellectuals. Mothers shed tears over the death of their sons fighting in China, create history as they reminisce about their beloved deceased figures and revive them for the present. That is, “History exists because humankind exists” (KHZ-A 13: 210), like the mothers who reminisce.

One needs only think of a mother’s feelings toward a historical fact, the death of her child. For the mother the historical fact is not just where and when and for what reason and under what condition this happening, the child’s death, took place. Its significance fails to come to life unless it is accompanied by a sense of an irreplaceable life lost irrevocably (trans. Seidensticker, *Kobayashi* [1971] 443; KHZ-A 13: 212) ¹²

The idea of a “historical fact” of a mother is explained earlier in Section 7.4.3.

8.2.3 “Polishing the mirror of our heart”

By re-reading traditional works such as *Jinnô Shôtô Ki* (*Chronicles of the Direct Descent of Divine Sovereigns*),¹³ Kobayashi sought to become “a maker of a new history or culture” (or civilization). The author of the chronicles

¹² See also Anderer’s translation from “On History” in Chapter 6. Although Kobayashi is severely attacked for being sentimental, Seidensticker considers such an approach to history as truly human (Seidensticker, “Kobayashi” [1971] 443), more so than the scientific, analytical history.

¹³ A historical work (1339?) by Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293-1354) that encourages the Kanto warriors to take the side of the Southern Court. It was used as a basis for textbooks during the Meiji period.

calls for readers not to remain in “the realm of reasoning,” but to polish “the mirror of our heart,” which is the approach to history that “remains unchanging,” according to Kobayashi. Only in this “unchangeable realm” does history reveal its secrets, Kobayashi continues (KHZ-A 13: 232).

Seidensticker claims that Kobayashi was drawn to the ethical demands of the author of the chronicles as much as to the man. The author declared: “Brighten and cleanse the spirit,” then “it will contain clarity and resolve,” That is, Kobayashi saw in the author of *Jinnô Shôtôki* a revelation of his own form of “attestation to the self” (*jiko shômei*). Kobayashi used the views of such as *Jinnô Shôtôki* to counter the history of analysis, materialism, and “illusions about objectivity,” the real culprits (“Kobayashi” [1971] 445).

8.3 Expressing “Destiny”: Pearl Harbor and the “Soul of History” (July 1942)

Crucial to Kobayashi’s beliefs is the series “*Karamozobu no Kyôdai*,” (“The Brothers Karamazov”) (October 1941 to September 1942). It was interrupted after two parts by Japan’s surprise attack on Pearl Harbor when explaining a form of destiny took precedence.

8.3.1 Brief Expressions Regarding Pearl Harbor

Soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Kobayashi submitted his essay “Three Broadcasts” (January 1942). He remembers clearly hearing the brief sentence, “That which was to come has come at last,”¹⁴ which appeared most often in magazines and newspapers without being fully understood. He

¹⁴ 来るべきものがついに来た。

remembers hearing the second sentence: "Early this morning, the Imperial naval force entered a state of war against America and England in western Pacific Ocean." He explains that the Japanese responded to both historical statements with, "As expected (*naruhodo*)" (KHZ-A 14: 129), what Professor Tsukamoto called a cathartic type of expression,¹⁵ reacting to what is called ABCD.¹⁶

Then Kobayashi heard the official broadcast of declaration of war:

While listening, I felt an incomparable beauty. Indeed, we most strongly felt our confidence in being a Japanese national (*nihon kokumin*). It was a confidence that expressed something far different from our daily confidence. Such a strong confidence cannot be gained and lost on a daily basis, so we are not usually aware of such confidence everyday." (KHZ-A 14: 130)

Two months after his essay "Three Broadcasts," Kobayashi writes his essay "War and Peace,"¹⁷ this time in prose which provokes contrasting interpretations.

Seidensticker concludes the following: "It speaks in its quiet way with an eloquence The initial impulse to dismiss it as another piece of wartime ranting ... seems foolish" ([1971] 180). Seidensticker sees a depth in

¹⁵ Interview with Professor Tsukamoto Toshiaki (formerly of Senshû University, Tokyo) in September 2005.

¹⁶ Represents four powers (America, Britain, China, Dutch Holland) which Japan construes as pressing in Japan from four sides. America moved its Pacific naval fleet to Pearl Harbor from San Diego in 1940, and Holland's embargo of Indonesian oil to Japan spelled industrial ruin for Japan. Britain has limited forces in Hong Kong and Singapore. Such pressures led Japan to collision course with the Western powers.

¹⁷ Translated in full by both Seidensticker's essay "Kobayashi" of 1979 and James Dorsey in the Ph.D. dissertation (1997).

Kobayashi who concluded it with a quote from Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. "The causes of war are not in warlike men. Human life itself is war" ([1971] 180).

Dorsey appears less sympathetic to Kobayashi's piece, and more critical. "[T]he burning ships and the dying sailors are no more important than the sun and the ocean and the waves. In fact they are just as natural. War and peace are one. Kobayashi's prose almost lulls us into believing it" (266).

This study places the above essay in context of Kobayashi's other essay written in July.

8.3.2 Essay: "The Soul of History" (July 1942)

Kobayashi commits himself to seeing the "form" (*katachi*) of such words as "Japanese soul" as the essence of classical history: "The true soul of history ... is its unchangeable beauty" (KHZ-A 14: 159). A "beauty" deep in history resists interpretations and criticism" (KHZ-A 14:160).

A socio-political force is at play, when Kobayashi admits being almost swayed and attracted by words such as "new interpretations," "new viewpoints," and "new structures" of history (KHZ-A 14: 158). He attempts to free himself, admitting the difficulty of "seeing history that is free of slogans" in the war days. He reaches out for a freshness that requires the intuitive perception of a poet (KHZ-A 14:166), such as the poet Basho.

[Basho] emptied himself [of all concepts] and observed nature. In the same spirit, one engages in history ... [relying on] the process of *fûga* [elegance, grace, refinement], which means subjugating one's self to nature at one with the four seasons. It

is [an act not passive, but] active in emptying the self and meeting nature” (KHZ-A 14:160-61).

But sadly enough Kobayashi considers that voices calling for history and tradition are merely mouthing slogans, for the reason that the heart of the spokesperson is premature, far from a state of elegance, and murky. From this vantage point, he clarifies how the spirit of a true historian and that of a true poet are so similar. Kobayashi ends the essay with, “We must struggle against these slogans,” especially those appearing in journalism (KHZ-A 14: 162-63).

He concludes the essay, “The Soul of History,” with, “This struggle against slogans is the path of a poet and that of an active thinker” (KHZ-A 14: 163). He returns to Dostoevsky about this time.

8.3.3 In Search of Dostoevsky’s “Beliefs”

Kobayashi’s series, “The Brothers Karamazov,” ended in September 1942 without his resolving the question of how pantheism relates to Christ. Instead, Kobayashi associated “beauty” with “beliefs”. The reason is Kobayashi found Dostoevsky discussing his final “beliefs” in his later works, as he was persistently burdened by the thought expressed by Pascal (KHZ-A 14: 100), that humankind often created the idea of God. Thus, Dostoevsky described Christ as a paradox (KHZ-A 14: 106).

Malcolm V. Jones however claims that conclusions regarding Dostoevsky’s “beliefs” are not important.

[I]t is *the voyage* that matters, not the arrival at one’s destination... . [His work] is a process of rethinking Christianity in dialogue, a process which reached no final conclusion in his novels [Dostoevsky] made this very

argument the cornerstone of his belief in immortality. (Leatherbarrow 158-59). (My italics.)

Jones continues that following “a law of nature,” Dostoevsky first sought to undo the ego but concluded that, “the individual is in development, [that is] unfinished, transitional” (159). This makes any statement on Christ never conclusive, never fully finished. It is no wonder that Kobayashi failed to complete his writings on Dostoevsky’s Christianity, and found his “beliefs” as an ongoing process. (See Chapter 9.)

8.4 Echoes of Focal Points Three and Four: “The Life of Dostoevsky”

The questions of “religion” in terms of “history” and “nature” (pantheism) appear to synthesize in Kobayashi’s writings on Dostoevsky. This section provides a final perspective on how “the milieu” of Dostoevsky most likely influenced Kobayashi, by first reviewing focal point three, “Behind society, see the duality of history” (1938-39) with focal point four, “Behind history, see nature (fused with humankind)” (1940-41).

8.4.1 Focal Point Three: “Behind society, see history.”

Dostoevsky focused on the inherent undercurrents of his “generation,” a topic which Kobayashi wrote of in “*Dosutoebusuki no Jidai Kankaku* [Dostoevsky’s Awareness of Period]” (January 1937) (KHZ-A 9: 11).

According to Kobayashi, one of the major problems that Dostoevsky saw was in the intellectuals of the time: “The nineteenth-century writers all became actors who performed the tragedy of the Russian intellectuals. If we

are to seek a foremost actor and, at the same time, an audience member, there is none other than Dostoevsky” (“Awareness,” KHZ-A 9: 19). Kobayashi contends that the ultimate tragedy was that “No other country had suffered so much over the vast gap between the ideal and the real as the intellectuals of nineteenth-century Russia” (KHZ-A 9: 17). Furthermore, Dostoevsky saw that, “Russian society then neither gave birth to Romantic literature nor accepted it. The imported Romantic literature merely created an enormously chaotic kind of society called a literary circle” (KHZ-A 9: 17).

Dostoevsky faced a reactionary period in the 1860s when Alexander II found it difficult to fully implement the liberation of the serfs as enacted in 1825 and the reformation of the judicial and military systems. The intelligentsia found it acceptable to advocate patriotism just as it was to promote socialism for the youths in the 1840s (“Awareness,” KHZ-A 9:21).

That is, Russian intellectuals found themselves unable to redefine their European liberal learning in the context of the historical movements of Russian conservative, totalitarian rule, claims Kobayashi (“Awareness,” KHZ-A 9: 27). This led to the “anxiety” among intellectuals that beset Dostoevsky's generation, which remarkably resembled that of Japan in the 1930s.¹⁸ Dostoevsky, however, claimed that he was able to penetrate this anxiety sensitively, because of his deep involvement in his own world (KHZ-A 9: 27).

Interpretation of Western European thought for the Russian people became an important issue among the intelligentsia and the ideologues. They

¹⁸ The word “anxiety” came to the fore in around 1935 in a way that reflects the intellectuals’ standstill from the Manchurian Incident (1931) to the WWII years, unable to find the way out of their own intellectuality (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 263).

sought national goals in the 1860s, which resulted in the “confusion.” Kobayashi wrote that even though both Belinsky and Herzen were Russophiles, they Russia’s particular situation requiring an import of Western culture. More important than their Russophiles Movement, Dostoevsky saw the need for both thinkers to link both the Western Europeanism and the Slavophilism with the Narod viewpoint (“Life of Dostoevsky, Editor of *Vhremya*,” (1935); KHZ-A 11: 22). Such debates took place when most intellectuals were unable to synthesize Western ideas with their traditional thoughts as Dostoevsky was publishing *Vhremya* (1960-63). Kobayashi saw in the debates similar social-cultural issues significant for Japan in the 1930s, but the Japanese intellectuals were floundering.

Kobayashi wrote “Awareness of Period” in 1937 which he ends with some awe-inspiring words that warn readers of the reactionary, militarized government of Japan. “In place of the Christ of the Gospels ... the Christ of Russia took up the sword with the Czar.” He continues that, “I don’t believe that any history has solved the riddle of ‘The Great Inquisitor’ left by Dostoevsky” (KHZ-A 11:29).

Dostoevsky saw the solution for the above “anxiety” by rendering and advocating a Christian theism of Russia. Similarly, Kobayashi sought a solution by regaining a sense of Japan’s traditional love of nature:

Kobayashi's writing on Dostoevsky takes up numerous problems, but the main theme is the “realism of anxiety” called the “modern age.” This “anxiety” did not merely reflect social conditions, but reflected a more basic crisis transpiring in man’s spirit, having lost a sense of nature. (Yoshida, *Course* 142)

8.4.2 Focal Point Four: “Behind history, see nature.”

Kobayashi continues that few Russians managed to understand Dostoevsky, particularly when Dostoevsky saw beyond imported socialistic ideas: “Russian socialism was a question of choosing between theism or atheism.” He alarmingly saw that “the historical flow of modern Russia consisted of atheism” (“*Dosutoebusuki 75 Nen Sai ni okeru Kôen* [Lecture at Dostoevsky’s 75th Anniversary (1956)],” KHZ-A 21: 219).

Dostoevsky had criticized Belinsky's form of socialism as a path leading to nihilism, breeding high expectations based not on idealism but on the emotion of despair, which Kobayashi later summarizes in his essay “*Sobieto no Tabi* [Soviet Travels]” (1964):

In short, Russia's nineteenth-century literature was basically revolutionary literature. For example, the fact that we read Tolstoy as a humanitarian and Dostoevsky as a Christian resulted from our lackadaisical cultural environment. If the two are stripped [of their labels], they appear as an anarchist sort of revolutionary. (“Soviet,” KHZ-A 25: 34)

Few in Japan, however, became revolutionaries and left the country, not wanting to risk being called a “cowardly traitor” (*hikyô*) to their homeland. There was no mass exodus of intellectuals and writers from Japan. Kobayashi himself faced censorship but persevered as a prolific writer and thinker through the 1940s, writing some of his most beautiful works.

Dostoevsky wrote about the importance of theism, albeit often unclear in a pantheism mixed with Christianity, for the “people” who belonged to the future of Russia: “The people and religion became one” (“The Life of

Dostoevsky, *Diary of the Writer*,” KHZ-A 11: 282).¹⁹ Kobayashi suggests that “Dostoevsky lived in a storm of the masses, Russian Orthodoxy, and Christ interacting, which served as the eye of the typhoon, the most indispensable part.” Dostoevsky claimed: “only those inside the typhoon know what the eye of the storm is like” (“*Diary of a Writer*” KHZ-A 11: 300).

Kobayashi, an intellectual, undoubtedly understood his task in the question: “Should I choose to be in the storm?” as he again chose to travel abroad in 1943-44, with a “storm” still brewing on the Continent.

8.5 “Theory of Destiny”: Ôoka and Kobayashi Debate

Kobayashi’s debate with Ôoka²⁰ appears important today in considering his response to the war. Ôoka and Kobayashi debated from opposite sides of the same coin of “fate,” which is tossed back and forth, then flipped and left spinning even for today.²¹ Kobayashi’s attempted to transcend the specifics of the war (such as Ôoka’s, confined to the Philippines) by reading great writers, finally settling on Dostoevsky as the most brilliant of them all.

¹⁹ In making this claim, Kobayashi explicitly opposes E. H. Carr who contends that Dostoevsky’s writings on theism became far detached from the actualities of the “people” and the “church” (KHZ-A 11: 282).

²⁰ Summarized in the article by Nakano Kôji, “*Unmei to Rekishi, Kobayashi Hideo to Ôoka Shôhei ni okeru Rekishi Ishiki* [Fate and History, Historical Awareness of Kobayashi Hideo and Ôoka Shôhei]” (1974).

²¹ This author sees Iris Chang’s book *The Rape of Nanking* (1997) as seeking the specifics of history, reparation and apology from the Japanese for their responsibility for 350,000 Chinese deaths, and Hosea Hirata’s *Discourses of Seduction* (2005) as insightful into the deeper dimensions of “evil” and “death of the human spirit.” It goes beyond the specifics to the universal problem of the human consciousness that has plagued humankind since the fruit (Apple) of knowledge.

8.5.1 Ôoka's Action as Priority

In Section 1, the introduction to the article, Nakano quotes Oketani Hideaki²² who wrote that, “man’s actualities are expressed by the compromise of two aspects”: They are (1) to make history by taking some form of action, and (2) to live according to “wisdom.” This latter term is subject to “nature’s aspect in history” (*rekishi no shizen*), the “still unknown” element of the “law of the inevitable” (*hitsuzen no hôsoku*) (Nakano 111). Nakano later claims that throughout the 1940s, Ôoka belonged to the first category of “a form of action [in battle],” and Kobayashi to the second category of the “still unknown” related to “wisdom.”²³

As the conclusion of Section 2, Nakano sees Kobayashi as a “thorough-going artist” (Nakano 114), who opposes Ôoka’s writings as one of “history through activity.” Nakano argues as does Ôoka that Kobayashi has ignored the politics in history.

In Section 4, Nakano praises Ôoka’s self-portrayal in the short story *Furyoki* [*Prisoner of War*] (1967) as a conscript forced into killing and a prisoner-of-war camp.

I no longer believe in the victory of Japan. I abhorred the army for dragging Japan into a hopeless war, but as long as I had no way of opposing the army, I thought I had no right to oppose the fate that they had brought upon me. I felt it comical that I was

²² Oketanai Hideaki (1932-) is a former Professor at Toyo University (in Tokyo) and a scholar of Modern Japanese Literature.

²³ Evidence published in 2000 reveal that Kobayashi became more active in 1943-44 than earlier believed, as will be discussed in Chapter 9.

equating one powerless civilian with an organization [military] of an entire nation that relied on violence. But I had to think so, since I no longer considered the foolishness of my being sent off to a meaningless death to be a laughing matter. (qtd. in Nakano 115)

Nakano continues to support Ôoka in attacking Kobayashi's view of the "inevitability of history" (or "destiny") that lacks any notion of "the politics of war."

8.5.2 Kobayashi's "Inevitability" Ahead of Politics

In Section 5, Ôoka calls Kobayashi's approach an idea of "false politics" by which Kobayashi supported the government plans for an "artificial unification of the people"; Kobayashi was too eager to discuss "tradition" and "overcoming modernism" (Nakano 119).²⁴

In a postwar symposium (1946), Kobayashi admitted to his political ignorance, but did not regret it. He felt far more ignorant about what he called "historical inevitability," a force far more awesome and enduring than politics.

I dealt with the war as a politically ignorant Japanese. I was silent. Regarding this, I regret nothing People want to take revenge on the inevitable occurrences. This type of revenge is endless: Did or did not the Great War [World War II] begin from a group of ignorant leaders joining the ambitions of other people? I cannot hold to such a convenient view of history. I believe that historical inevitability is much more awesome. I know very little about it, *so I regret nothing*. Only the clever ones need to reflect [on it]. (Ara *et al* 59) (My italics.)

²⁴ Ôoka misunderstood Kobayashi, who argued for "transcending modernism," not "overcoming modernism."

He could not regret his destiny, a power of nature reflected in history beyond his comprehension and control.²⁵

Nobel laureate Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972) expresses in 1968 his notion of “destiny,” similar to Kobayashi’s, in a beautiful eulogy dedicated to his friend Yokomitsu Riichi (1908-47).

Sufferer of the New Asia that fought the West,
Pioneer of the New Tragedy in the Asian Tradition,
You shouldered such a destiny.
And you left the world sending a smile to Heaven.
(qtd. in Najita and Harootunian, 774)

8.5.3 “Destinies were different.”

Kobayashi early mentioned one’s destiny in his first essay “Various Patterns” (1929): “Only the personal destinies of Balzac and Marx²⁶ were different and distinct.”

The relations between practice and theory for this individual, Balzac, are surely similar to what they were for the individual, Marx. And there is no difference between them with respect to this fact: that both took as their working premise the representation of the basic characteristics of their age; that both craved nothing beyond the reality which lived and moved before their eyes. Only the personal destinies of Balzac and Marx were different and distinct. (trans. Anderer 32; “Various,” KHZ-A 1: 152-53)

²⁵ Particularly missing in this debate is Kobayashi’s depiction in Stavrogin of *The Devils* as the force of evil, which Kawakami explained for the first time in 1955, almost nine years after this symposium (1946).

²⁶ To be distinguished from Marxism as a conceptual ideology.

This study proposes that both Kobayashi and Ôoka described “the basic characteristics of their age” craving the reality “before their eyes.” Kobayashi viewed the realities of destruction on the Continent and the grieving mothers at the home front as part of Japan’s destiny. Ôoka wrote of his specific reality in the Philippines, so indelibly imprinted in his memory that he as a writer could not but express it.

A foremost critic Yoshimoto Taka’aki expresses the viewpoints of many young intellectuals after the war. He deliberates on Kobayashi’s notion of his “destiny” in “silence” with a lingering dissatisfaction that Kobayashi had fallen victim to his own notion of inevitability or fate (Yoshimoto 120-21). Yoshimoto credits rather ambivalently that Kobayashi did write of the world of “transiency” and provide comfort to millions on the home front (Yoshimoto 124). But he describes with mixed emotions the place of “destiny” during war, a feeling that still persists today and baffles many.

Chapter 9 Wartime, “Matured” Cultural Critic (1942 - 1944 and after)

Focal Point Five:

“Behind nature, see (that which inspires) beautiful literature.”

9.0 Introduction

Chapter 8 discussed Kobayashi as a “maturing” cultural critic, who incorporated a “logic of destiny” in 1933 into his beliefs as a new approach to creating “a new history and culture.” Since 1938 he had been observing those living in history (on the Continent) as well as seeing his own face in historical figures in the Japanese classics. He sought this new approach to history to counter the scholars’ programmatic justifications of war and the slogans of the government. His approach was summed up in Chapter 8 as, “Behind history, see nature (fused with humankind).” This chapter discusses the problem of how to express the merging of history with nature, which is summarized as, “Behind nature, see (that which inspires) beautiful literature.”

Seidensticker explains the difficulty of responding to beautiful classical literature (expressed in the “muted Japanese language”) not with a rational understanding but one of “awareness and evocation of things” ([1979] 183).¹ In his consideration of “That wisest of Japanese books, *The Tales of Genji*,” Seidensticker claims, Kobayashi found any schematization of the term Japanese spirit (“soul”) (“Kobayashi” [1979] 184) distasteful, and would prefer his own term “abiding beauty” (*dokuritsu jizoku shite iru utsukushisa*), something that one must feel, not analyze (*Overcoming* 223).

¹ Japanese criticism appears rather “shy and elusive,” and thus *The Tale of Genji*, the most meditative among the greatest Japanese novels, nowhere “approaches the speculative heights of Dostoevsky’s Grand Inquisitor” (Seidensticker, [1979] 183).

Seidensticker wrote in his earlier article (1971) that Kobayashi's "muteness" on the classics does not submit well to summary and partial translations. Such attempts should "produce an uneasiness to send the readers to the original" (1971, 454).²

Following Seidensticker's warning, this chapter minimizes the use of "partial translations" and proceeds to the following. First, biographical accounts of Kobayashi in Ito Town³ with Aoyama; second, Dostoevsky's notion of beauty; third Kobayashi's term "transcending modernity," which he associated with his own terms "statics," and "dynamics" (the two terms are related to Kobayashi's essays "*Taema*" and "On Age"); fourth, his attempt to make history by promoting peace during his two trips to China in 1943-44 (according to new evidence); and lastly, the above is reconsidered in relation to the future of East Asia.

This author sees Kobayashi's overall efforts as an attempt to use beautiful writing in appreciating the works of Dostoevsky (and such as Buddhist arts). As Clark remarks, the "book of art" is the only trustworthy mark of civilization, though he was referring mainly to objets d'art and architectural remains.

Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts, the book of their deeds, the book of their words and the book of their art [Of] the three the only trustworthy one is the last. (Clark, *Civilisation* 1)

² Kobayashi's writings on traditional classics are: "*Taema*" (April) discussed below and "*Mujo to Ui Koto*" ("Transiency," June), "*Heike Monogatari*" ("Heike Tales," July), "Essays in Idleness" ("*Tsurezuregusa*," August), and "Saigyō," (November). The final fine essay on Japanese classics, "Sanetomo" appeared in February 1943. They are introduced in Seidensticker's and Keene's articles.

³ Located in the Izu Peninsula about seventy kilometers south of Kamakura where many in Tokyo took refuge from the war and found foodstuffs more available.

9.1 Kobayashi's Life and Views of Beauty

Kobayashi's prolific wartime writing gives the impression that when he withdrew himself from the war in 1942-43 he spent most of his time studying and writing and did little else. This was far from the case, as he frequently visited Ito Town to see Aoyama Jirô and to take part in variety of activities in 1943-45. Kobayashi spent six months in 1945 in Nanking.

9.1.1 Kobayashi in Ito Town

In summer 1943, Kobayashi ventured to Ito Town to continue his search for the "Japanese soul" in old ceramic wares as did a hundred and twenty visitors who stayed overnight for drinking (Shirasu, *Why Today* 64-65). Thereafter, Aoyama declined visitors and concentrated on objets d'art with closer friends, which interest terminated when Aoyama invested their money in objets d'art for his own profit (Shirasu, *Why Today* 66-67).

Numerous friends came to live in Ito Town from Tokyo, but most soon distanced themselves from Aoyama, unable to meet his demands: "Family is not important. Literature and life are not sugar-sweet tasks and require total commitment." Among them all, it was Kobayashi, the premier critic of Japan, who most persistently sought him out, persevering in hoping to "see the soul of beauty," listening to Aoyama's collection of classical records and discussing Aoyama's reading of five hundred volumes on Christianity. With Kobayashi's persistence and passion, his skills of "seeing" eventually matched those of Aoyama, which led to a rivalry that was never resolved (Shirasu, *Why Today* 78-80).

9.1.2 Aoyama and Beauty

Shirasu Masako⁴ summarizes Aoyama's views of art, which were important influences on Kobayashi's understanding.

1. First, begin with [works of] China. Chinese objets d' art have definite shape and techniques, which Korean wares [in general] have have yet to achieve
2. Next, see numerous Korean wares. Tire of them but return to them ... as if to a woman
3. [Realize] a first-rate Korean piece is one in a million [of Chinese and Japanese wares].
4. Korean pieces feeble in form and poor in skill display a beauty of its own
5. The Koreans' preference for white gown without patterns reflects purity, perfection, and freshness (*sawayaka-sa*) — a richer beauty than perfected beauty. (qtd. in Shirasu, *Why Today* 73-74)

Aoyama himself (as did Kobayashi) followed these stages before finally admitting his preference for the tea-ceremony earthen-ware of 14th-century Japan (the Muromachi Period). They seem to emerge out of a rural society (with imperfect shape) into the world at large. According to Aoyama, Japanese wares possessed perfected shape only up to the 7th-century Nara Period, as a replica of Chinese art (Shirasu, *Why Today* 75).

Shirasu explains other ideas of Aoyama. The whiteness of the gown (in Korea) and the shapelessness of wares (in Japan) entice the artist to discover a beauty of one's own. "A renowned painter does not paint beauty, a renowned poet does not recite beauty. [Beauty] is not grasped by depicting

⁴ Shirasu (1910-98) was a renowned collector and writer on Japanese art.

and by reciting. Beauty is discovered by one who sees. It is produced” (qtd. in Shirasu, *Why Today* 75).

9.1.3 Dostoevsky’s Idea of “Transcending”: “Harmony” and “Serenity”

Another important influence in Kobayashi’s renewed interest in beauty was Dostoevsky. The Russian writer helped Kobayashi put traditional Japanese conceptions of beauty into a wider perspective. Kobayashi acknowledges Dostoevsky’s impact on his thinking in his contributions to the 1942 symposium on “Overcoming Modernity.”

Frank describes Dostoevsky’s aesthetic thus: “[A] genuine ‘beauty’ embodying the ‘eternal ideals’ of mankind – ideals of harmony and serenity for transcending the human realm – is ‘an indispensable exigency of the human organism’” (Frank 82).⁵ Frank continues that for Dostoevsky “an indispensable exigency” occurs at a time when “man is in disaccord with reality” in his greatest struggles, that is, a period of struggle precedes man’s awareness for the “need for beauty”:

[The] need for beauty develops most strongly when man is in disaccord with reality, in discordance, in struggle, that is, *when he lives most fully*, for the moment at which man lives most fully is when he is seeking something [I]t is then that he displays the most natural desire for everything that is harmonious and serene, and in beauty there is harmony and serenity. (Frank 82) (My italics)

⁵ Particularly relevant to Kobayashi is Dostoevsky’s exposition of the classical ideal of beauty. According to Frank Dostoevsky borrowed his idea of “transcendence” from the universal treasures of European civilization “to express the most burning issues of the present” (Frank 83). Dostoevsky refers to the poem *Diana* by A.A. Fet (1822-1892) who suddenly imagines that a statue of the goddess Diana will come to life in a “moment of disappointed expectation.” She will walk the streets of Rome again: “the motionless marble / whitely gleamed before me with unfathomable beauty” (qtd. in Frank 84).

Dostoevsky says that a human being seeks to attain something ideal *when he lives most fully* (in a “disaccord” with reality) in order to prevent him from sinking further into apathy and despair, explains Frank. At a moment of melancholy, “an indispensable exigency” of the “human organism” engages in *a genuine “beauty” embodying the “eternal ideals of mankind”* (Frank 82) (My italics).

In his great struggles, Dostoevsky had embodied the “whole realm of the supernatural and the transcendent” in his understanding of Christianity (Frank 82). Dostoevsky wrote of “true literature, like enduring art” in *Letters on Art*, after he emerged from the gloomy days in prison camp in 1858, which Frank summarizes:

Art is for man just as much a need as eating or drinking, and *the creations embodying it, are inseparable from man*, and without it man would perhaps have no wish to live. Man thirsts for [beauty] ... and it is perhaps in this that lies the greatest mystery of artistic creation. (qtd. in Frank 81) (My italics.)

Frank summarizes the above, quoting Dostoevsky’s “cornerstone of his own doctrine”:

“Art is always actual and real, has never existed in any other way, and, most important, cannot exist in any other way” (Dostoevsky’s italics).

Dostoevsky adopted this from critic Valerian Maikov (1821- 97) (Frank 84).⁶

⁶ Dostoevsky emphasized “Christianity in art” in his discussion of classical antiquity shortly after experiencing a four year’s ordeal in the Siberian prison camp. Dostoevsky wrote in 1854 that nothing was “more beautiful” than the figure of Christ (Frank 85). He found answers to the “anguishing questions confronting both modern Russia and modern man” in the Christian faith, which he “deliberately underplays” (Frank 85).

This fundamental view became a “gradually evolving view of life” (Frank 85) so that all sane and healthy “beauty” has religious connotations to the extent that, “This marble is a god.” Dostoevsky singles out one particular sculpture of Apollo:

[S]pit at it as much as you like, you will not rob it of its divinity... . There are, of course, thousands of impressions in the world, but surely it is not for nothing that this sort of impression is a special one, the impression of a god. (qtd. in Frank 87)

Note here that Dostoevsky’s views reject art as a slavish reproduction of nature, but includes what is “human” and “civic minded”:

[I]t is only the artist who calls this aspect [unmarked obscurity] of the world to our attention and gives it a name. “Of course, the most important thing here is what the artist himself is capable of seeing, what constitutes his own particular point of view – *is he humane, discerning, civic-minded, and finally, is he an artist?*” (Frank 93). (My italics.)

Dostoevsky’s sense of beauty did not detach him from social needs, the reality to which he directed his aesthetics. “Dostoevsky insists both on the importance of an artist’s personal contribution ... to be oriented toward the society of its time, that is “realism.” He defines this as a personal type of “fantastic realism” that comprises his own artistic quintessence (Frank 93).

Kobayashi used the term the “socialized I” to depict Dostoevsky’s type of “civic-mindedness” (see Chapter 6). He formulated the idea of history discussed in Chapter 7 by looking at the ordinary person as did Dostoevsky. He formulated his beliefs on the “nature of his physical body” as he wrote on the beliefs of Dostoevsky (see Chapter 8).

9.2 “Overcoming Modernity”

Kobayashi also attempted to “transcend modernity” by referring to Dostoevsky’s aesthetics. Kawakami had been in consultation with Kobayashi, planning for a symposium of leading intellectuals, for over a year since mid-1941. Then in Kyoto in July 1942, the participants gathered with copies of the manuscripts received beforehand, which they discussed before writing final drafts for publication in *Bungakkai* in the September and October issues (Kawakami, *Overcoming* 165).

9.2.1 Symposium: “Overcoming Modernity” (July 1942)

Kawakami (and Kobayashi) originally intended the symposium to oppose the war in a non-political way (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 221-22), but it didn’t quite turn out that way. Kawakami apologized to a younger critic in the postwar period, as he did never before and thereafter, for his feeble opposition to the war (*My Kobayashi* 75). Kobayashi knew in July from viewing the manuscript that the presenters had trapped themselves in the “culturalism” (*bunkashugi*) centered on Japan, a motif for “overcoming modernity (Westernization)” for which Kobayashi prepared a rebuttal. They were participants who “returned” to the “native place of spirit” (*Nihon kaiki*), after unsuccessfully finding Japanese human and social values in Western culture (Najita and Harootunian 734-35).⁷

Kobayashi follows Dostoevsky’s idea of beauty: humankind “has always displayed an unconditional need for beauty inseparable from his

⁷ One discussant, Takeuchi Yoshimi (1910-77), conveyed to the others the choice between war or culturally submitting to the West (Najita and Harootunian 761). Two others, Hayashi Fusao (1903-1975) and Kamei Katsuichirô (1907-1966), advocated the viewpoint that the Japanese had to “reintegrate themselves with the spirit of *kami* [gods of Shinto]” to succeed in “overcoming modernity.”

history” (Frank 82).⁸ It is this true “figure” of Dostoevsky that Kobayashi had attempted to regain since 1933.

I [Kobayashi] sought only to restore the true figure (*sugata*) of Dostoevsky. I read the itinerary of Dostoevsky who from a time of massive social upheaval discovered the people of Russia and its spirit (*kami*) (Kawakami 218; trans. Harootunian 80)

Next, Kobayashi blamed Japanese historians and historicizing for distorting and bending Dostoevsky’s original “shape” (Harootunian 80), which created a “diseased conception” deep in their interpretations: “The diseased conception of humanity was a modern historical consciousness that concentrated on only interpreting (representing) history as something other than what it actually was” (Harootunian 80). According to Kobayashi, Dostoevsky saw the need to replace the “diseased conception” with the classical arts, which can then occupy a permanent place in history (Harootunian 84).

9.2.2 “Overcoming Modernity” (Specific Arguments)

First, Kobayashi desires to point out “one item”: “the [first-rate] writer always wars against and triumphs over general concepts of society and the age” (qtd. in Kawakami, *Overcoming* 218-19).

It is more important to realize that all great works warred against concepts such as individualism and rationalism of the West. (trans. Harootunian 80; qtd. in Kawakami, *Overcoming* 219)

⁸ Frank devotes a whole chapter “An Aesthetic of Transcendence” to discussing Dostoevsky’s theory of art (Frank 76-93).

Harootunian's book, *Overcome by Modernity*, summarizes Kobayashi's reference to Dostoevsky in his rebuttal of the other participants: "Great writers never bend to the demands of their age, nor do they take flight and try to separate themselves from it. They conquer it ...," (trans. Harootunian 85; Kawakami, "Overcoming" 220).

Second, Kobayashi claims that study alone cannot demonstrate (*soroeru*) the spirit of this victory.

Modern historicism is generally based on the theories (*riiron*) of history *in change*, but doesn't this lead to the possibility of the [theory] of history *without change*? (Kawakami, "Overcoming" 219) (My italics.)

What is important for today is that Kobayashi modeled his life on this spirit of Dostoevsky that required victory and the uprooting in Japan of the traditional view of history in change (Kawakami, *Overcoming* 219), and attempted to replace it with a history "without change."

Third, Kobayashi explains that he realized that aesthetic literature inevitably emerged from forms (*katachi*) embracing the ideas of harmony (*chôwa*) and order (*chitsujo*). The forms are not under the power of change, but emerge from the power of balance (*kinkô*), or what he called "statics." Kawakami explains a victorious masterpiece is capable of maintaining a state of "statics" in "tension" (of balance and unbalance) ("Overcoming" 219-20).

Fourth, Harootunian summarizes Kobayashi's words in the universal battle against of the ideas of history of the moderns.

Here, he [Kobayashi] wanted to link the great writer to the classics in both East and West... . Humans have always been waging war, and those who have managed to "penetrate" this

“thing” (the struggle between art and history), to grasp its lesson and master it, are after all, eternal, immortal. (84)

Kobayashi considered it a “serious defect” of human thought when humankind considers history to be a state of incessant change or progress (Kawakami, *Overcoming* 220).

9.2.3 “Statics” and “Dynamics” of History

Narita and Harootunian explain Kobayashi’s account of the “abiding [beauty]” in art objects, which is one of the basic terms for his idea of “transcending modernity”:

The art objects of the Kamakura period are before our eyes ... and possess an “abiding [beauty]” (*dokuritsu jisoku shite iru utsukushisa*) that transcends modern scholarly interpretations. (trans. Najita and Harootunian 761; Kawakami, *Overcoming* 223) ⁹

“The discerning eye [must penetrate that of] the immediate moment.

[Kobayashi argues] that the essence of Kamakura religious art contained a deep and abiding form that outlived its immediate history and the moment that had given expression to it” (Najita and Harootunian 761).

Kobayashi insisted on the idea of “statics” and “dynamics” in his description of history:

[F]or example, in [the field of] dynamics the theory of the power of change is called dynamics ... so is it not possible to consider the idea of “statics?” I believe the basic weakness of modern humankind lay in forgetting the “statics” as historical energy (*rekishi ryoku*), being so engrossed in the

⁹ 鎌倉時代の美術品がわれわれの眼の前にあってその美しさというものはわれわれの批評解釈を絶した独立自足している美しさがあるのですが、僕に感じられなければならぬ。

dynamics as historical energy.¹⁰ (Kawakami, *Overcoming* 219)

Kobayashi also associated “statics” with the fixed, stationary, unchanged aspects of history (Harootunian 84).

The process of maturing (*seijuku*) leads to seeing the form (*katachi*) of literature and feeling the form of objets d’art, claims Kobayashi.

There is no other way of understanding the classics. Only *one absolute life* exists in them, and coming into contact with this is *most vital*. In this way one must sense it [absolute life] with the physical body. It is not mental understanding. We must *mature* up to this point in order to understand the classics.¹¹ (Kawakami, *Overcoming* 246). (My italics.)

9.3 “Beliefs” in “*Taema*” (as “Statics”) and “One’s Age” (as “Abiding beauty”)

Kobayashi’s idea of embodying the “one absolute life” is better understood by describing these two essays. The essay “*Taema*” provides one example of “statics” in the immutable form as expressed in the “eternal form” of the “beautiful flower” or “beauty embodied” in the flesh. Next, the essay “On Age” provides insight into what was earlier described as “abiding beauty” in the symposium of 1942.

¹⁰ 例えば力学でも力の変化に関する理論をダイナミックと言うなら互いに平均しているいろいろな力に関する理論、即ちスタチックというものが考えるわけです。歴史力に関するダイナミックに足をとられて、歴史力のスタチックというものを忘却している処に近代人の弱さがあるのであるのかと僕が考えて来たのです。

¹¹ 日本の古典というものがどうしても分からない。絶対的な命というものは一つであって、それに触れることが一番大事なことである。そういう風なものに触れるのだ。肉体で触れるのだ。そういう風な所まで僕などが成熟して来ないと古典というものは分からない。

9.3.1 Eternal Forms of the “Beautiful Flower”: “*Taema*”

The opening paragraph of “*Taema*” includes the questions, “What was it? What could one call this: two white *tabi* socks starting at the flute’s sound? [It was] *Taema*, Zeami would have said” (“*Taema*,” KHZ-A 14: 134). Komparu describes the play as a “drama based on fantasy which makes the fullest use of symbolism,” an example of the phantasmal type of Noh drama. It crosses the barriers of time and space, implying eternal themes (Komparu 79).

The second paragraph introduces Buddhist or medieval religious sentiments in the time of Zeami (the writer of the Noh drama, *Taema*). It was that life begins with death, an idea which elicits a frightening emotion since in the play there is a response from the world of death to the world of life: “... as if the forms of two or three dead kittens” (“*Taema*”) (trans. Seidensticker 181; KHZ-A 14: 135). This emotion implies a positive belief in death as the springboard to eternal life—a notion unfamiliar to the Westerner since it approaches Eastern mysticism, expressed in such a statements as, “That thoughts about life and death could take so simple a form!” (trans. Seidensticker, 182; “*Taema*,” KHZ-A 14: 135).

The following paragraphs speak of a modern civilization which does not know its direction. Kobayashi blamed the war on the death of a wholesome consciousness, which resulted in the inevitable outcome of man's frenzied activities craving after “social progress” based on various concepts and contrived tradition. He hinted at this in his characterization of the tragedy of modern times, which contrasts with the figure of Chûjôhime:

The lovely form of Chûjôhime moved diagonally across the stage, like a flower flung from the mud of history. That thoughts about life and death should take so simple a form! I

thought I saw how it could ignore social progress. Things hovered about the lovely form and went no further. Nothing was permitted inside that solemnly contrived mask. There, without doubt, was Zeami's "flower." (trans. Seidensticker 182; "*Taema*" KHZ-A 14: 136) (My italics.)

Kobayashi himself had abandoned the *bundan* and retreated into a period of isolation, self-searching, and inner struggle, having once been entrapped by Japan's dreams for peace in the Far East by a conquest of China.

Kobayashi concentrated on the form of "a flower flung from the mud of history" in his notable expression, "There is only the beautiful 'flower,' not the beauty of the 'flower.'" Kobayashi understands the "flower" as "the movements of the body correcting changing concepts," which Zeami explained as, "That hidden can become the flower, but that not hidden cannot."¹²

Shimizu Takayoshi claims that Kobayashi adopted the effects of Noh drama and the mask in his essay, which masked the "simple, pure form" that harbored the essence of the important question of life and death (*Course* 188). The beautiful mask of the princess (Chûjôhime), for example, is more than mere aesthetics, being also a bare form that resolves the crucial question regarding that which borders on life and death. She expressed the crystallization of Kobayashi's resolution, which he felt could not be explained with precise meaning, except in creative silence under "the night sky among the stars and snow" (Shimizu Takayoshi, *Course* 190).

¹² The bare face could not express the inner depth of the movement of the flesh, the form of "the soul transformed into the flesh," which then required the mask to perfect that which was hidden (Shimizu Takayoshi 189-90).

Kobayashi's consciousness reconsiders the hidden aspects closely associated with *Taema* — and finally intuites the symbols of infinity, “the stars and snow” (Shimizu Takayoshi, *Course* 190).

9.3.2 “One’s Age” as “Abiding Beauty”

Focal point five, “Behind nature, see (that which inspires) beautiful literature,” suggests that there is something in nature that provides the human spirit with “abiding beauty.” Kobayashi writes that one begins to see genuine beauty in one’s forties and hear genuine sounds in one’s sixties, as will be explained in “One’s Age.”

9.3.2.1 New Awareness of One’s Age and Beauty

The war ended, and Kobayashi noticed on a visit to Jakkôin Temple in Osaka that the beauty of the surroundings captivated him in a way never experienced before. He was then well into his forties. The poet Miyoshi Tatsuji (1900-1964),¹³ his traveling companion, explained, “That may be due to your age,” which he suggested best reflected the age of his inner self (“One’s Age,” KHZ-A 18: 93).

This idea was reinforced when on a hike to Mt. Yatsugatake, Kobayashi and his friends stumbled upon a volcanic crater in the evening dusk and were struck by the awesome crimson peak in front:

We took a deep breath in unison, and stood motionless.
Directly across the pure-white incline, there stood a crimson,
triangular volcano peak In the evening sun, the peak

¹³ Miyoshi Tatsuji graduated from the French Literature Department of Tokyo Imperial University in 1928, the same year as Kobayashi. His chief source of income for ten years was translating French works. He is regarded as one of the two or three finest Japanese poets of the twentieth century.

loomed like a gruesome monster covered with red blood... . A short time later, we discussed that climb... . [Someone said,] “It was the *dewa* (god) that appeared. (“One’s Age,” KHZ-A 18: 94-95)

The *dewa* (foreign god)¹⁴ had appeared before in Nara. Kobayashi recollected his vagabond days there after graduating from university. He had looked at old temples and Buddhist statues, which began to look like absurd figures, instilling anxiety in him. He had viewed historical forms of beauty out of mere curiosity as he had been appreciating Western paintings and sculptures. Only after he turned forty did Kobayashi realize a new appreciation for the beauty of Japanese classics, and the traditional arts (“One’s Age,” KHZ-A 18: 95).

Previously he had read the classics with his intellect as a form of knowledge but not with penetrating eyes to see their forms of beauty, which Kobayashi had learned by around 1941 under the tutelage of Aoyama Jirô. Kobayashi had also learned that the writer of the *Tale of the Heike* wrote of only what he saw, which became the eternal forms of beauty that the ancients attended to (“One’s Age,” KHZ-A 18: 95).

Kobayashi interpreted these forms as coming from Confucius’s “time- table” of life. Confucius had termed the age of forties as *yowai fuwaku* (“free of vacillation”), then the age of fifties as *tenmei wo shiru* (“knowing of Heaven’s decree”), and the age of sixties as *jijun* (“hearing [and understanding] all”) (“One’s Age,” KHZ-A 18: 96).

¹⁴ Takahashi Hideo translates *dewa* as “devil” in English (Takahashi, *Walking* 133-34).

9.3.2.2 “One’s Age” and “Japanese Animism”

Not long afterwards Kobayashi read *Sasame Yuki* (1948) (trans. *The Makioka Sisters*, 1957), and the matter of “age” (“free of vacillation”) persisted in his mind. The heroine, Yukiko, is asked what are her favorite flowers, and she replies “cherry blossoms.” The author, Tanizaki Jun’ichirô (1886-1965), then in his sixties, had in his protagonist Yukiko characterized the feeling of the ancients. They first awaited the cherry blossoms to bloom, then grieved and lamented when the petals fell. This was a subject on which the ancients had written countless poems. The novel ends with Yukiko (as a personification of Tanizaki) listening to the “sound of hail, vibrating on the pillow.” In this account the *dewa* (foreign god) was no longer present (“One’s Age,” KHZ-A 18: 101).

Through the image of Yukiko, Tanizaki as the author of the novel is thus “hearing all.” It recalls Kawabata Yasunari’s *Yama no Oto* [*Sound of Mountains*], which is inspired by “hearing the sound of the mountains,” expressing a Japanese kind of animism (trans. Seidensticker; Kawabata, 10).

There persisted in Kobayashi a mysterious harmony with nature which Takamizawa Junko writes about some twenty years after the war: “Hideo’s love for cherry blossoms turned fiendish, far beyond an ordinary interest. He became so obsessed that the blossoms triggered in him a demonic passion for beauty” (*My Brother* 109). These suggest “animistic” characteristics, which are reflected in Kobayashi’s magnum opus *Motoori Norinaga* written in the 1960s and 1970s, describing a realm not only of cherry blossoms but also of the myriad of gods, a mystifying realm clothed in forms of beauty.

9.4 Between Ito Town (1942) and Nanking (1944)

Biographical accounts see Kobayashi in both places spending six months in Nanking and stay with Aoyama in Ito Town. His life was endangered for a third time¹⁵ during his trips to the Continent, and Kobayashi strained to understand his work and the world of the arts.

9.4.1 Aoyama: Objets d'art and Mozart

He listened to Aoyama's collection of Mozart at Aoyama's new place in Ito Town from August 1943 (Shirasu, *Why Today* 61). He was again moved by Mozart, the second time since 1928 when he was wandering in Osaka. This interest in Mozart continued as he traveled in China, writing on Mozart until June in Nanking, the first draft of which he destroyed and rewrote when he returned.

Shirasu sees in Kobayashi's writings on Mozart some self-portrayals.

Mozart gambled all on each of his dealings. Why is it that a genius sees so many difficulties in what the ordinary sees as facile? Most likely, a strong-willed person dislikes any facile task. (qtd. in *Why Today* 60)

What did Mozart aim for? Most likely, nothing. He knew nothing about purpose or plans, which have poisoned the

¹⁵ The first incident occurred on his first trip in 1938 in Shanghai and the second and third took place during his sixth trip (December 1943 to June 1944). On the first occasion, an unexplained "political plot" threatened Kobayashi's life. On the second occasion, Kobayashi quarrelled with a member of the group, while in drink when negotiating for funds in Shanghai (Etô *Kobayashi* 259-60). The angered fellow forced his way into the inn at night and was about to cut off Hideo's arm, but when he saw Kobayashi's angelic looks in deep sleep he had a change of heart, accounts Takamizawa (*My Brother* 132). On the third occasion while drinking, Kobayashi began to pat the head of an officer, which the M.P. mistook for his striking the officer's head. They immediately ordered, "Do away with that Kobayashi," when a friend came to the rescue (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 132).

minds of artists and thinkers today *What is important is how one is walking in the present, not the purpose.* (qtd. in *Why Today* 61) (My italics.)

A question emerges as to what sadness he was expressing in the original Nanking version of his essay “Mozart” from 1944. The 1946 version refers this sadness to his mother’s death in that year. Hosoya Hiroshi raises questions about how Kobayashi could have predicted his mother’s death two years in advance. Kobayashi apparently destroyed the manuscript written in Nanking and rewrote it a later time (Hosoya, 143-45).

9.4.2 The Fifth Trip (June - July 1943)

New evidence published in 2000 reveals that, contrary to the understanding of many commentators, Kobayashi engaged in a period of activism, soon after completing the final essay of his series on the Japanese classics, “Yoritomo,” in June 1943.

Though told by Japanese officials that they could not guarantee his safety (Etô, *Kobayashi* 259), he took his fifth trip with Hayashi Fusao to Manchuria and China to prepare for the Third Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Literati Meeting in Nanking in November 1944.¹⁶ Kobayashi learned of the difficulty of the proposed meeting when told that Japan “invaded” and China was “invaded” (Sugino, ed. 29).¹⁷ After his return from China, he met with over twenty Chinese writers who had attended the Second Far East Co-Prosperity Literati Meeting (*Dai Nikai Dai Tôa Bungakusha Taikai*) in

¹⁶ This was sponsored by the Patriotic Association for Japanese Literature (*Nihon Bungaku Hôkokukai*). Neither Kobayashi nor Fumiko wrote anything about the trip to four cities in China (Etô, *Kobayashi* 258). Etô claims he went to China to help his friend, Kume Masao who headed the Patriotic Association for Japanese Literature (*Nihon Bungaku Hôkokukai*), the sponsors for the meeting (Eto, *Kobayashi* 259).

¹⁷ He also had as source a good Chinese friend, a doctor and a writer (Inoue 520).

Tokyo in August 1943.¹⁸ He also heard from the Chinese delegation leader that the Chinese writers found making a living difficult in war-torn China and required financial aid for publications, and faced pressures from Japanese organizations (Sugino, 272).

Presumably from such consultations, Kobayashi spoke of the difficulty of Asia writers “joining hands” at the Second Greater Far East Co-Prosperity Literati Meeting. Takamizawa writes of her brother’s defiant mood at the time. When writers joined in eagerly to cooperate with the Co-Prosperity Movement, Hideo spoke in a way to dash it to pieces: “I believe joining hands is as difficult as fighting a war” (KHZ-A 14: 233). Takamizawa records Kobayashi saying, ‘I [Kobayashi] spoke because you [Kawakami], a friend, had requested it, otherwise I would have declined” (Takamizawa, *My Brother* 121).

Despite these difficulties, Kobayashi went to China again in November 1944. Inoue Ken’ichirô believes he was willing to put in a last moment effort in a losing fight, and sees the trip as part of a lone struggle by Kobayashi, a “man with a soul of action” (*jikkoka no tamashi*) as well as the “soul of a writer.” Furthermore, Kobayashi’s attitude towards Japanese policy in China had wavered. He desired to implement peace as a man of action (516),¹⁹ seeking a project of joint publications with Chinese writers “for the sake of peace.”²⁰ Kobayashi wrote that, “Literature exists for the

¹⁸ And probably some other Chinese writers attending the Greater East Asia Conference (*Dai Tôa Kaigi*) also in Tokyo in November 1943).

¹⁹ Though Kobayashi’s efforts for joint publication required him to compromise himself with some political obligations, Inoue believes he genuinely sought to make some amends for the policy of war among the Chinese writers (Inoue 517).

²⁰ Kobayashi felt compelled to accomplish his goals due to a personal commitment to a Chinese friend who published a literary magazine in Shanghai. Kawakami went to there believing a new joint publishing venture would begin (Kawakami, *My Kobayashi* 234).

sake of peace, not for war... . Peace among writers can only emerge in a time of peace, not in a time of war” (qtd. in Inoue 516).

9.4.3 The Sixth Trip (December 1943 - June 1944)

In Shanghai, Kobayashi successfully negotiated for funding for a meeting in Nanking while his good Kamakura friend, Hayashi Fusao, held a discussion with sixteen Chinese delegates in Beijing held on January 27 (Sugino, ed. 609-11). The Chinese writers rejected the report,²¹ with comments which went unrecorded. Only Hayashi’s comments were recorded:

This time I came for this purpose [of unifying the Chinese writers], but upon arrival, I *found out how impossible the task is*. Although the problem is that of finding a leading [Chinese] writer, we should proceed on. I will report to the Greater Asia Writers’ Meeting how impossible [a unified organization] is. (Sugino, ed. 610) (My italics.)

After hearing of Hayashi’s failure, Kobayashi went for a meeting of his own with Chinese writers in Beijing on February 27, probably in hopes of salvaging this “impossible” task.²²

Important here is that Kobayashi²³ deviated from the official policy, suggesting that they seek aid for writing and publication without

²¹ Hayashi read the report adopted the previous year at the Second Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Literati Meeting. Of the five purposes, the following three relate to this study: “1) Japanese delegations will be sent to China and Manchuria [in 1944]. 2) A unified Chinese writers’ association will be established. 3) The Patriotic Association for Japanese Literature will dispatch one representative each to Beijing, Nanking and Shanghai with office facilities” (Sugino, ed.273).

²² The records indicate that the Chinese made two claims. “(1) The initiative of a new [unified] organization should express the desire of the northern Chinese writers recognized as a group of civilians [non-governmental] writers. (2) The nomination and selection of the planning committee of the new [unified] organization should be conducted by the northern Chinese writers, not from the top [bureaucrats] down” (Sugino, ed. 517).

²³ Serving as a writer and a representative of the Japanese bureaucracy.

holding a conference in 1944 and that they unify “forever” (272). Kobayashi agreed to bring the demands of the northern writers to the southern Chinese writers and to the information bureau in Nanking. Nonetheless, the Chinese writers regarded Kobayashi’s attempt to unify the Chinese writers as a form of interfering with internal matters, which dashed to pieces Kobayashi’s suggestion (Sugino, ed. 270). Kobayashi’s struggle for peace ended in defeat (Sugino, ed. 518), probably for the reason that Kawakami, then in Shanghai, noticed. The leftists had been defeated, the rightists created “death squads,” and the organization of special military groups emerged (Kobayashi 237), which undoubtedly represented a threat to some northern writers.

The Third Far-East Co-Prosperity Literati Meeting held in October was a fiasco. Kobayashi did not attend the meeting although he stayed in Nanking until June hoping to promote it rather than attending the meeting. The meeting, however, took place without members of the sponsoring groups. Kobayashi hardly wrote about his stay in Nanking, except reporting that he wrote his essay “Mozart” (1946) there.

9.5 Reconsiderations and Final Remarks

9.5.1 Western Writers’ Views of Kobayashi

Seidensticker (1921-) at near age fifty, Keene (1926-) at near age sixty, wrote on Kobayashi for the first time, both from a mature understanding of Japanese literature, modern and classical. They both seem to reflect what Kobayashi himself predicted for himself in reading Tanizaki Jun’ichirô’s essay “On Art”:

Yet in the power and integrity of the sentiments Tanizaki himself expresses, which are founded on the author’s lifelong experience [at approaching fifty], something else is at work,

something hard to fathom, which provokes in us [young] readers a heavy, gloomy feeling.

Tanizaki concludes his essay by remarking that “young people who laugh at my perversity *will perhaps come around to my way of thinking when they reach my age*. (trans. Anderer 48)(My italics.)

A difference surfaces between the older scholars of Kobayashi, Seidensticker and Keene, and the younger ones, Hirata and Dorsey, which raises the issue mentioned by Tanizaki. Perhaps the younger writers “will come around” when they reach the age of fifty. Harootunian wrote his work in his seventies. This author is in his late sixties.

James Dorsey refers to Seidensticker sparingly and critically: “Seidensticker, like many interpreters of Kobayashi, presents him as having no stomach for the abstract.” Dorsey, also a philosophy major, appears upset by Seidensticker’s statement: “A dislike of abstraction is everywhere [in Kobayashi’s works] ... “ (Dorsey 105). In addition, Hosea Hirata does not mention Seidensticker at all in his work since he prefers to follow the path of intellectual thinkers, including neo-Freudians. Seidensticker claims that Kobayashi had no love for “psychologism.”

9.5.2 War Responsibility, Universalism, and Western Culture

Kobayashi himself left some questions unresolved. Regarding the matter of war responsibility, leftist writers accused Kobayashi and others of cooperating with the war effort in their activities with the Patriotic Association for Japanese Literature. But Kobayashi, as new evidence makes clear, sought peace through literature. The eminent postwar critic, Yoshimoto Taka’aki, concludes that among those accused of cooperating with war authorities, Kobayashi’s responsibility is relatively light (Sugino, ed.

512-13). However, Kobayashi's belief in "theory of destiny" in explaining the war remains unconvincing to many today.

Another question is whether Kobayashi (or anyone) had been able to completely rid himself of culturalism (of one's own) during the war? Or, does some form of "culturalism," or a particularism, accompany a person's love or appreciation for one's own culture? This remains a matter for future studies which might consider how he expressed his "theory of destiny" (or that which circulates with his blood) in an entirely new set of circumstances in U.S. occupied Japan.

Kobayashi's type of "culturalism" also appears to reflect his anticipation of what Takeuchi (1908-1977), a scholar of Chinese literature, expresses as "universalism."

I believe that Asians have always recognized [severe limits to Western power]. Oriental poets have intuitively known this. Whether it is Tagore or Lu Hsun [Xun], they have accomplished the ideal of a general humanity in their own personal examples. The West has invaded the East; there has been opposition to this In order to realize superior Western cultural values, the West has to be entrapped once more by Asia, as a means of revolutionizing Westerners themselves; it has *to create universalism* according to this cultural rewinding of values. The strength of the East is in revolutionizing the West in order to elevate the universal values that the West produced. (qtd. Najita and Harootunian; Takeuchi, *Hôhō to Shite no Ajia [Asia as Method]* 1978) (My italics.)

After the war, Kobayashi engaged in a new search to understand Japan through Western culture.²⁴

²⁴ Postwar essays on Western artists, "View of Life" (which discusses Henri Bergson), "Letters of van Gogh," and "Common Sense" on Descartes).

Finally, Samuel P. Huntington in 1996 calls for new awareness on the part of all in a situation that he considers “dangerous,” and which he feels grips the fault-lines of civilization, beginning with Islam and the West, but not excluding East Asia. He calls it “Greater China and Its Co-Prosperity Sphere” (168). He directs himself to the West and Western beliefs.

In the emerging world of ethnic conflict and civilization clash, Western belief in the *universality of Western culture suffers* three problems: [This belief] is false; it is immoral; and it is *dangerous*. (*The Clash* 310) (My italics.)

According to Huntington, the fact that the above universality is *false* “has been the central thesis of this book” (*The Clash* 310). Moreover, he suggests that it is a “false consciousness” (*The Clash* 310) that leads an immoral and dangerous situation, a note that Hirata (a poet-scholar) appears to be sounding and Chang (a journalist-historian) is trumpeting.

The question emerges whether the process of our consciousness can truly grasp reality as Huntington remarks: “The most important lone country is Japan. No other country shares its distinct culture Japan’s loneliness is further enhanced by the fact that its culture is highly particularistic and does not involve a potentially universal religion ... or ideology ...” (137).

An understanding of the life and thoughts of Kobayashi Hideo will help in appreciating the uniqueness of Japan. Western writers have found understanding Japan is not an easy task. Japan is sharing her elusive forms of beauty with the world through all forms of art and culture, which are infused by a universal religion or ideology that has yet to assume complete expression and has thus yet to achieve full appreciation.

Conclusion

Kobayashi's work as a critic had very wide application to Japanese thought and culture, as this thesis has shown. His life and example were inseparable from his writings in exerting a broad and manifold influence on the readers of his time, including those in the intelligentsia. Seidensticker correctly observes that Kobayashi's "own importance must lie in a realm other than practical literary criticism." He continues that Kobayashi's "best writing is in fact scarcely literary criticism at all. It concerns something more moral than literary ... this ... leads perilously close to a breakdown of the distinction between life and art" ("Kobayashi" [1971] 421). One of the keys to Kobayashi's approach, from the beginning, was what Seidensticker calls "self-awareness": a state of "sincerity" and "sympathy" directed to his objects of study.

The focus of this thesis is on Kobayashi's life and work up to 1944. It has attempted to combine biography with "close readings" and commentaries on Kobayashi's works to give a fuller picture of his achievement in this period, particularly his moral emphasis. There have been a number of memoirs relating to his life, and some book-length critical studies of his writing, but no up-to-date comprehensive study of his life and his work exists, either in Japanese or English, and no biography per se. The last critical biography was written in 1961, almost forty years ago, by Etô, and this study takes advantage of all the information that has come to light since then to reassess Kobayashi's achievements through an integrated approach, combining biography and analysis.

The flood of writings by commentators on Kobayashi in the postwar years in Japan "refigured" Kobayashi in their own image, in a way

convenient to themselves. The author believes this tradition has continued in writings on Kobayashi. The present thesis indicates that in the prewar period both Japanese and Western scholars (excepting Seidensticker, for which reason this study often refers to him) have tended to forget Kobayashi's struggles to resolve his relationship with the chaotic social scene and repressive political world around him. Kobayashi engaged himself in this world in the earlier part of his maturity by attempting to find an ethical standpoint based on personal integrity and commitment, which he called "character." He observed aspects of revolutionary change in Japanese society and politics, including industrialization, nationalism, and imperialism. However, as a critic, he saw as equally damaging to the human spirit the process of schematic conceptualization amongst intellectuals, and attempted to reinstate an ethical and personal perspective in his own writing and life. In the later period of his struggle and maturity, he attempted to overcome with his "beautiful writings" the entanglement through interpretations which he saw as a perennial and debilitating by-product of intellectual activity.

His approach included a moral, ethical one: a union of the body, soul, and mind seen in a holistic education and a training in the Yôki Group engrained in his childhood, his rebellion from middle school, his agonizing years in higher school after his father's death and mother's illness. Thereafter, indispensable for this study is the role of two women in his life (other than his mother and wife) and his fascination with objets d'art, based on new evidence which reveals a hitherto unsuspected dimension in Kobayashi's life and works. The first part of the biographical section of the thesis introduces the sources of his attitudes and predispositions, those elements Kobayashi himself called "innate tendencies," also new material about his antecedents and beginnings. They also illustrate some of his early

life as one of risk-taking and rebelliousness, demonstrated in his school and university years. New material from interviews with family and associates brings this part of his life into sharp relief.

The moral crisis of the 1930s, with the dramatic turn of Japanese society and culture toward unfettered nationalism, tested Kobayashi's ideas and conscience to the utmost. The thesis has attempted to show that far from resorting to reflex escapism (as commentators have often suggested) Kobayashi's reactions from 1942 on were based a quietism rooted in a well-considered and highly traditional refusal to yield to the importunities of the moment. Kobayashi had learned from Dostoevsky that for writers under repressive rule politics should be secondary to social and cultural issues, whereby they could express themselves, occasionally bordering on the political, but if so, indirectly. Kobayashi was not an apologist for the nationalist régime but deliberately withdrew from political engagement when he realized that there was a larger force at play – "fate" or the "inevitable." His focus was on the personal and local, arguing that the tragedies that matter are those struggles of the individual, best verified by the "beauty" of one's writings, not academic discussions.

In offering a new set of biographical information translated into English, the thesis allows the English-language reader an opportunity to appreciate a new aspect of the regular tension in Kobayashi's works between the working out of his ideas, summed up here as the work of "logic," and the expression of more deeply held convictions or "beliefs," going through the process inherent in the term "theory of destiny," (1929) and "logic of destiny" (1933). A summary of "Various Patterns" leads to "Shiga Naoya," "*Shishôsetsuron*" to "The Life of Dostoevsky." "On History" can be seen as the

preparation for “On History and Literature”; and “Tradition” and “Overcoming Modernity” for “*Taema*.”

This study interprets Kobayashi’s writing and thought as passing through five stages of maturity in a period of breath-taking changes in Japan. In stage one (1929-32), he struggled to reinstate “the man” in place of all schools of literary thought adopted from the West. He first had to struggle against the I-Novelists who dealt deep in the trivialities of the “I,” using a European concept of humanity based on scientific psychology, and then the Marxist writers who made the external social structure over-ride the human elements. As discussed in Chapters 5, Kobayashi described his attempts as, “Behind literature, see the man (as the handiwork of nature).” He emphasized innate tendencies over the scientific structures of psychology and the ideological patterns of Marxism. His criticism in this period aimed to redress the balance by exploring these tendencies in himself, and then in the writers he discussed.

In stage two, Kobayashi used the term the “socialized I” in his attempt to define the “modern individual” in a 1930s Japanese society of change, anxiety and chaos. He sought a model in the West and found Dostoevsky. He wrote extensively on Dostoevsky, particularly from 1933 to 1937. Kobayashi followed Dostoevsky’s example, establishing publications (from the early 1930s into the 1940s) which sought to affect society as much as to be affected by society. This is discussed in Chapter 6 as “Behind the man, see society.” Kobayashi concluded that intellectuals had detached the “socialized I” from society and their own lives for their own convenience. At this juncture, Kobayashi wrote an important essay (or an open letter) in April 1936 to the Marxist writer Nakano Shigeharu which suggests what he meant by the “socialized I”:

I have always thought criticism to mean attesting to the self (*jiko shômei*). From this principle it follows that in order to write powerful social criticism, one must be in possession of a fully socialized self [I].¹ Cultural conditions must be such as to permit a harmony, a balance, between the social and the individual. (KHZ 9: 171; Seidensticker, “Kobayashi” [1971] 440)

Much later, Kobayashi clarified his term “self attestation” by way of a definition of “beliefs” as connected to personal responsibility. In a lecture to university students in 1974, he explained that one can “know” a body of knowledge as commonly understood by others, but one can “believe” (*shinjiru*) only in one’s own way as a unique individual. This entails a sense of responsibility: “When man ceases to believe, one ceases to take responsibility. Man becomes a member of a mob or the mass, placing responsibility on the group or society as a whole while relieving himself of it” (Kobayashi H., “*Shiru koto to shinjiru koto* [To Know and to Believe]” (KHZ-A 26: 73). He refers to his days in the prewar period when he saw mob action all about him. More than is generally realized, Kobayashi did take his share of responsibility at that time, as Chapter 6 shows.

Kobayashi followed an ethics of criticism. He believed that this kind of writing is not a process of “dispelling the darkness in another” but rather of educating oneself (Seidensticker, “Kobayashi” [1979] 157). Kobayashi called the process *éducation sensationnelle* in 1936, a necessary condition for seeing the world abroad correctly, since he had likened the Japanese people in their isolation to a “frog in a well.”

Between 1938 and 1942, the war in China was affecting all aspects of Japanese politics, economics, and culture as government

¹ Kobayashi uses the word *jiko* (“I” or “self”) instead of *watakushi* or *jiga* in “*Shishōsetsuron*.”

repression increased. In Stage 3 (1938-9), Kobayashi sought not only to see the war-stricken Continent but also to observe how the ordinary Japanese was responding at the time. He first explained history as a force that creates war or destroys, in “On History” (1938-39). Then he concluded that the “silence” of Japanese people expressed a “wisdom” that accepted the “inevitable” or their “fate” in history. Chapter 7 explains stage three, “Behind society, see the duality of history.”

Stage four (1940-41) is summarized in Chapter 8 as “Behind history, see nature (fused with humankind),” where nature (as an external force) fuses with man (as an integral part of nature, and with nature within him). This is explained in Kobayashi’s essay “History and Literature” (1941) in which he traces history to man’s primordial tendency to reminisce, to remember the beloved ones in the past, which he explores in terms of the image of the “weeping mother.” Kobayashi argued this it was this natural tendency of man (which distinguishes man from animals) that creates genuine history. He lectured abroad in Korea in 1940, when he began to express this kind of history as a “belief” in the past. Thus Kobayashi argues that “history exists because people exist” or because sincere people reminisce with skill (*jōzu ni*), ideas which opposed the process of conceptualized history of the Marxists and the trumped-up history of the ultra-nationalists. It must be noted how many times the word “reminiscences” appears in this study in the works of both Kobayashi and his commentators.

In his debate with Kobayashi, Ôoka criticizes this dallying into theories of history without criticizing the politics of war. This study concludes that Ôoka may have been correct in principle, but that practically speaking, Kobayashi, along with Ôoka, would have been imprisoned for speaking out in this way. Instead Kobayashi traced the cause of war to man’s

pride (quoting from *The Tale of Heike*), and to the inevitable force of nature, which he considered a greater force than that of politics. Kobayashi provided comfort in such writings as “*Taema*,” and perhaps even hope in their “beliefs” for the ordinary Japanese imprisoned in a totalitarian system. This study also asserts that Kobayashi found in his reading of Dostoevsky the idea that an individual’s “beliefs” come into being as a natural result of their sufferings.

The fifth stage adopted the terms from the symposium “Overcoming Modernity” (see Chapter 9). Kobayashi adopted what Dostoevsky described as “harmony and serenity” by transcending the human realm, when the human organism in its greatest struggles sees the need for beauty as a lasting art. He believed that those who struggled with the problems of history and life produced writings of beauty, and ones which tended to last through the ages. This aesthetic quality in the end transcended the immediate issues about which they wrote. Kobayashi sought the mysteries of truth in the greatest writers and artists of “character,” past and present, and realized that only the most eminent tended to “transcend” their time, including any notions of “modernity.”

Perhaps Kobayashi’s message is to adopt Dostoevsky’s model and “transcend modernity” by study of the ancients, who created “beautiful literature” or a “beautiful history.” A determined opposition to modernity (to Americanization, materialism, and commercialism) can lead to a neo-modernism or a post-modernism which leads to a neo-postmodernism that requires in turn a new process of “overcoming.” Kobayashi spoke of the “statics” of history and the “abiding beauty,” which this study has encapsulated as, “Behind nature, see (that which inspires) beautiful literature.” This is discussed in “*Taema*” and “One’s Age.”

The present study has attempted to bring his critical works out of the isolation of abstract discussions and return them to the context of his everyday life and feelings. *This process has revealed two struggles that became formative of his “character.” His first struggle against his social, historical and cultural context led ultimately to his second struggle — that of discovering himself.* The uniqueness of Kobayashi was that he attempted to “embody” or “incarnate” whatever truths he gleaned from his readings into his style, his life and his circumstances.

A. 1.0 Chronology of the Life of Kobayashi

(Including major historical events and essays)

- 1902 (April 11) Date of registration of the birth of Hideo (not actual date of birth).
- 1904 (June 3) Date of registration of the birth of Junko (not actual date of birth).
- 1905 Einstein's papers.
- 1909 (April) Enrolls in Shirokane Primary School; family moves to Shida, Shirokane.
- 1912 Taishô Period begins, named after the reign of Emperor Yoshihito (1912-26).
- 1915 (March) Graduates from Shirokane Primary School.
- (April) Enrolls in First Middle School; family moves to Imasato, Shirokane.
- 1917 (Dec.) Father Toyozô founds Japan Diamond Company.
- 1920 (March) Graduates from First Middle School, but fails entrance exams to First Higher School.
- 1921 (March) Father Toyozô dies from illness.
- (April) Enrolls in First Higher School after a year of self-study.
- (Oct.) Operated for inflammation of appendicitis, suffers from nervous exhaustion, contemplates suicide, and drops out of his first year of higher school.
- 1922 (Oct.) Publishes "Suicide of the Octopus"
- 1923 (Sept. 1) The Great Kanto Earthquake
- 1924 (June) Moves from Shirokane to Mabashi, Kôenji City.
- (June) Tominaga writes first of six letters to Kobayashi dating to February 1925.
- (July) Publishes "Brain Portion" in the coterie magazine *Bronze Age*.
- 1925 (Feb.) Publishes "Laughter of Ponkin" (later "Ponkin and the Woman" in coterie magazine.)
- (Feb.) Tominaga returns to Tokyo after a five-month's stay in Kyoto; meets Kobayashi.
- (March) At age 23, he graduates from First Higher School in four years, his repeating the first year in a three year course.
- (April) Enrolls in Tokyo Imperial University; meets Nakahara and Yasuko in May.
- (Oct.) Takes a trip to Ôshima Island and considers suicide (Yasuko failing to accompany him). Kobayashi is hospitalized with twisted intestines.
- (Nov.) Tominaga deceases on Nov. 20; Kobayashi soon after lives with Yasuko.

- 1926 Showa Period (1926-89) begins, named after the reign of Emperor Hirohito
 (Feb. & March) Publishes two articles in reputable *Bungei Shunjû*.
 (Mar. to Oct.) Moves to Kamakura, Zushi, then to Shirokane.
 (Oct.) Publishes "Arthur Rimbaud, Life's Dogmatist" in *French Literature Research Journal*.
- 1927 (Feb) Kobayashi moves with Yasuko to Yato, Nakano Ward
 (July) Publishes anonymously the first of nine translations in series of "Biography of Arthur Rimbaud" to end of May 1928 in *Bungei Shunjû*.
- 1928 (Mar.) Graduates from Tokyo Imperial University.
 (April) Kobayashi disappears from Tokyo (formerly thought to be in late May) and spends a year in Nara.
- 1929 (Sept. to Dec.) Translates first of fifteen in series on "Biography of Charles Baudelaire" to December of 1929 in *Bungei Shunjû*.
 (Oct) Publishes prize-winning essay "Various Patterns." This year, the Great Depression leads to the rise of nationalism and militarism.
- 1930-31 The series on "Achilles and Tortoise" clarifies Kobayashi's views in "Various Patterns," particularly the problem of language.
- 1931 (Aug.) Manchurian Incident leads to government control of Japanese life and thoughts. The group "Aoyama Gakuin" forms and Kobayashi liaisons with M.S.
- 1932 (April) Kobayashi accept lectureship at Meiji University.
 (Sept.) Kobayashi begins his lectures on Dostoevsky.
 (Fall) Kobayashi turns into a social critic while writing "Letter to X" (Sept.)
 (This year) The proletarian movement is thoroughly suppressed.
- 1933 (Feb.) Japan leaves the League of Nations, leading to isolationism and ultra-nationalism.
 (Oct) Helps found the first issue of *Bungakkai* magazine.
- 1934 (June) Kobayashi marries Mori Kiyomi.
 From this year, Kobayashi accompanies Aoyama almost daily to curio shops. Nazi fanatics and ideologues form an alliance with the intellectuals. A similar scene occurs in Japan.
- 1935 (Jan.) Begins to publish the first of twenty-four articles, "The Life of Dostoevsky," (until March 1937).
 (April to March 1936) Becomes chief editor of *Bungakkai* magazine.
 (May & June) Publishes "*Shishôsetsuron*" ("Discourse on the I-Novel").
- 1936 (Feb.) Rightist officers and troops assassinate members of Cabinet members, leading to military domination of the government.
- 1937 (April) Begins to serve as chief advisor to Sôgensha Publishing Company (until the postwar).

- (June) Publishes his series on “The Devils” (until November).
- (Aug.) Publishes “Direction of Literary Criticism.”
- (July) Outbreak of the China Incident leads to full-scale warfare.
- (Oct.) Nakahara Chûya deceases at age 30.
- (This year) Kobayashi begins to purchase objets d’art, as a process of developing “a feeling for” beauty that leads to “seeing beauty.”
- 1938 (March to April) First trip to the Continent (southern China).
- 1938 (Oct. to Dec.) Second trip to the Continent (northern part including Manchuria and the Peking area).
- (Nov.) Government proclaims the New Co-Prosperity of Greater East Asia.
- 1939 (Jan.) Publishes “Impressions of Manchuria.”
- (May) Publishes *The Life of Dostoevsky*.
- 1940 (Aug.) Third trip to the Continent (Korea and Manchuria), speaking tour led by Kikuchi Kan.
- (Sept.) Japan signs the Three-Power Pact with Germany and Italy.
- (Oct. to Nov.) Publishes his lectures “On Machiavelli” and “Literature and Myself”
- 1941 (Jan.) Publishes “Afterthoughts” (including accounts of his “beliefs” in history and admiration for Fukuzawa Yûkichi).
- (March to April) Publishes “History and Literature”
- (Around this year) Kobayashi ability to “see” objets d’art begins to surpass that of Aoyama.
- 1941 (Oct. to Nov.) Fourth trip to the Continent (Korea), a speaking tour led by Kawakami.
- (Dec. 7) Attack on Pearl Harbor
- 1942 (Jan.) Publishes “Three Radio Broadcasts”
- (March) Publishes “War and Peace.”
- (April to June 1943) Publishes essays on Japanese classics, beginning with “*Taema*”
- (October) Participates in the symposium “Overcoming Modernity” in Tokyo.
- 1943 (June-July) Fifth trip to the Continent to prepare for a meeting in Nanking.
- (Dec. to June 1944) Sixth trip to the Continent to prepare for a meeting in Nanking.
- 1944 (April) Publication of *Bungakkai* temporarily ceases.
- (June) Returns to Japan from Nanking.
- 1945 (Jan.) Writes “Umehara Ryûsaburô”
- 1945 (Fall) A-Bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. WWII ends.

Appendix 2.0 Short List of Kobayashi's Writings

(1924 - 1945)

(Those related to this study)

- 1922 (Oct.) "Suicide of the Octopus" (蛸の自殺) (Reminiscences)
- 1924 (July) "One Brain" (一つの脳髓) (Reminiscences)
(Oct.) "Twelve Short Pieces" (断片十一)
- 1925 (Feb.) "Laughter of Ponkin" (ボンキンの笑い)(later retitled "The Woman and Ponkin" (女とボンキン) (Reminiscences)
(April) "Ogasawara Travel Records" (小笠原紀行)
- 1926 (Feb.) "Dilemma of Satô Haruo" (左藤春夫のジレンマ)
(March) "Miracle of Personality" (性格の奇蹟)
(Oct.) "Arthur Rimbaud, Life's Dogmatist" (人生昔斫壇家アルチュ ランボウ)
(Retitled "Rimbaud I")
(Nov.) "Tominaga Tarô" [富永太郎] (Reminiscences)
- 1927 (July to May 1928) "Biography of Arthur Rimbaud" (アルチュ ランボウ伝)
(Series of translations)
- 1927 (Sept.) "Muses and Destiny—Akutagawa" (芥川龍之介の美神と宿命)
(Dec.) "One Aspect of 'The Flower of Evil'" (「悪の華」一面)
- 1928 (Sept to Dec. 1929) "Biography of Charles Baudelaire" (シャルル ボオドレエル伝) (Series of translations)
- 1929 (Oct.) "Various Patterns" [様々なる意匠] (Translated by Anderer)
(Dec.) "Shiga Naoya" (志賀直哉一世の若くあたらしい人々へ)
- 1930 (Feb.) "Deceptions" (からくり)
(April to Aug.) "Achilles and the Tortoise" (アシルと亀の子) (First of four in series)
(Oct.) *Season of Hell* (by Rimbaud) (地獄の季節) (Second book of translation)
(Nov. to Feb. 1931) "Critics' Failures" (First of two) [批評家失格]
- 1931 (Sept.) "A Sleepless Night" (眠られぬ夜) (Reminiscences)
- 1932 (June) "The Anxiety of Modern Literature" [現代文学の不安] (Translated by Anderer)
(Sept.) "Letter to X" (X への手紙) (Reminiscences)
- 1933 (May) "Literature of the Lost Home" (故郷を失った文学) (Translated by Anderer)

- (Oct.) "On the I-Novel" {私小説について}
- (Dec.) "Notes on Dostoevsky's *The Adolescent*" (ドストエフスキイに関するノオトー未成年)
- 1934 (Jan.) "Chaos in the Literary World" (文学の混乱) (Translated by Anderer)
- (Feb. to July) The first of three in series on "Notes of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*" (ドストエフスキイに関するノオトー罪と罰)
- (Sept. to Dec.) The first of three in series on "Notes of Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*" (ドストエフスキイに関するノオトー白痴)
- 1935 (Jan. to March 1937) "The Life of Dostoevsky" (ドストエフスキイの生活) (Articles #1 to #10 of twenty-four in series)
- (May to Aug.) "Discussions on the I-Novel" (私小説論) (The first of four in series) (Translated by Anderer as "Discourse on Fiction of the Self")
- 1936 (Jan. to Dec.) (Chapters, 11 - 22 on "The Life of Dostoevsky")
- (March) "Frog in the Well" {井の中の蛙}
- (April) "Letter to Nakano Shigeharu" {中野重治君へ}
- 1937 (Jan.) "Dostoevsky's Awareness of Generation" (ドストエフスキイの時代感覚)
- (Feb. to March) (Last two articles #23 to #24 on "The Life of Dostoevsky")
- (June to Nov.) "On *The Devils*" (悪霊について) (First of four in series)
- 1937 (Aug.) "On the Direction of Literary Criticism" (文芸批評の行方)
- (Sept.) "My University Days" (僕の大学時代)
- (Nov.) "On War" (戦争について)
- 1938 (Feb.) "Discussions of Shiga Naoya" (志賀直哉論)
- (May) "Kôshû" [Hangchow] (抗州)
- (May) "From Kôshû to Nanking" (抗州より南京)
- (May) "On Return from China" (支那より帰りて)
- (June) "Soshû [Soochow]" (蘇州)
- (Oct.) "On History" (Part 1 & 2) (May 1939, Part 3 & 4) (歴史について)
- 1939 (Jan. & Feb.) "Impressions of Manchuria" (満州の印象)
- (April) "Doubt I" (疑惑 I)
- "On Reading" (読書について)
- (May) "On History" (歴史について) (Part 3 & 4) *The Life of Dostoevsky* (with "On History" as Prelude)
- (June) "Keishû" (慶州)
- (Aug.) "Doubt II" (疑惑 II)
- (Nov.) "Scholars and Bureaucrats" (学者と官僚)
- 1940 (Aug.) "Newness of the Incident" (事変の新しさ)

- (Oct.) “On Machiavelli” (マキアヴェリについて)
- (Nov.) “Literature and Myself” (文学と自分)
- 1941 (Jan.) “Afterthought” {感想} (The eighth of the same title since April 1939; explains his “beliefs” in history and his praise of Fukuzawa Yûkichi.)
- (Jan) Symposium: “On the Modern Age” (現代について)
- (March & April) “History and Literature” (歴史と文学)
- (June) “Tradition” (伝統)
- (Oct. to Sept. 1942) “Brothers Karamazov” (カラマアゾフの兄弟) (First of eight in series)
- 1942 (April) “*Taema*” (当麻)
- (June) “Transiency” (無常という事)
- (October) Symposium “Overcoming Modernity” in Kyoto (近代の超克)

Others Referred to in this Study

- 1946 (Feb.) Symposium: “*Comedie Litteraire*—Surrounding Kobayashi Hideo” (コメデイ リテレールー小林秀雄を囲んで)
- 1946 (Dec.) “Mozart” (モオツアト)
- 1949 (Oct.) “My View of Life” (私の人生観)
- 1950 (June) “One’s Age” {年齢}
- 1964 (Oct. & Nov.) “On Common Sense” (常識について)
- 1965 (June) First of series on Motoori Norinaga {本居宣長}
- 1974 (Summer) “To Know and to Believe” (知ることと信じること)

Appendix 3.0 Glossary

“abiding beauty” (*dokuritsu jizoku o suru utsukushisa* 独立持続をする美しさ). Sections 9.3 (“*Taema*”), 9.3.2 (“One’s Age”)

artist (*geijutsuka* 芸術家) or *bijutsuka* (美術家).

bundan. See literary circle

civilization (*bunmei* 文明) Sections 6.0 (“doom”), 6.4.2.2 (“evil”), 8.0 (“destiny”), 8.1.4 (Fukuzawa)

character (*seikaku* 性格) A person’s true character and an aesthete’s.

chie (智慧) (wisdom).

common sense (常識) See A.5.6 Ôoka Notes. See Section 7.3.5 (“Dugald Christie”)

destiny (宿命) “That which circulates with one’s blood in his body and is another name for destiny.” (From the latter part of Section 2 in “Various Patterns,” 1929). Note “theory of destiny” in “Various Patterns” (1929) and “logic of destiny” in “On the I-Novel” (1933). Sections 8.5 (Ôoka and Kobayashi debate), 8.5.3 (“different”),

experimental approach Gide’s method was unparalleled in Japan since the Japanese lacked the inductive-reasoning process of going from the specific to the general. The Japanese were only capable of describing and confessing [in their writings] (Hijiya-Kirschner 82).

“expression of silence” (黙って処理する).

fate (*unmei* 運命) (1) The changeable aspects of destiny. (See 11.2.2) “Unless we feel the inevitable, we would not have discovered the profound word fate.” (From the latter part of Section 1 in “History and Literature,” 1941) (See also “inevitable.”) (2) Hirata “Fate by definition is irreplaceable (the fact that I am here and not there despite the fate that I could have moved there.” (3) Seidensticker “existential. “

forms (*katashi* 形) “Most importantly, art is not the new forms themselves but the process of creating forms, which process remains the dark secrets of artists.” (From the earlier part of Section 4 in “Various Patterns,” 1929). “Figures” are interpreted as “outer forms.”

gendai (現代) modern as opposed to *kindai* (contemporary).

home (homeland) See discussion, chapters 7 – 9.

“I” (*Watashi* 私, *jiga* 自我, *onore* 己れ, etc.) See “self.” Also see Kobayashi’s essay “*Jiko ni tsuite* (On the Self)” in 1940: “Everyone wants to begin literature writing about the self. But Rousseau, who taught us this, left confession of the self to the end” (KHZ, vii: 314). Compare with “non-self” (*mushi*).

individual (*kojin* 個人) See Chapter 5.

inevitability (*hitsuzen* 必然) “Our life experiences reveal that historical inevitability is not simple. Isn’t the very fact that the mother lost the child that she wanted to live on, that the inevitability of the death of the child affected her so deeply. Only where our freedom of our hopes are abruptly disrupted, do we truly experience the inevitability of history.” (From the latter part of Section 1 in “History and Literature,” 1941). Section 8.5.2 (and politics) (See also “fate.”)

innate tendencies (*jinseiron* 人生論) “The most suited [strategy is] to study a rule based on a man’s innate tendencies” (Section 1, “Various Patterns”). “Quality criticism always reveals the individual” (Section 2, “Various Patterns”).

literary circle (*bundan* 文壇) the small groups of writers, critics and editors whose works and opinions determine what literature is.

mass novels (*taishû shôsetsu* 大衆小説) Belonged to the genre of *historical* fiction, whereas the “popular” novels (*tsûzoku shôsetsu*) belonged to a contemporary scene.

Mental Attitude Novels (*shinkyô shôsetsu* 心境小説) A variety of the I-Novel that usually involves meditation on some aspect of nature. “A form of I-Novel that attempts to discover truths in small and often unimportant occurrences” (Keene, “Dawn, Criticism” 631).

mushi (無私) non-self.

mysterious (神秘的) Introduction (p. 1),. Section 4.1.2.3 (in *Tannishô*), Chapter 9 (“On Age”)

naruhodo (なるほど) as (to be) expected.

nationalism Sections 4.3.5 (“a natural process”), 7.3.3 (“expression of silence”), 7.3.4 (“common sense”),

“New Sensationalists” (*Shinkankaku-ha* 心感覚派) a movement associated especially with Yokomitsu Riichi and Kawabata Yasunari. Associated with the sensations regarding a sense of beauty generated by urban living, which preceded any moral or political analysis. Many lost faith in beauty after the Great Kanto Quake of 1923, when they sought material means of livelihood (Keene, “Yokomitsu” 84).

“Overcoming Modernity” Sections 9.2.2 (transcending),

popular novels (*tsûzoku shôsetsu* 通俗小説): Belonged to a *contemporary* setting but sacrificed the value of literature for the sake of popular appeal. The term was first used to distinguish these novels from proletarian literature, then later from “pure” and “mass” literature, which had a historical setting. “[P]opular literature thrives because man cannot part from literary illusions” (Section 4, “Various Patterns”).

pure literature (*junsui bungaku* 純粋文学) Novels in a “intensive pursuit of the self” or the “pure essence” of the inner self. “[E]specially since the 1920s, a type of personal or confessional prose, as opposed to popular or proletarian writing” (Anderer 161).

self (*jiga* 自我) Kobayashi defines “*jiga*” as a concept of self and “*onore*” as a self developed through experience (KHZ-A, “Literature and Myself” xiii: 149).

shishôsetsu (私小説) (the) “socialized I” (社会化した私) See Chapter 6.

theory of destiny (*shukumei no riron* 宿命の理論) “For an artist, awareness of purpose is but the logic for his creativity. This logic of creativity is nothing other than the logic of his destiny [or what flows in his blood]. The artist cannot but be faithful to the logic of his own particular destiny.” (From Section 3 in “Various Patterns,” 1929.) “It is natural for Japanese writers, who by destiny were to be satiated with “emotionalism” (*kansho-shugi* 感傷主義), to refute theories (*riron* or “logic”; Section 0.1.6). Writers, however, hold to theories in order to ask why they (not as artists but as thinking people) seek a clear awareness of the question of why they produce aesthetic works. At least, these ‘wild’ questions attest to a strong interest or an awareness of theories (‘logic’) regarding the question of why they hold to a theory of epistemology regarding their destiny that they are writers.” (From KHZ-A, “Achilles and the Tortoise I,” 1: 184.)

tradition (*dentô* 伝統) Aspects of history which have been internalized in a people, society, or language.

“transcending modernity” (*gendai no chôkoku* 現代の超克).

wisdom (*chie* 智慧) See sections 6.2.3, 7.3.2, 7/3/3

Appendix 4.0 List of Personal Interviews

This material was collected from 1988 to 1990, when author was translating *My Brother Hideo Kobayashi* by Takamizawa Junko. She provided me with explanations and other suggestions, including one that I contact others who knew her brother. She referred me to Sasabe Risaburô (Kobayashi's last surviving childhood friend), Jôya Ikuko (daughter of Jôya Saburô), Kaibori Kazuko (daughter of Jôya Moku), who directed me to Hasegawa Sumiko (long-time resident apprentice of her artist mother) and to Dr. Nishimura Kôji who kindly provided information in some six letters (see Appendix, A.5.5.2, Nishimura letters).

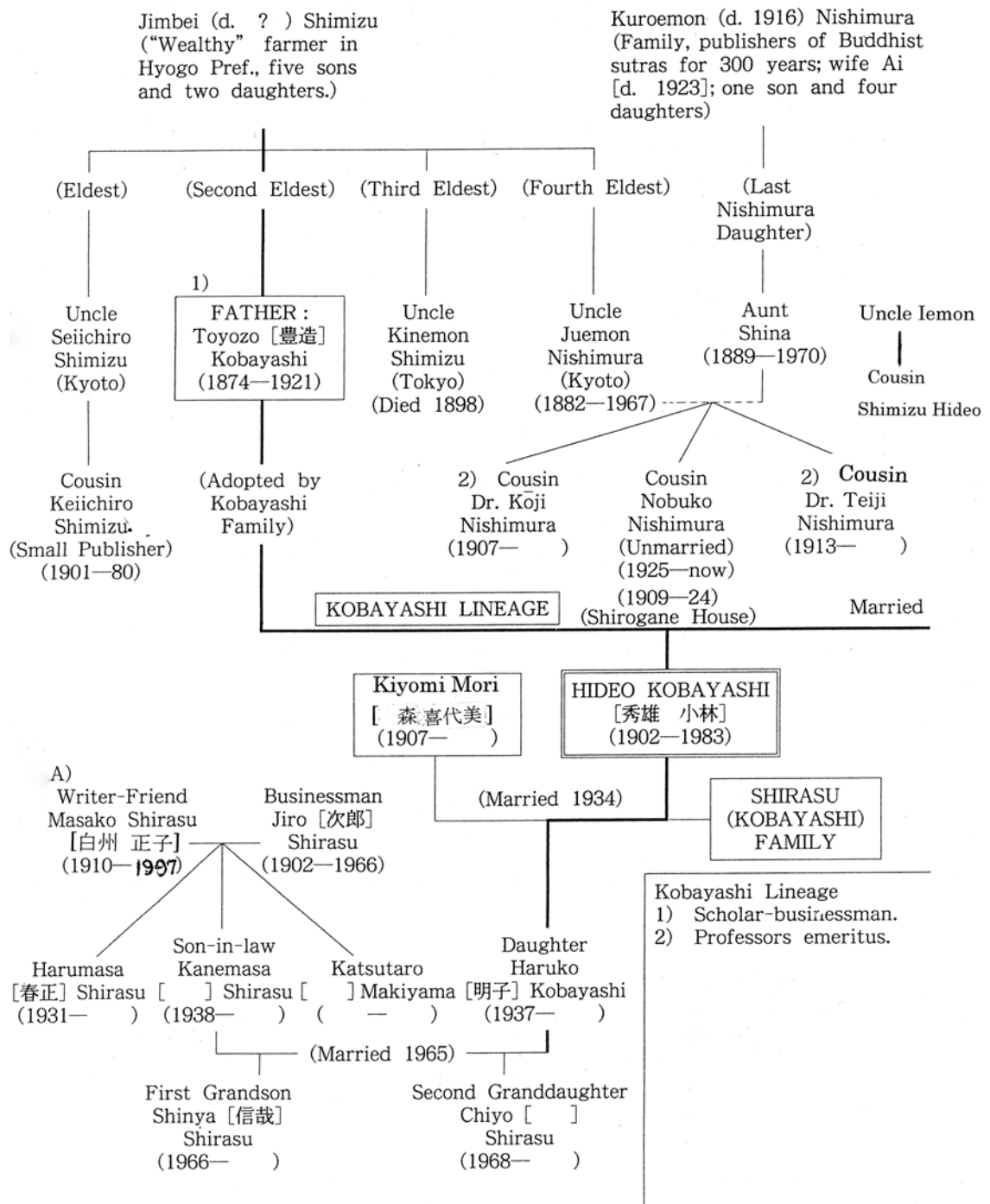
Takamizawa also referred this author to such illustrious people as Ôoka Shôhei and Nagai Tatsuo, as well as to Shirasu Masako, who became a relative of Kobayashi in the 1960s. In his interview, Ôoka emphasized the importance of Kobayashi in terms of “common sense,” as he carefully outlined the importance of the essays “Deceptions” and the series “critics’ failures” as the key words to the notion of Kobayashi’s view of “common sense.”

As most of the above people are now either deceased or are no longer physically capable of providing information, so much more important will be the material for future readers and researchers of Kobayashi.

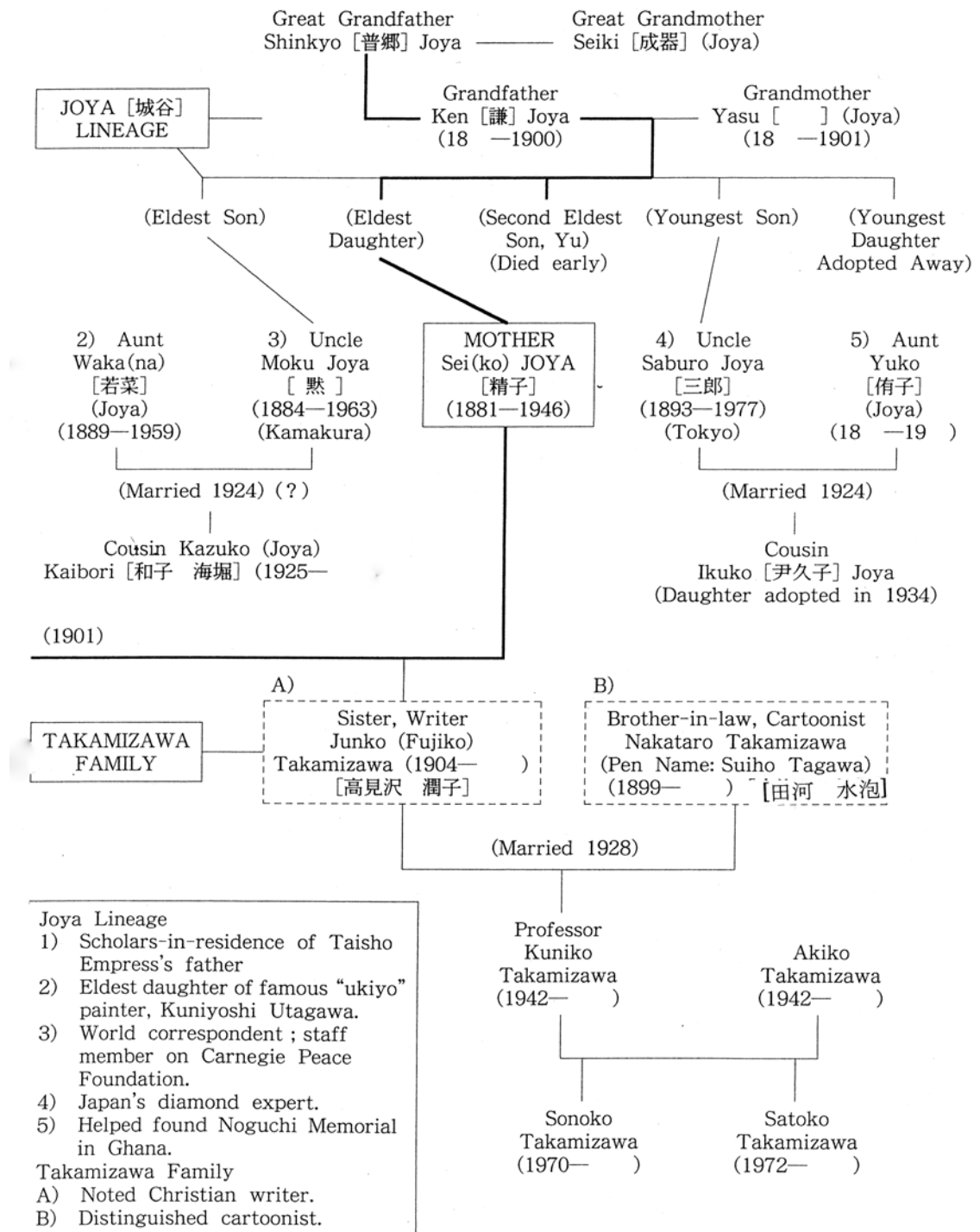
Person	Description	Place	Date	Chapter(s)
Hasegawa, Sumie	Apprentice of Kaibori Kazuko	Home in Kôfu City	July 31, 1988	One
Jôya Ikuko	Daughter of Jôya Saburô	Home in Ôta Ward	July 10, 1988	One
Kaibori Kazuko	Daughter of Jôya Moku	Home near Gotanda Station, Tokyo	July 22, 1988	One
Nagai Tatsuo	Writer-friend of Kobayashi	Kamakura Museum of Lit. in Kamakura	Fall 1988	Six
Ôoka Shôhei	“ “ “	Home in Seijo Gakuin, Tokyo	June 28, 1988	Seven
Sasabe Risaburô	Childhood friend of Kobayashi	Home in Chôfu City, Tokyo	March 2, 1988	Two
Shirasu Masako	Critic & relative of Kobayashi	Home in Kanagawa Prefecture	May 1988	Two to Six
Tajima Toshio	Professor at Senshû Univ.	Home in Tokyo	January 1982	Intro
Takamizawa Junko	Younger sister of Kobayashi	Coffee shop near Ogikubo Station	May to Oct. '88	Intro to Nine
Tsukamoto Toshiaki	Professor at Senshû Univ.	Restaurant near Hana-Koganei Station	Spring 2005	Eight

Appendix 5 Charts, Photos and Maps

Appendix 5.1.1 Toyozô Kobayashi Family Tree



Appendix 5.1.2 Seiko Jôya Family Tree



Appendix 5.2.1 Moku, Saburô and Hideo (1905)



Top Left: Jôya Saburo. Top Right: Jôya Moku

Bottom: Kobayashi Hideo (age 5)

Provided by Kaibori Kazuko, daughter of Jôya Moku. Previously unpublished.

Appendix 5.2.2 Yoki Group



Back row, left (circled): Kobayashi. Back row, center (circled): Sasabe

Directly below Sasabe: Ozawa *sensei*

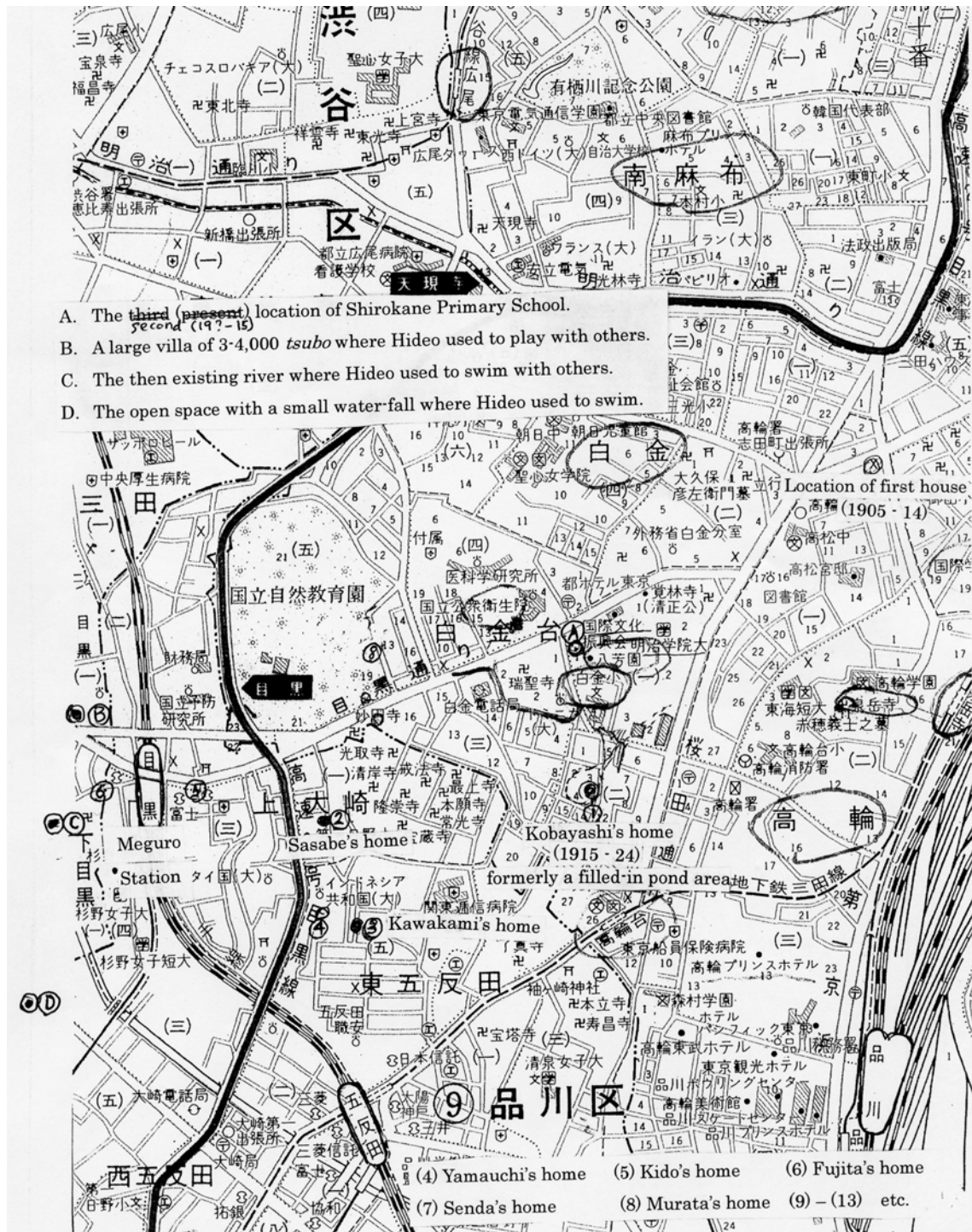
Classroom building, circa 1915. Provided by Sasabe Risaburô. Previously unpublished.



Left front (circled): Osawa *sensei*. Right front (circled): Sasabe

Nov. 5, 1938. Provided by Sasabe Risaburô. Previously unpublished.

Appendix 5.3.1 Sasabe's Map



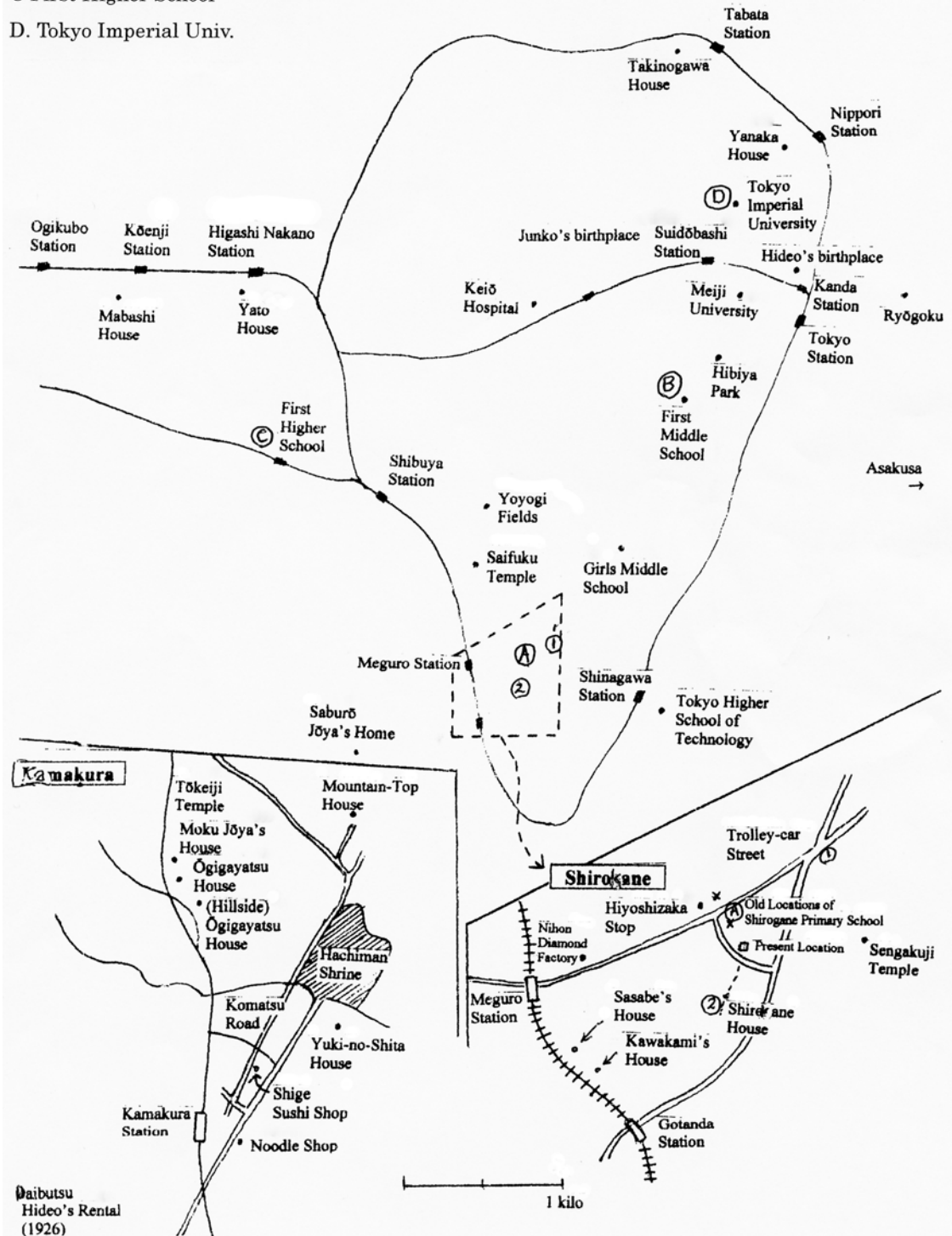
Appendix 5.3.2 Tokyo and Kamakura

A. Shirokane Primary School (former location) (1) Shida home (2) Imazato home

B First Middle School

C First Higher School

D. Tokyo Imperial Univ.



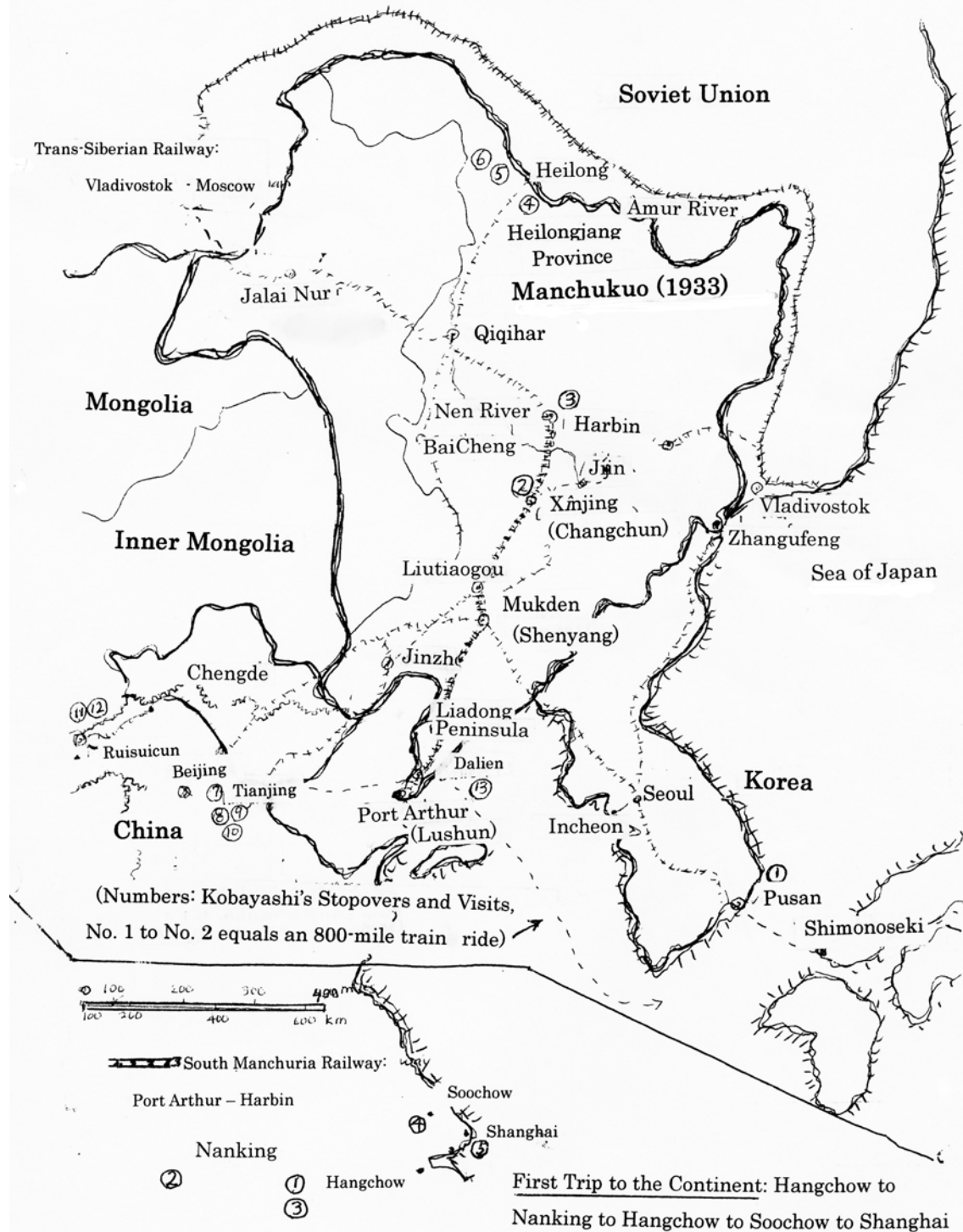
Appendix 5.3.3 First Two Trips Abroad

Second Trip (Oct.-Dec. 1938)

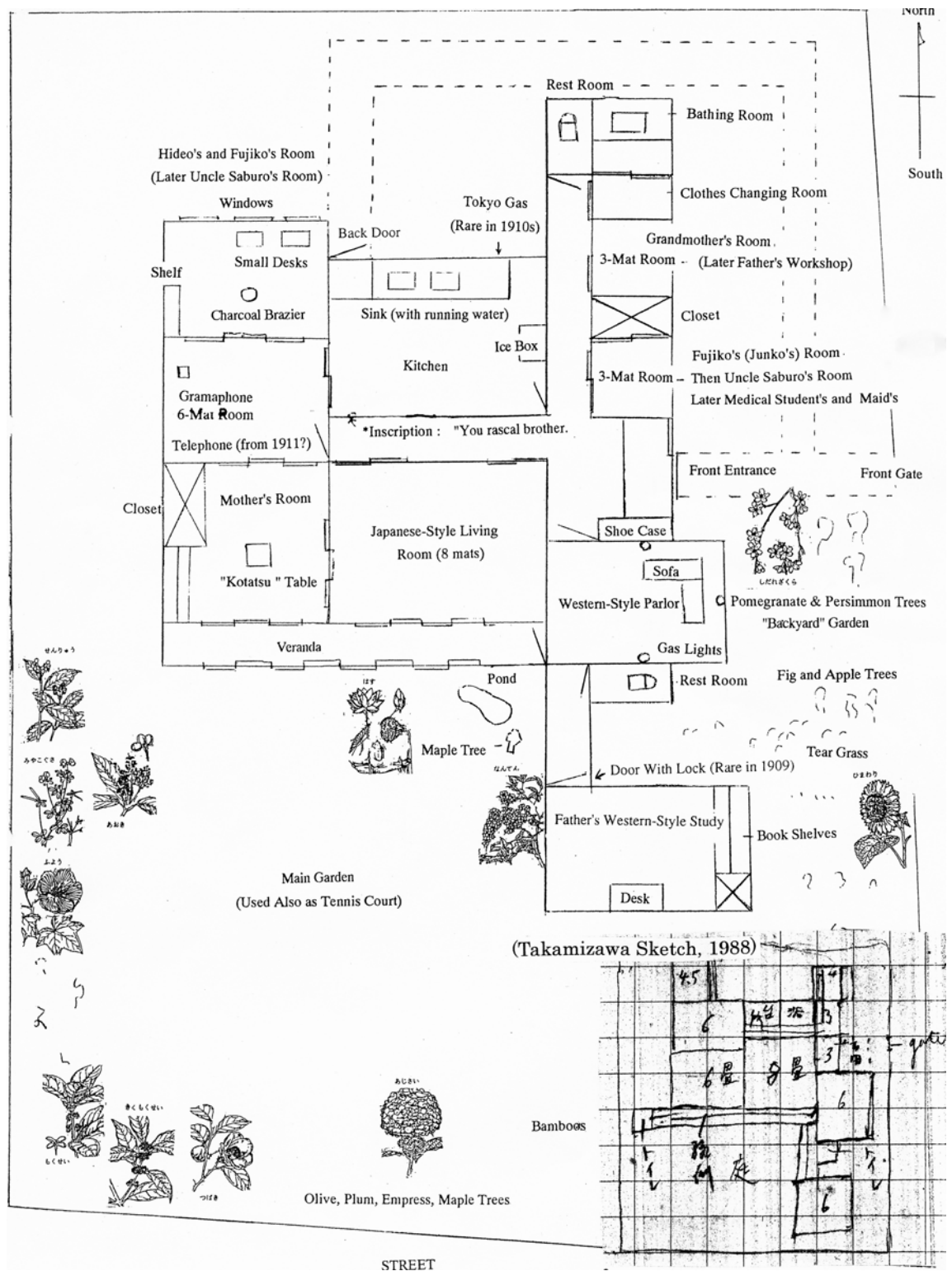
First Trip shown below.

Japanese population in Manchukuo in 1933

1.5 million civilians and 1.0 million military



Appendix 5.4.1 Shirokane House



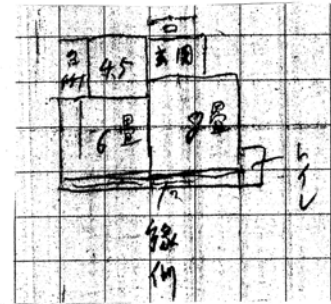
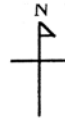
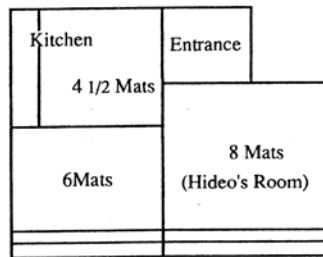
Shirokane House (1909-January 1924)(77 Imazato, Shirokane)
(approx. 90 "tsubo" or 297sqm.)

Appendix 5.4.2 Rental Houses (1924-32)

Mabashi House in Kôenji, Tokyo (Feb. 1924 – Aug. 1928)

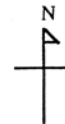
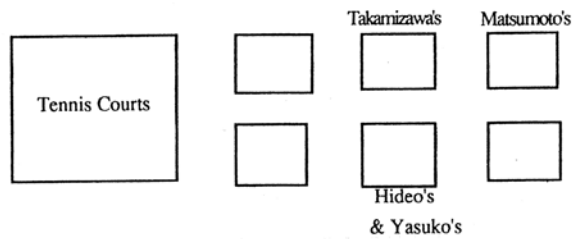
Home of Kobayashis.

(Original sketches provided by Takamizawa appear on the right.) Compare house sizes on this page with those on other pages.)



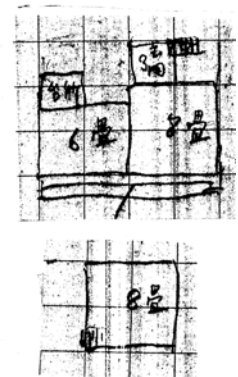
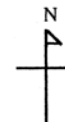
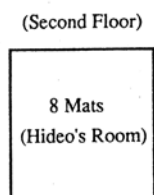
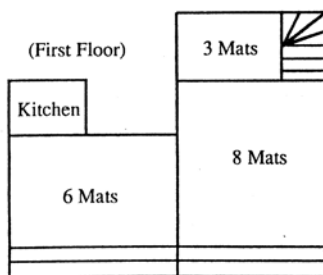
Yato House in Nakano, Tokyo (Feb. 1928 – April 1928)

Home of Kobayashi and Yasuko. Junko meets her husband Takamizawa while visiting her friend, the Matsumotos.



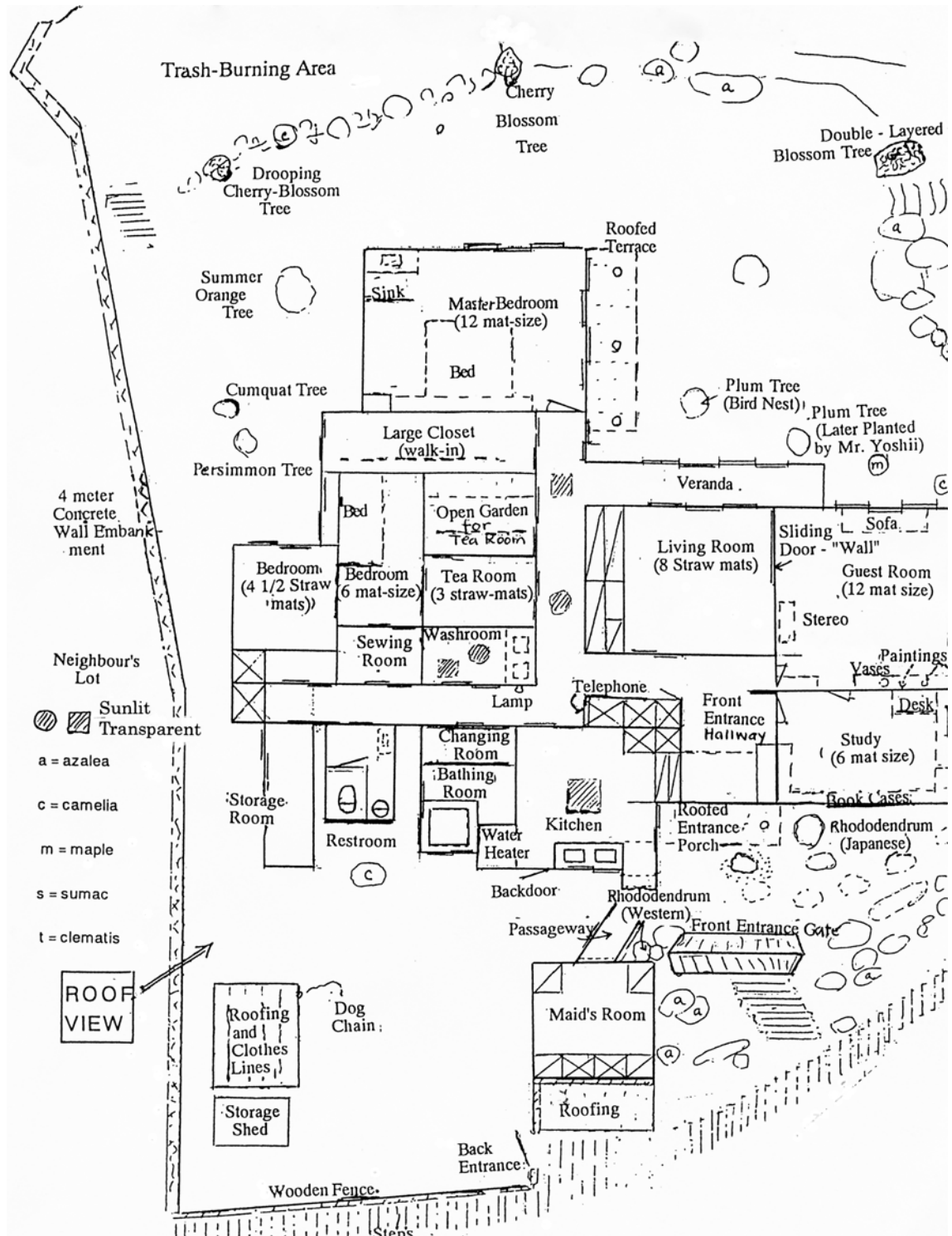
Takinogawa House (Dec. 1928 – early 1932)

Hideo lives upstairs from spring 1929 – Oct. 1931.



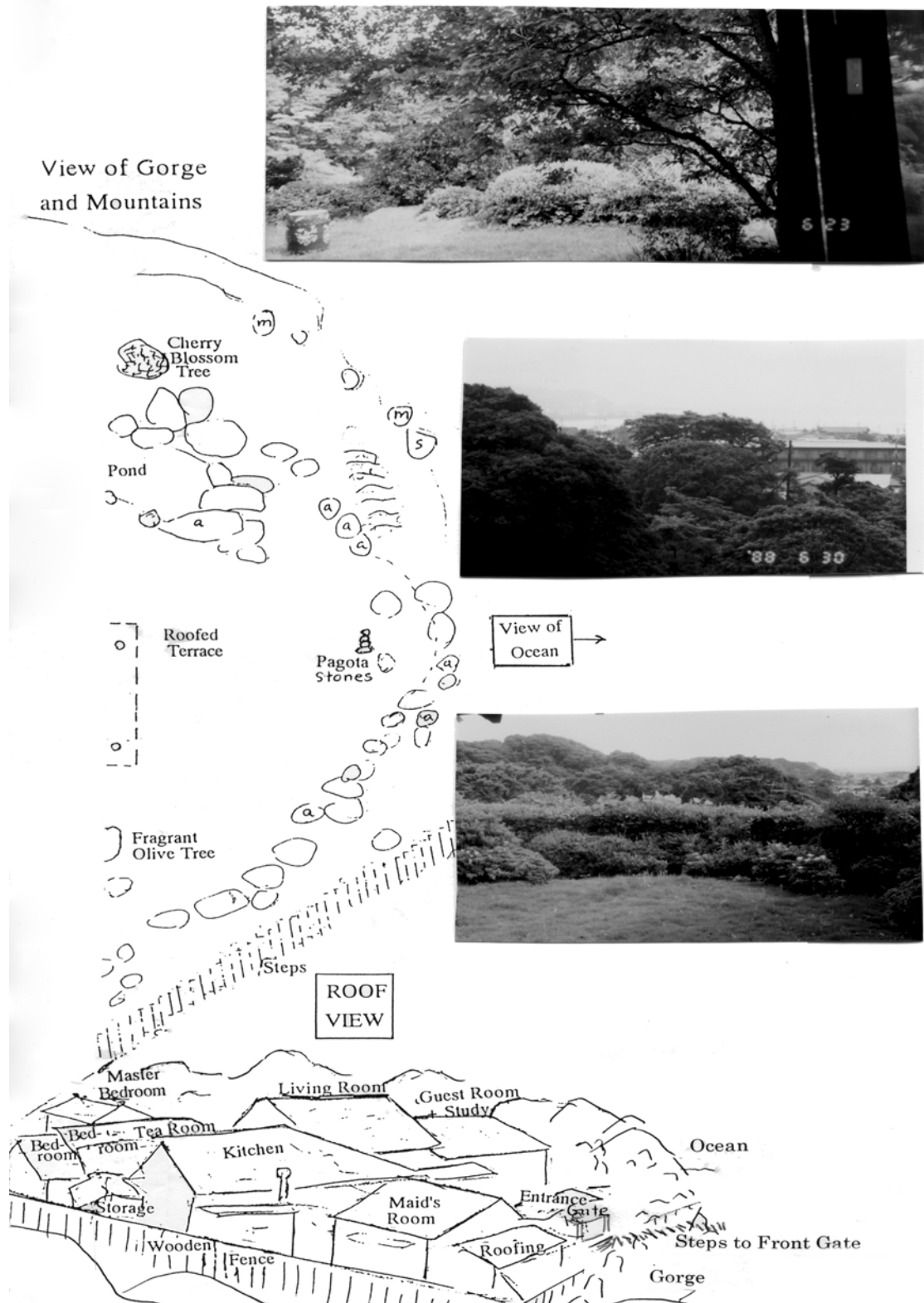
Takamizawa provides further description during interviews with this author (Wada),

Appendix 5.4.3 The Mountain-Top House (1948-1976)



Sketched by J. Wada in 1988.

Appendix 5.4.3 (continued)



Photos taken by J. Wada in June 1988

Appendix 5.5.1 Takamizawa's Collection of Letters

(In *My Brother Hideo Kobayashi*)

Kansai Letters & Postcard from Hideo (Ninth is a Tokyo Letter)

No..	Chapter	Date	Written From	Contents
First	Two	Early June	Miyoko Temple	"Don't worry about me."
Second	Eleven	Mid-June	" "	"I'm terribly tired." "I plan to move."
Third	"	Late June	Uncle Shimizu's	"I plan to stay around here."
Fourth	"	Day Later	Hasegawa Inn	"I'm thinking of living in Nara"
Fifth	"	2-3 Days Later	" "	"That girl lacks in heart."
Sixth	Twelve	July 13	Nara	"Central to humankind ...is the heart."
Seventh	"	September	Nara	"... just returned from Wakayama"
Eighth	Seven	Oct. or Nov.	Nara	"I read your novel."
Ninth	Nine	Aug. 1929	Tokyo	"Teaching ... with love."

Kamakura Letters (from Mother Seiko)

First	Fifteen	1931-34	Kamakura	"Let's [live] here together."
Second	" "	" "	"	"Please visit [me]."
Third	" "	" "	"	"Hideo is always out."
Fourth	Sixteen	" "	"	"Mother could not find a girl."
Fifth	Seventeen	1934	"	"His marriage will be held."

Appendix 5.5.2 Nishimura Letters

Letters to James Wada

No.	Date	Content	Chap	Sect
First	Aug. 1, 1988	Info about Nishimura Family Tree	One	
Second	Nov. 17, “	Clarifies who punched him.	-----	
Third	Mar. 9, 1989	Kobayashi was “free and wild” but also “a filial son.”	One	
Fourth	May 26, “	Kobayashi learned from “the cultured and well educated” Uncle Moku.	One	
Fifth	Aug. [?] “	Critiques Takamizawa’s book, <i>My Brother Hideo Kobayashi</i> .	One	
Sixth	Jan. 7, 1990	Clarifies that Kiyomi was working in a café (cabaret) when Kobayashi met her.	Six	

Kobayashi Letters in Nishimura’s *My Cousin Kobayashi Hideo*

No.	Date	Content	Chap	Page
First	Aug. 25, 1928	Kobayashi “plans to write” in Nara.	One	36
Second	Sept. 20, “	Kobayashi “lost the concert ticket.”	One	41
Third	Oct. 22, “	“Accept invitation to speak.”	One	44
Fourth	Spring 1944	“Publishing is very difficult.”	Two	70
Fifth	March 6, 1935	“Do your best to translate Poe.”	Two	72
Sixth	Nov. 30, 1936	“What you need is directness.”	Two	73
Seventh	March 29, 1940	“Apologize to Kobayashi Shigeru.”	Two	76

Appendix 5.6 Ôoka Notes

The Idiot 白痴 ムイシキン (Myshkin)

ムイシキン

白痴

The Idiot

成り行く 時勢 (tides of the time)

なりゆくじせい)

werden (in Deutch) (to become, to grow, to turn out)

古？

上 (upper flow)

下 (lower flow)

初期 (Early Period)

1. 無垢 (innocence, purity,
sincerity)

「かえり」 (“Deceptions” [1930])

「批評家失格」(“Critics’ Failures” [1930-31]) 2. 自意識 (self-awareness)

3. 生活の秘密 (secrets of life)

④4. 直感 (intuition)

1. "Self-awareness," "intuition," and

6. 天才 (genius)

2. Language enables “common sense”

萌芽 (sprout)

Note 1: Ooka referred to the essay "Deceptions" (Feb. 1930) then the essay "Critics Failures I" (Nov. 1930) and "Critics' Failures II" (Feb. 1931) which expressed Kobayashi's need for "common sense" (or, wisdom in the real world as mentioned in the epigraph of "Various Patterns").

3. "Sincerity (or purity)" is a basic 常識 (common sense)

ingredient for "common sense."

世間知 (wisdom of the world)

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