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Dear Readers,

This is a special edition of *Silva Iaponicarum* 日林 issued under the auspices of the Polish Association of Japanese Studies (PSBJ) and supported by the Takashima Foundation.

This special edition includes five papers contributed by PSBJ members. We have also published the report of the annual PSBJ conference and information on PSBJ including profiles of Japanese studies institutions belonging to the Association.

The next regular fascicle of *Silva* will be the 2009 spring fascicle.

The editorial board

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読者のみなさまへ

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SPIS TREŚCI / CONTENTS / 目次

Shinobu Kaiho-Przybylska Deviation from Traditional I-novel Characteristics— Mizumura Minae’s <i>Shishōsetsu from Left to Right</i>	11
Agnieszka Kozyra Nishida Kitarō’s Logic of Absolutely Contradictory Identity and the Problem of Ethics in Zen	32
Mikołaj Melanowicz Yamada Taichi’s Work – The Scope of Metamorphoses of Popular Drama and Novels in the 1980s During the „Bubble Culture“	65
Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska Ambassador Tadeusz Romer. His Role in Polish-Japanese Relations (1937-1941)	82
Katarzyna Sonnenberg Caught In Between. Women of the Demimonde in Higuchi Ichiyō’s Narratives	105
Iwona Kordzińska-Nawrocka, Agnieszka Kozyra 1000-year Anniversary of <i>Genji Monogatari</i> Polish Association for Japanese Studies Conference The University of Warsaw 20-23 October 2008	125
Polish Association for Japanese Studies	128
STRESZCZENIA / SUMMARIES / 要約	132
AUTORZY / CONTRIBUTORS / 投稿者	140
PRACE NADSYŁANE / FOR CONTRIBUTORS / 投稿	144

**Deviation from Traditional I-novel Characteristics—
Mizumura Minae's *Shishōsetsu from Left to Right***

Introduction

The I-novel (*Watakushi shōsetsu/Shishōsetsu*) is considered to be the most striking feature of modern Japanese literature. Literary critics, both in Japan and in the West, have characterized the Japanese “I-novel” as the most typical and representative modern Japanese literature that possesses a unique form.¹ Since the 1920s, many writers and critics have written about the I-novel, some praising and supporting it, others criticizing it extensively, stating that it is wrong-headed even to refer to the I-novel as a literary form at all. Debate over the I-novel developed through the 1920s and 1930s, including disputes between Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892-1927) and Tanizaki Jun’ichirō (1886-1965) over the plot in the novel (*shōsetsu no suji/purotto ronsō*). Tanizaki argued the importance of the plot, but Akutagawa supported “novels without story-like ‘stories.’” (“*hanashi-rashii hanashi no nai shōsetsu*”). The situation resulted in a heated debate which involved the whole literary circle (*bundan*).

Afterwards, the cycle continued when the I-novel appeared to decline from active debate and then returned to the center of *bundan*. The I-novel sustained itself like a living fossil while it was sometimes exposed to intense criticism.²

Generally, the I-novel is regarded as an autobiographical narrative in which the author faithfully recounts the details of his or her personal life almost with little or no guise of fiction. In other words, it is designated as a single-voiced, faithful record of the author’s real experience.

The I-novel regards the “authentic novel (*honkaku shōsetsu*),” seen in general Western literature, as something in binary opposition. An authentic novel is a fictional type of novel formed objectively, and characters become relatively independent, set apart from the author. Although the hero is connected with an author internally, as a form he expresses himself by borrowing another person who is a fictional creation. Due to its construction, plot, and the dynamic development, it tends to resemble the full-length novel out of necessity.

¹ Cf. Suzuki 1996: 1.

² For details of the development of the “I-Novel” in the postwar period cf. Suzuki 1998: 349.

On the contrary, an I-novel is a factual type of novel in which the author expresses himself subjectively, where the hero is directly connected with the author. The hero is the author himself, both internally and externally, where the author is seen simply to copy himself. Since it has a certain lack of structure, but has an element of miscellany and a static aspect, it is apt to become a short novel. Literary historians or critics usually date the origins of this autobiographical genre back to the works of Japanese Naturalist writers, in particular Tayama Katai's (1872-1930) *Futon* (The Quilt; 1907). *Futon* is considered to be the first modern Japanese novel that faithfully depicted the "facts" of the author's real life.

The I-novel was initially referred to as "certain contemporary autobiographical sketches" in which the authors revealed their personal lives directly to a closed literary circle of fellow writers. It was called *mi-no-ue-banashi* (stories about one's own life) and *shinpen zakki shōsetsu* (pieces in note-form on the immediate surroundings)³ or also *wagamama shōsetsu* (egocentric), *gakuya shōsetsu* (backstage stories)⁴ and *gakuyaochi shōsetsu* (the insider novel).⁵ So-called *yūjin shōsetsu*, *tomodachi shōsetsu* (friendship novels) or *bundan kōyūroku* (records of friendships within the literary circle) were also widespread, where the authors wrote about their relationships among themselves or about individual and personal experiences. Usually these made sense only to a small circle of the initiated or the people portrayed.⁶ All these terms share an emphasis on factual content without guise, on the autobiographical nature of the work, whereby *wagamama shōsetsu*, *gakuya shōsetsu* and *gakuyaochi shōsetsu* emphasized the accentuated subjectivism and closed character of the literature.

Consequently, the contents of the I-novel are often confined to the author's experiences within the narrow circumstances of the author's life. The world of fiction such as the authentic novel, where the author makes use of his or her imagination, can be labeled as popular novels (*tsūzoku shōsetsu*) and are underestimated within the Japanese literary circle, no matter how interesting the story itself is. Instead, just like the I-novel, if a work describes the author's real experiences, or the state of mind inside his or her existential cosmology or world, it is apt to be regarded as pure literature and is highly estimated.

³ Cf. Senuma 1962: 25.

⁴ Enomoto 1968: 45.

⁵ Ogasawara 1962: 37.

⁶ Cf. Nakamura 1977: 165.

Now this raises a question. If the I-novel is something which depicts the narrow circumstances within the range of the experiences perceived by the author, could the I-novel, which transcends the border of the nation, culture and languages, exist? What if the I-novelist him or herself were a transnational writer?

This paper shows that “the transnational I-novel” can exist, citing first and foremost Mizumura Minae’s *Shishōsetsu from left to right* (1995), and analyzes how resoundingly fresh this new I-novel is and how dramatically this work overthrew the fixed idea of the I-novel which had been considered to be a “traditional” Japanese literary genre.

Shishōsetsu from left to right is a novel that tells of the heroine’s (namely Mizumura’s) memory of her infancy, episodes in the lives of her family, friends and teachers, and a recollection of her school life in the United States. Her thoughts, and her associations thereof, are presented in a rambling form. It is an intriguing work which has a structure and contents that overthrow the fixed idea of the traditional I-novel.

This paper looks at how Mizumura’s *Shishōsetsu from left to right*, contrary to its very authentic title, deviates from the traditional I-novel in terms of such extrinsic markers as scene, form, length, and the mood of narration. It also demonstrates that her “I-novel” preserves its excellent quality as an I-novel, whilst deviating from the conventional idea of this genre.

The Exodus from Japan

As was shown, the “I-novel,” called *mi-no-ue-banashi*, *shinpen zakki shōsetsu*, *gakuya shōsetsu*, and *bundan kōyūroku*, was formerly only concerned about the author, within the narrow range of his or her circumstances. These kinds of *shōsetsu* were about relationships between the author and other writers, or about individual and personal experiences, usually making sense only to a small circle of initiated friends or the people portrayed.⁷ In Mizumura’s case however, the story does not develop in Japan because the author was living in the United States.

Mizumura Minae was born in Tokyo, and moved to New York at the age of twelve with her family. After studying fine art in Boston and then living in Paris, she went on to study French Literature at Yale College and Yale Graduate School. Then, Mizumura decided to return to Japan in order to devote herself to writing novels in Japanese. Aside from writing, she traveled to the United States and gave lectures on modern Japanese

⁷ Cf. Nakamura 1977: 165.

literature at Princeton, Michigan and Stanford Universities. It was in 1990 that Mizumura made her debut as a writer with *Zoku Meian* (Light and Darkness Continued), daringly completing the unfinished work of one of the greatest modern Japanese novelists—Natsume Sōseki’s (1867-1916) *Meian* (Light and Darkness; 1917)—and consequently became the winner of the Minister of Education Award for New Artists in 1991. Mizumura Minae—having had such a background and career—then went on to create some very intriguing I-novel works that possess a very particular and characteristic style.

Since the Taishō period, the story in the conventional I-novel had always been located in Japan, such as *shinpen zakki shōsetsu*, which observed only the author’s narrow circumstances. For example, Ozaki Kazuo’s (1899-1983) *Mushi no iroiro* (This and That about Bugs; 1948) is about his rambling recollection of bugs, including a spider shut inside a bottle for half a year and another spider accidentally caught between the sliding panes of a double window for about two months. Shiga Naoya’s (1883-1971) *Haha no shi to atarashii haha* (Mother’s Death and My New Mother; 1912), a story that expressed the young Shiga’s state of mind when his mother died and when he later welcomed his step-mother. *Kinosaki nite* (At Kinosaki; 1917) expresses Shiga’s ideas about death during his recuperation at the Kinosaki hot springs following a train accident. And Takii Kōsaku’s (1894-1984) *Mugen hōyō* (The Infinite Embrace; 1921-24) is about his strong love for a former prostitute, their happy marriage and her death. In almost all of the works, the author “I” is resident in Japan and in general “I” depicts only his narrow surroundings, although sometimes “I” travels within the country.

However, during the latter half of the 1970s a period of globalization began and the space for literature expanded dramatically with the development of means of transportation. This was the period of Japan’s economic growth post World War II, when Japan gradually joined developed countries—importing enormous quantities of foreign culture, especially from the United States—and the spread of this new culture began to influence the Japanese literary world. Not merely the I-novelists, but writers in general started setting scenes from their novels outside Japan or their heroes as non-Japanese, which brought about obvious transitions in the literary world. For example, Murakami Ryū’s (b. 1952) *New York City Marathon* (1986) includes a strong “de-Japanized” style. Firstly, in this story all the episodes, except one, occurred outside Japan. Secondly, almost all of the characters who are expressed in the first-person pronoun “I”—such as “boku,”

“watashi” or “ore”—are actually non-Japanese. This “I” is unrelated to the “I-novelistic” “I” in the traditional Japanese style in the Taishō period.

Ikeda Masuo’s (1934-1997) *Eige-kai ni sasagu* (Dedicated to the Aegean Sea; 1977), which was awarded the Akutagawa prize in 1977, also represents this “de-Japanized” style in the regard that the hero “I” is a Japanese sculptor living in San Francisco. In fact, Ikeda himself had been living in the United States for a long time and it seems that he did not feel any difficulty in crossing borders in the world of literature.

As far as the I-novel is concerned, Kurahashi Yumiko’s (1935-2005) *Virginia* (1970) is very close to the I-novel, in which the novelist “I” depicts her friend Virginia whom “I” had met when she studied at Iowa University with her husband for a year. Actually, it is not a work about “me,” but a work that thoroughly investigates what kind of human being “I” is by observing a woman called Virginia through the filter of “watashi” in a foreign country. Dating back to the Meiji period, Mori Ōgai’s (1862-1922) *Maihime* (The Dancing Girl; 1890), if it is at all to be considered as an I-novel, can also be included into this same pattern of literature in the sense that it is also about the experience of the author when he stayed outside Japan for a while.

However, in Mizumura’s *Shishōsetsu from left to right*, the I-novel reached a point where the heroine, who emigrated to a foreign country and spent most of her time outside Japan tells about her experiences in Japanese.

In *Shishōsetsu from left to right* Mizumura —“I”— articulated how she always used to read modern Japanese literature and described multiple episodes including her sister’s love affairs and attempted suicide, her father’s illness, her mother’s love affairs and escape from the family, and her view of American society, including implicit racial discrimination in a society of white people.

The I-novel used to be regarded as “a shōsetsu type that makes up the main current or core of Japanese literature”⁸ or was often connected with Japanese traditionalism, making it difficult to associate the I-novel with the experience of American life of the author who spent half her life in the USA. In episodes of Mizumura’s I-novel, not only do Japanese or American characters appear, but also those with multiple nationalities. It is quite natural for her to create characters with multiple nationalities, since she lives in the States where multiculturalism is well-developed; but with regard to the general history of Japanese literature, where something is bound to the fixed idea that the I-novel is “traditional” literature “peculiar

⁸ Morikawa 1980: 191.

to Japan,” Mizumura’s work is a breakthrough well beyond the flame of the precedent I-novel.

The I-Novel from Left to Right

The fact that the story in Mizumura’s I-novel takes place in the States and the characters are not confined to Japanese nationals also allows the language used in the work to not be limited to Japanese. This style makes the work something that is very characteristically beyond the orthodox appeal of the I-novel or even the novel in general. Surprisingly, the text in this work is written from left to right, mixing both Japanese and English. Traditionally, Japanese was written vertically in columns going from top to bottom and ordered from right to left. The horizontal text originally came into Japanese in the Meiji period when the Japanese tried to print dictionaries for Western languages. Now, both horizontal and vertical writing is used in Japan; yet for novels, newspapers, comics and many other forms, vertical writing is still common. As was referred to in a previous section, the I-novel has special reason to be regarded as a genre of Japanese tradition. That is why it is such a challenge and an experiment to write the “traditional” I-novel from left to right and, even further, a challenge to the stereotypes of literature. It is naturally linked with the fact that English is mixed in the text. In order to accurately express Mizumura’s bilingual consciousness, both Japanese and English were needed, and in order to form this mixed texture, she had no choice but to write horizontally. Consequently, it became an epoch-making experiment that obviously differs from the conventional I-novel.

Mizumura places just a little English into her own thoughts and words—and much into the words of her sister too—but she does not translate these expressions into Japanese in the text. For example, the conversation between them is expressed as follows:

奈苗が続けた。

—ねえ、by the way, you’re coming for Christmas, n’est-ce pas? Henryk’s gone, you know. だから泊まれるわよ。やっぱり Christmas tree 飾ろうって考えてたところなのよ。さっき煙草を買いに出たら、いつものとおり、角んとこで沢山売りに出て、そばを通るとモミの木のあの匂いがツンとして、ああやっぱり今年も飾ろうって思ったの。I’ll get a small one.

They're a lot cheaper. 男の人がいないから飾らないって、そういうのよくないと思う。

—そりゃあそう。

—あたし、もう、オトコがいるとかいないとかで人生を左右されるの、やめようと思っているの。

—そりゃあそう。

—だって、もう、そろそろそういう認識に達すべき歳じゃない。

—そう。

—I mean it.

—Well, I should hope so.

—Gee, whiz. Thanks for the encouragement. Anyway、いづれにせよ、いらっしゃいよ、あなた長いこと出てきてないんだし。⁹

Also, the conversation between Mizumura's former boyfriend and her American friend is written as follows:

—アイ・アム・ソーリー・マイ・イングリッシュ・イズ・ソー・プアー。

⁹ Mizumura 1998: 81-82. This Shinchō bunko version gave correction and revision to the book published in 1995 and it is considered to be the final draft. The translation of this dialogue is as follows, with the part that was originally in English left in italics. This paragraph and all other quotations are translated by the author of this paper, unless otherwise stated.

—Listen, *by the way, you're coming for Christmas, n'est-ce pas? Henryk's gone, you know.* So you can stay with me. I was thinking that I should put up a *Christmas tree*. Just a moment ago, when I went out to buy some cigarettes, there were many Christmas trees for sale on the corner just like usual, and they smell so nice. So I decided to put one up this year, too. *I'll get a small one. They're a lot cheaper.* I don't think it's a good idea not to put one up just because I don't have a boyfriend.

—You are right.

—I have stopped being swayed so easily, just because I have a boyfriend or not.

—You are right.

—I am at the age when a woman should be aware of it.

—That's correct.

—I mean it.

—Well, I should hope so.

—Gee, whiz. Thanks for the encouragement. Anyway, come to my place. You haven't been here for long time.

英語を話すと自意識の強くなる「殿」は必ずこう言うのだった。

—Oh, no no. Your English is very good, Tono.

—ノーノー。

—Oh yes. アメリカ人の友人は「殿」にいつも優しくかった。

10

Tono's poor English, pronounced just like Japanese, is well expressed in katakana.¹¹ Not only in conversation, but sometimes Mizumura's thoughts also mix Japanese and English:

…ああでも月日は実に容赦なくたっしてしまい、私はあれからもうとって返すことのかなわぬ現実の時間を生きてしまった。And what have I learned from all these years I've spent living in my own shadow?¹²

As seen above, it is written horizontally in Japanese with English sentences scattered here and there. English is mainly used in the words of the heroine's (Minae's) sister Nanae who, from the viewpoint of Minae, looks more Americanized. It is also used in other American characters' words and for proper nouns, such as the names of people and places. English is composed naturally in all of the various text types and does not interrupt the flow of the text. In and from the mind of Mizumura—Japanese but brought up in the United States—wavering between the two languages is skillfully expressed visually.

Thus, Mizumura's I-novel, as its title shows, is written “from left to right” causing it to deviate from the original image of the I-novel. It is worth noting that despite its mixed style of Japanese and English, it does not

¹⁰ Ibid.: 82.

—I am sorry, my English is so poor.

“Tono” always says so when he speaks English.

—Oh, no no. Your English is very good, Tono.

—No no.

—Oh, yes.

Our American friend is always kind to “Tono.”

¹¹ Her mother's poor English is also written in katakana. Cf. Ibid.: 178, 212.

¹² Ibid.: 13.

Oh, but time is flying by without mercy and I have lived the time of reality where I can never go back. *And what have I learned from all these years I've spent living in my own shadow?*

confuse readers but rather it becomes a natural I-novel that mirrors the author's bilingual consciousness.

The I-Novel of a Long Piece

It was already argued that formerly the “I-novel”, called *mi no ue banashi*, *shinpen zakki shōsetsu*, *gakuya shōsetsu* and *bundan kōyūroku*, was written only about the narrow surroundings of the author. The fact that the I-novel is a factual type of novel, where the hero is directly connected with the author, both internally and externally, and where the author just copies him or herself, means that it is apt to become a short novel since it has a lack of structure, but has an element of miscellany and a static aspect. There is also the I-novel of a long piece,¹³ but usually the works that are considered to be representative are relatively short, such as Shiga Naoya's *Kinosaki nite*, Kasai Zenzō's (1887-1928) *Kanashiki chichi* (The Sad Father; 1912), Kamura Isota's (1897-1933) *Gōku* (The Torments of Karma; 1928), and Kajii Motojirō's (1901-1932) *Lemon* (1925).

However, Mizumura's *Shishōsetsu from left to right* is a long piece of 390 pages. A novel this long could have the same characteristics as an authentic novel (*honkaku shōsetsu*), which was considered to be the dichotomy of the I-novel; that is, having a strong construction, plot and dynamic development. Her work does not have these qualities; rather it has the characteristically limited plot of the I-novel, which is something formerly treated either negatively or affirmatively.

The story develops as follows.

On the thirteenth of December 19xx, on a snowy night, “I” —Mizumura Minae— types her diary on the computer in the privacy of her room. While typing, she recalls what happened that day, accompanied with some associated memories. At the opening, the perception of “I” lies on the night of the thirteenth of December 19xx, when she is typing her diary. Then it flies to the conversation of that morning when her sister Nanae called her at nine forty-five. Nanae told her that today was the twentieth anniversary of their arrival in the United States. The perception of “I” then begins flying everywhere and recalling various memories.

The action of “I” itself on the thirteenth of December, 19xx is as follows. “I” receives a telephone call from her sister Nanae at eight forty-five a.m. Then “I” calls the French literature department at the university around eleven o'clock and tells them that “I” is going to take an oral examination.

¹³ For example, Shiga Naoya's *An'ya kōro*. Cf. Hijiya-Kirschner 1996: 180.

At twelve p.m., “I” makes a phone call to Nanae and hangs up at half past one. Nevertheless, “I” knows well that “I” has to call her professor who will examine her, “I” cannot do it and instead, “I” recalls many things in her mind. At four o’clock, “I” makes a rice salad and eats it, then after five o’clock when “I” has finished eating, “I” decides to call an advisor at the French department and her professor “Big Mac.” After that, “I” goes downstairs and finds a letter from her mother and reads it. At seven o’clock “I” waits for a call from her sister while reading magazines. Because “I” cannot wait any longer, “I” decides to call Nanae, but she is not home yet. At eight o’clock “I” receives a phone call from Nanae and “I” calls her back. Then “I” implies that “I” may go back to Japan. Soon after, “I” receives a call from Nanae once again and is told crying, “You can go back.” Later “I” hangs up and opens a window of her room for the first time in several days.

As is shown above, nothing special could be seen about these events. The fundamental factor of this novel lies not in the author’s actions of the day, but on the contents of her various memories which come to her mind during just one day, and the author’s feelings connected with them.

For example, hanging up after Nanae’s first call, Minae recollects the happy period just after she arrived in the United States. Then her thoughts fly back to the memory of when she returned to Japan at the age of twenty for the first time since her immigration to the States. Later in the afternoon, when Minae calls Nanae, she recollects visiting Manhattan at Christmas during her childhood years. Then, she thinks of Nanae’s love affair, their relationship problems and subsequent separation. After this conversation with Nanae, she recollects her junior high-school life in the States and thinks about the gap between the “I, who is in the Japanese language” and the “I, who is in the English language” which formed after she became more acclimatized to the States. She feels her inferiority complex afresh, which is rooted in her difficulty speaking English. While having a rice salad she thinks of her great professor of French literature who is hospitalized. After reading a letter from her mother who eloped with a young man, Minae recollects the time when her grandmother died during her childhood. At half past seven in the evening while waiting for Nanae’s telephone call, she thinks about the loneliness that she feels in the States:

It was not a gap between me and America. [...] Rather it was a gap between “I” and the “I who is in America”; in other words, between the “I who is in Japan” and the “I who is in America”—

No, to be more accurate, it should be called a gap between the “I, who is in the Japanese language” and the “I, who is in the English language.” [...] The reason why I lived with the belief that the “I, who is in the Japanese language” is my true self which I can restore if only I could come back to Japan is that the “I, who is in the English language” is for me something which I can’t think of as the real me at all.¹⁴

I love Japan, I love Japanese food, I love Japanese people, I love the Japanese language, I love Japanese literature which is written in hiragana, katakana and kanji. I want to go back to Japan which has everything that I love, and exactly then, for sure I will arouse pleasure, delight and a strong desire for a blessing which had to be asleep for a long time and start to live life to the fullest. While thinking like this, I have lived outside Japan for such a long time, far and far away from the sky and the earth of Japan, nevertheless I know that I can live my life only once.

What was I doing for my life...? Suddenly, I felt as if this usual lament was transported to another dimension. I felt scared. I thought as if I had gotten a glimpse of my life which had already finished from the pool of the white death.¹⁵

In these recollections, her emotions are condensed after she has arrived in the States, emotions which are related to her loneliness, her inferiority complex, her admiration of Japan and her relationships with her family. They are focused on the memories which come to the author’s mind and her state of mind which appears to reveal her casually flowing consciousness that is void of any deliberate plan, although she probably prepared her plan thoroughly.

In addition, as has been shown above, Mizumura’s recollection is wide, from her infancy to the present, something that deviates from the characteristics of the I-novel of a “two-fold narrative standpoint.”¹⁶

Hijiya-Kirschnerreit argues that “usually, a shishōsetsu (I-novel) does not begin at the real end of the narrative, as many autobiographies do” because “this would mean a loss of immediacy, since the reader would then know that the narrative was merely a reenactment of events already passed.”

¹⁴ Mizumura 1998: 192.

¹⁵ Ibid.: 46-47.

¹⁶ Ibid.: 182.

According to her, what “Japanese readers and writers enjoy” is “the illusion that the work has been created parallel to the events described, that the active and narrative first person are identical.” Therefore, she asserts that “shishōsetsu is confined to relatively short episodes from the author’s life, the first of which should not be too far in the past and the last of which should take place in the narrative present, close to the time of publication.”¹⁷

Mizumura’s I-novel, unlike Chikamatsu Shūkō’s (1876-1944) works, does not arouse in the reader a sense that they are reading the author’s ongoing events in the same manner as reading gossip women’s weeklies but “a reenactment of events already passed,”—that she looks back upon her past from the point of 19xx. This recollection, however, is carefully set up as her “real time thought” as if it came to her mind “now,” during the thirteenth of December 19xx. The reader cannot share in the recent events actually taking place around the author—in particular, the event that is ongoing and which is open-ended—but they can be involved to the point where the author stands, on the thirteenth of December 19xx, and can feel enough that at this moment the author remembers various episodes and recounts them. That is why her I-novel is not “confined to relatively short episodes from the author’s life,” but rather makes one long I-novel combining various short episodes, and remains “the illusion that the work has been created parallel to the events described, that the active and narrative first person are identical.” This enables it to have the “immediacy” that “Japanese readers and writers enjoy” irrespective of it breaking the tacit rule that “episodes from the author’s life, the first of which should not be too far in the past and the last of which should take place in the narrative present, close to the time of publication.”

As argued above, Mizumura’s *Shishōsetsu from left to right* deviates from the conventional I-novel in that it is a long piece, and that it combines episodes from various temporal axes from her infancy to the present.

Autobiographic Narration That Is Not Dreary

Formerly, Kanbayashi Akatsuki (1902-1980) said, “about ten years ago, when I was completely down spiritually—physically, financially and in my literature—I wrote about myself thinking it could be my will.”¹⁸ It is evidence that for writers a confession in the I-novel was extremely hard and painful work, and that serious self revelation with complete frankness

¹⁷ Ibid.: 182.

¹⁸ Kanbayashi 1947: 49.

in the author's crisis was awarded a high ethical-moral status. Hirano Ken remarks that "literary genuineness is guaranteed by revealing without hesitation the most painful part of one's own body, the most private part which one does not want to show anybody."¹⁹ Dōke Tadamichi also states that "this sincerity of total self-revelation is the highest ethos of the I-novel."²⁰

They provide us with the impression that generally the I-novel put an emphasis on serious confession, in particular that of the "destructive type" (*hametsu-gata*). As we shall see, the I-novelists of this type show a dreary, gloomy and masochistic revelation in their works.

For instance, in *Gōku* Kamura Isota describes the circumstances of when he eloped with his lover and lives in Tokyo, deserting his wife and child in his hometown as follows:

Keiichirō's salary was, at that time, 35 yen as a trainee. It was not enough to live on and Chitose decided to earn some more money by needlework. [...] Fortunately, neighbours brought some work to Chitose and so somehow they were able to get by. However, because she had to stay up all night to meet the deadlines her health failed dramatically.

"Look, my hair falls out this much."

When Chitose combed her hair in the morning, her eyes would fill with tears as she showed Keiichirō bundles of her fallen hair. Indeed, her hair was falling out so badly that, even if she used a hairpiece and smoothed her hair down, a small patch of skin like that of little bird without feathers could be seen on her head.²¹

Chikamatsu Shūkō wrote in *Wakaretaru tsuma ni okuru tegami* (Letter to My Wife, Who Has Left Me; 1910) about his state of mind when he found that his favorite prostitute was not available because she was called on by someone else as follows:

"Oh, everything is non-sense, non-sense. Under these circumstances, what will become of me?" Thinking like this, I almost missed the station where I had to make my transfer. I knew

¹⁹ Cited in Morikawa 1961: 13.

²⁰ Dōke 1953: 52-53.

²¹ Kamura 1972: 238.

that things like this could happen, but I came home with tears in my eyes, having been exposed to the cold wind at night.²²

The following passage is from Kasai Zenzō's *Kanashiki chichi*, where the author is suffering from disease and poverty:

He is tired, pale, and his eyes are gleaming like those of a sick animal. Sleepless night continues. Even if he stands still, his heart beats faster and if he tries to calm it down, he suffers even more from short attacks of heart palpitations.

His new landlady, around 45, is probably a widow of a government official. She, together with a maid from the countryside, makes a living frugally by running a rooming house. It is a dark and gloomy one-story house with low ceilings, located in the outskirts and surrounded by many trees. All that he has there is the bedding, a desk and a small chest made of paulownia wood. This small wooden chest is the only one sad memorial thing left unsold in his long poor life.²³

Referring to Ozaki Kazuo, Yagi Yoshinori names four possible crises: “Whoever cannot present one of the four following crises—the health crisis, the financial crisis, the family crisis, or the crisis of ideas (*shisō*)—is not qualified to write a *shishōsetsu*.”²⁴ According to these possible crises, Kamura has the health crisis, the financial crisis and the family crisis, Chikamatsu has the family crisis, and Kasai has the health crisis, the financial crisis and also the family crisis in the sense that his family had to separate. These crises on parade are narrated drearily in a manner that excites the reader's sympathy. Their dismal and hopeless circumstances convince us to agree with Ara Masahito (1913-1979), who argued that “in their writing they looked for difficult circumstances”²⁵ in life.

In Mizumura's I-novel, however, such dreary narration cannot be seen. As has been shown already, its contents include the revelation of an inferiority complex about her English, her sister's love affairs and attempted suicide, and her mother's love affairs and elopement with a younger lover. In regard to the four possible crises, the family crisis and the crisis of ideas

²² Chikamatsu 1972: 38-39.

²³ Kasai 1972: 9.

²⁴ Akiyama et al. 1977: 11.

²⁵ Ara 1952: 23.

could be applied, but Mizumura's I-novel does not include dreary narration so as not to suit the term "crisis" or "revelation."

The reason is that in this work the revelation of the ugliness of the family is merely one of many episodes which makes the author concentrate less on such "events." These kinds of episodes are all attributed to the loneliness resulting from living in a foreign country, not a matter simply of missing, but of the desolation, emptiness or restlessness that are related to the author's identity.

Such a lament of desolation frequently appears in the work. In the United States, where "there is no premise" that "people have a relationship with each other" but rather that "they have a premise that naturally people are separated from each other like solitary islands," it stands to reason that "[any]one who cannot bear this loneliness, which is compelled by this premise, has to lose balance of mind little by little, and there is no other way but to become reclusive."²⁶ Under these circumstances, Mizumura and her sister amplify each other's loneliness. This lamentation is, just like in other tragic I-novels, immediate:

—It's tough.

—Oh yes, tough.

—Oh, so hard and tough.

What can console us is the thought that Americans must also feel bruised.

—Americans also look pained, don't they?

—Yes, they look pained, too.

—Especially the single girl.

In fact, Sarah Bloom (who wishes to be a writer) does indeed look pained.²⁷

Sarah Bloom, one of "my" few friends, invited "me" to a party one day. "I" was surprised and wondered "how many people would come to this small flat on that day" and felt a sort of disappointment that "I am just one of many friends of Sarah's." However, even Sarah usually feels terribly lonely:

I don't remember why we began talking about this, but one day she told me something like this: She gets up in a good mood and does

²⁶ Mizumura 1998: 402.

²⁷ *Ibid.*: 403.

some stretching exercises, then she washes her face, changes her clothes, waters her plants, gives her cat some food and finally makes her own breakfast. That is her daily routine. However, when she starts her breakfast alone at the table, she is already shedding tears.

—I feel so lonely—so desolate. I can't stop crying.

When I saw Sarah smile to everyone at the party, I just remembered what she said.²⁸

Do American women really feel lonely just like us?

Lonely but free.

I think everyone could say like this, but Nanae insists that these are Brahms' words. And she tells me that she wants to feel "lonely but free," but actually she feels "free but lonely."

Free but lonely.

Indeed the nature of loneliness varies, depending on which word comes first.²⁹

As we can see, even the melody of lamentation of a difficult life gives readers a light visual impression due to its mixed style of Japanese and English, and clearly differentiates the I-novel with the appearance of multiple Chinese characters, written in a classical style.

Another feature of Mizumura's work is its ending. In the case of Kasai's *Kanashiki chichi*, it ends with the scene where the hero, having no possibility to recover from his disease and poverty, feels at peace and tries to write his work, even if he spits blood and has a fever of around thirty-eight degrees. The ending of Chikamatsu's *Wakaretaru tsuma ni okuru tegami* shows neither the hero's wife's return home, nor his marriage to a prostitute with whom he was infatuated. It just ends with an unpleasant and absurd quarrel over the prostitute with his friend. In the case of Kamura's *Gōku*, perhaps even more terribly, the hero cannot help feeling deep guilt toward his lover Chitose, more than toward his wife and child left in his hometown. His feeling of "strong pity on Chitose that comes up from somewhere in his mind," his "total absentmindedness." Finally, it ends

²⁸ Ibid.: 404.

²⁹ Ibid.: 404-406.

with a hopeless maze. For example, “What on earth should I do? What will become of us? Keiichirō tossed about in his futon multiple times.” Hope can just be seen in *Kanashiki chichi*; however, all the heroes are unable to find the solution to their circumstances and can barely see any form of salvation. This is related to what Hijija-Kirschnereit argued, that “shishōsetsu does not treat an individual’s process of maturing, since this would require the hero to consider himself from a distance, a condition that conflicts with the principle of the genre.”³⁰

In the case of Mizumura’s I-novel, hope can be seen at last for the heroine “I” who has lived for twenty years in a foreign country, being indecisive to return to Japan in spite of being overwhelmed with loneliness. “I” finally decided to go back to Japan, called her sister Nanae and told her about it, then opened the window:

Snow falls from the sky as if deleting equally both the sorrow and crime of humankind. It snows in silence to remind you of death, in a time of eternity. My body was filled with a strong passion for life. At this moment a sound that the mountain witches, who jumped from graves and ran down from the mountain barefoot with hanging hair, echoed powerfully to my ear once again.

Wake up, all hope.
Wake up, all desire.

I don’t even remember how many days ago I last opened it, but I put both hands to the brass handle and energetically opened the window wide. At the same time as the cold air came in, the stagnated air around me moved slowly, and the wind blew towards the ceiling.³¹

The snow, from the beginning to the end of the story, lies in pure white, symbolizing the deletion of the past and birth of a fresh start. Also, the stagnated air, that began to move slowly when “I” opened a window, symbolizes the hope that “I” is going to recover. The difference between Mizumura’s I-novel and the conventional destructive and hopeless I-novel that arouses the reader’s sympathy is very apparent here, in that a way forward towards a solution to the author’s life is shown.

³⁰ Hijija-Kirschnereit 1996: 282.

³¹ Mizumura 1998: 460.

Thus, Mizumura's I-novel deviates from the conventional I-novel in three areas. Firstly, the revelation of ugliness of the family is merely one of many episodes, subsequently making the author less focused on personal confession. This is in contrast to others written as a "will" in the time when serious self revelation, combined with complete frankness in the author's crisis, was awarded a high ethical-moral status. The second respect is that, unlike the conventional I-novel in which tragedy is exaggerated, her style of autobiographic narration that laments loneliness, her inferiority complex and family problems are not rendered drearily and so keep a level of light. The third deviation worthy of mention is the ending, in which a touch of hope is included. This is unlike the destructive type of I-novel, void of any solution to the hero's circumstances since it does "not treat an individual's process of maturing." Mizumura's I-novel, with all its direct expression about her lamenting her loneliness, does not have the dreary narration that has always been associated with the image of the I-novel. It differentiates itself from the traditional I-novel in which the narration of a tragic hero provokes the reader's sympathy when the author describes his or her crisis.

Conclusion

This paper argued how Mizumura's *Shishōsetsu from left to right* deviates from the conventional I-novel. The first deviation is that the story is set outside Japan. The second is that it mixed both English and Japanese in the texts. The third is that it is a long piece in spite of the received conventions of the I-novel. This is related to the fact that it consists of various episodes from various times, from her infancy to the present. The fourth is that self revelation is not the central matter in the work, where the autobiographical narrative of confession does not include a dreary tone but is to some extent light, and where the ending shows a touch of hope, unlike the destructive type of the I-novel that neglects to show any solution to the hero's circumstances.

Despite its significant deviation from the image of the orthodox I-novel, Mizumura used the title "Shishōsetsu (I-novel)" with confidence. Here, her challenge to create a new I-novel which overthrows the fixed idea and her extraordinary determination to force the reader to read this work as an "I-novel" can be seen.

This I-novel, having extrinsic elements that are written from left to right, and in which English is woven into the fabric of the text, and where the bilingual heroine appears in the United States, has a novelty which may be regarded as a provocation to the conventional I-novel. However, if the

other elements which make an I-novel an I-novel are taken into consideration, then unexpectedly these other classic aspects can be seen in this work.

As explained earlier, the “I-novel is a factual type of novel which is expressed subjectively, where a hero is directly connected with an author. The hero is the author himself, both internally and externally, where the author just copies himself. Since it has a certain lack of structure, but has an element of miscellany and a static aspect, it is apt to become a short novel.” Mizumura’s I-novel seems to apply to this definition, except on one condition: that “it is apt to become a short novel.” This work expresses various recollections subjectively and reveals episodes having “factuality” that the author actually experienced in the U.S.A.—or at least, the reader believes that what is written is a fact. Also, it is evident that the heroine is the author herself both internally and externally. In addition, Mizumura’s I-novel does not have, in spite of it being a full-length story, the characteristics of construction, plot and dynamic development or climax like an authentic novel. It does, however, have the characteristics of the I-novel; a certain lack of structure, an element of miscellany and a static aspect. It is also worth mentioning that in her I-novel the illusion that “the active and narrative first person are identical” still remains, in spite of it not having a “two-fold narrative standpoint” due to its combination with various episodes in various temporal axes. This enables it to have the “immediacy” that “Japanese readers and writers enjoy.” Despite its mixture of Japanese and English styles, it does not confuse readers, but rather it mirrors the author’s bilingual consciousness and so strengthens the representation of subjectivity including the author’s state of mind, which is one of the most important elements in the I-novel.

At first sight, Mizumura seems to have created a defiant I-novel that deviates from the conventional idea of this genre, but in fact she might just have wanted to reach the point of the classic principle in the I-novel—to express “I” frankly and faithfully—as close as possible, rather than to provoke modern Japanese literature. It can be understood that she created the bilingual I-novel from left to right in order to strengthen her “I-ness” in the I-novel. Kume Masao stated that “In the final analysis, the basis of all art lies in the self [*watakushi*]. It follows that the form that expresses this ‘self’ directly and frankly, without pretense and disguise, that is to say, the I-novel, should become the main path, the basis and essence of the art of

prose.”³² In the case of Mizumura, this bilingual format from left to right was indispensable in expressing the “self” directly and frankly, without pretense and disguise.” Mizumura knew that the conventional contours of the I-novel were not altogether satisfactory if she wanted to faithfully express her situation wavering between two languages. Therefore, paradoxically, she dared to adopt an unconventional style in order to deepen the “I-novel-ness” in the I-novel.

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Agnieszka Kozyra

Nishida Kitarō's Logic of Absolutely Contradictory Identity and the Problem of Ethics in Zen

Ethics is learning about the concept of good and principles in human behaviour; it is associated with the existence of moral standards. In the case of Zen, however, we cannot speak about ethics in the sense of some collection of precepts, which distinctly belong to this school. Can Zen ethics even be said to exist, since Zen masters advocate overcoming the duality of all opposites, including the opposition between good and evil?

The answer to this question also seems not to be clear to some Zen practitioners, for instance in contemporary American Zen centers, where some masters have justified their blameworthy behaviour (drunkenness, seduction of female pupils) by claiming to be free from the concepts of good and evil¹. Of course, such behaviour has been criticized not only by public opinion, but also by other Zen masters.

In my opinion, Zen ethics should be treated as a part of philosophical reflections on the experience of Enlightenment. Such a statement brings us to the problem of Zen philosophy.

In this article, I would like to present the analysis of Zen ethics from the point of view of Nishida Kitarō's philosophy of 'absolute nothingness' (*zettaimu*) and its logic of paradox, i.e. logic of absolute contradictory self-identity (*zettaimujunteki jikodōitsu no ronri*), which is, in my opinion, the key to Zen master's teaching and *kōans*².

The scope of this article does not allow me to present all the arguments which are important to defend my interpretation of Zen philosophy as 'paradoxological nihilism' and Zen logic as the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity, which I have discussed elsewhere.³ I will mention only the most important problems.

¹ Yampolsky 1986: 64.

² *Kōan* is an account of a Zen master's actions or statements, including questions and answers, which is regarded as the expression of Enlightenment. Also, quotations from various texts, not only Buddhist, are treated as *kōans*, since they point to the reality of Enlightenment.

³ This article is partly an English translation of Chapter Five from my book on Zen philosophy (Kozyra 2003), which was published in Polish. The first part of this book (Chapter Two on Polemics on Zen theory and practice, and Chapter Three on Zen language) was translated into English and published as *Nishida Kitarō's Logic of Absolutely Contradictory Self-Identity and the Problem of Orthodoxy in the Zen Tradition* (Kozyra 2008). Chapter Six on Paradoxological Nihilism as well as its relation to Nishida's philosophy of science, which was analysed in my book on Nishida Kitarō's philosophy of Nothingness (Kozyra 2007) was translated into Japanese (see: Kozyra, 2006). See also on Nishida and Shinran: Agnieszka Kozyra 2007.

In the first part of this article, I will present some interpretations of Zen philosophy, which are different from Nishida's. After explaining how Nishida's own experience of Zen practice made him abandon institutional Zen and seek his own philosophical interpretation of Zen, I will introduce the outline of Nishida's philosophy of 'absolute nothingness' (*zettai mu*) and his logic of paradox as (the logic of absolute contradictory identity) as related to Zen teaching.

In the second and third part of my article, I will use Nishida's interpretation of Zen Enlightenment as the experience of the reality regarded as absolutely contradictory self-identity (the structure of such reality is paradoxical) to answer the following questions:

How can one explain the logical connection between Enlightenment (Jpn. *Satori*) and Great Compassion (Jpn. *Daihi*) as the Buddhist ethical ideal? (The realization of true self and the experience of reality 'as it is', i.e. as Thusness or Suchness (Sk. *Tathāta*, Jpn. *Nyo*) is only one aspect of Enlightenment (the epistemological aspect), the other aspect of Enlightenment is ethical.)

Why do Zen masters stress the importance of overcoming the dualism of good and evil but, on the other hand, demand from their disciples compliance to strict rules in monastic life and do not tolerate behavior that in society is regarded as immoral?

In my opinion, the answers to the above questions are crucial to understand Zen ethics. The answers for these questions can also be found in Buddhist sutras and commentaries, but I would like to focus on the words of Zen masters, since Zen is claimed to be "transmission separate from [written Buddhist] teaching" (*kyōge betsuden*). Let me concentrate on the problem of the logic of paradox in Zen ethics, since the scope of this article does not allow me to discuss other important Zen dilemmas, such as, for instance, why Zen masters have left so many written accounts and commentaries if Zen is not to be explained in words. (I have discussed them in my other books and articles⁴).

I. The Logic of Paradox and Zen Philosophy

Polemics on the philosophy of Zen

Let me introduce just a few voices in the discussion on philosophical reflection in the Zen tradition, since some scholars deny philosophical discourse in Zen.

⁴ See for example: Kozyra 2003:144-183, Kozyra 2007: 125-132, Kozyra 2008: 96-98.

Hsueh-li Cheng, probably influenced by the “negative method” of the Madhyamika school of Buddhism, claims that Zen masters had no vision of reality. According to him, the essence of Zen philosophy is not an explanation of the nature of reality but a critical attitude, intellectual liberty, creativeness and practical attitude. Such “critical philosophy” liberates a human being from prejudices, dogmatic tendencies and illusions.⁵ His analysis of the practical aspect of Zen leads him to the rather controversial comparison of Zen and Confucianism. Hsueh-li Cheng does not explain the difference between chaotic and arbitrary choices and the “openness of Zen philosophy,” that he postulates. He does not determine the criterion of Truth, which is crucial to Zen, since Enlightenment must be verified.⁶ Hsueh-li Cheng’s conclusions reminds one of Thomas Cleary’s interpretations of Zen as not an ideology but a “practical psychology of liberation.”⁷

Suzuki Daisetz always emphasizes that, while Enlightenment liberates a man from all conditional determinations, at the same time true Zen masters throughout history “have a certain firm basis of truth obtained from a deep personal experience.”⁸ Zen teaching may look chaotic but in fact there is one clear current in Zen masters’ teaching. It should be noted that Suzuki was referred to by many authors of books on Zen, such as Allan Watts or Robert Linssen, who claimed that treating Zen as a philosophy is a grave mistake.⁹ They usually quote the following words of Suzuki Daisetz: “To understand Zen one must abandon all he has acquired by way of conceptual knowledge and strip off every bit of knowledge that he has painfully accumulated around him.”¹⁰ Suzuki warned that any „philosophy of Zen” would be nothing more than „a castle in the sand.”

The above statement by Suzuki only apparently contradicts his opinions presented in his article titled “The Philosophy of Zen.”¹¹ The problem is the meaning of the phrase “to understand Zen.” When Suzuki denies rational thinking, he means that it is an obstacle on the way to the experience of Enlightenment. Of course, he is right to claim that rational discourse is not the way to the experience of Enlightenment — all true Zen masters, past and present, would agree to this conclusion. However, Zen is also a form of human expression and, as such, is meant to be

⁵ Cheng 1959: 29-30.

⁶ Ibid.: 30.

⁷ Cleary 1989: vii.

⁸ Suzuki 1969: 54.

⁹ Watts 1960: 17, Linssen 1960: 46.

¹⁰ Suzuki 1956: 349.

¹¹ Suzuki 1951: 5.

communicated and articulated in concepts and notions, belonging to the so-called rational sphere. The following quotation is proof of the fact that Suzuki Daisetz was aware of the unavoidability of the philosophical aspect in Zen: “Zen is not to be conceptualized, let me repeat, if it is to be experientially grasped; but inasmuch as we are human in the sense that we cannot remain dumb, but have to express ourselves in one way or another, indeed, we cannot have an experience if we cease to give expression to it. Zen would not be Zen if deprived of all means of communications. . . . The conceptualization of Zen is inevitable: Zen must have its philosophy. The only caution is not to identify Zen with a system of philosophy, for Zen is infinitely more than that.”¹²

In my opinion, Suzuki’s interpretation of Zen is not all that different from that of his friend, Nishida Kitarō, but in contrast to Nishida, Suzuki avoids systematic analysis on the logic of Zen. Although Suzuki calls the philosophy of Zen “the philosophy of emptiness,” he is not a philosopher—first and foremost he is a Zen master concerned with leading people to the experience of Enlightenment itself. Dealing with Zen, he is not just a scholar whose main aim is to clarify philosophical aspects of the doctrine. Suzuki encourages everybody to experience the emptiness, not to understand its philosophical implications. According to him, only by emerging in emptiness can one experience emptiness. “The proper way to study *śūnyatā* [emptiness – A.K.] is to become aware of it, in the only way *śūnyatā* can be approached. That is to say, the philosopher has to purge every residue of what the mind has accumulated by assiduously applying himself to the work of intellect. . . . There is no other way than that of casting away this intellectual weapon and in all nakedness plunging right into *śūnyatā* itself.”¹³ In Nishida’s writings, one cannot find any encouragement of Zen practice. Unlike Suzuki, Nishida is first of all a philosopher; concerned with the logical structure of his vision of reality, he tries to prove his point of view by linking his conclusions not only to dilemmas of Western philosophy or to religious experience, but also to modern physics.¹⁴

Abe Masao continues Suzuki Daisetz’s mission of explaining the essence of Zen to foreigners by comparing Zen philosophy with such Western philosophers as Nietzsche, Whitehead, or Tillich. However, Abe does not characterize the philosophy of Zen in a systematic way—in his

¹² Ibid.: 4.

¹³ Ibid.: 5.

¹⁴ As seen for instance in Nishida’s philosophical essay *Keiken Kagaku* (*Experimental Science*, 1939).

comparative studies he admits similarities but mainly emphasizes differences, clearing out what is not Zen philosophy.

Many previous studies have overlooked the firm logical structure of paradox in Zen. An example of an interpretation that totally neglects not only the logical aspect of Zen but also its philosophical aspect is Bernard Faure's book *Chan Insight and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition*. Faure stresses the importance of historical analysis, including the examination of the particulars that inform the ritualistic character of Zen teaching.¹⁵ He writes, "Chan texts are necessarily rhetorical in the sense that they imply a departure from an ontological conception of truth toward a more reformative and dialogical conception."¹⁶ The deconstructive approach to Zen tradition that Faure takes is very interesting and innovative, but in my view some of his conclusions oversimplify the problem. He suggests, for instance, that the enigmatic structure of *kōan* is not the expression of the unique "will to truth" but rather of a "will to power."¹⁷ This interpretation is justified only in some marginal aspects of Zen *kōan*, such as, for instance, their usage during funeral rituals in medieval Japan. In my opinion, the meaning of "enigmatic structure of *kōan*" was explained by Nishida — according to him *kōans* complies with the logic of paradox and expresses the paradoxical structure of reality experienced in the act of Enlightenment.

Nishida Kiatrō's Zen Practice

Nishida's unique interpretation of Zen tradition, which is philosophical and free from a sectarian approach (he does not advocate orthodoxy of any specific Zen line, such as Rinzaï or Sōtō), was also influenced by his own experience of Zen practice.

Nishida started his practice of Zen in April 1896 at Senshin'an, a small meditation center at the foot of Utatsuyama in Kanazawa, under the guidance of Setsumon Genshō (1850-1915). Nishida was apparently encouraged by his friend, Suzuki Daisetz (Daisetsu, 1870-1966), who had attained the initial awakening—"seeing one's nature" (*kenshō* 見性)—at Engakuji in Kamakura in 1895. It is possible that Nishida may have found some consolation in his Zen practice during times of personal crisis, as he endured a short separation from his wife and encountered difficulties in obtaining a new post after he lost his job in 1898 at the Fourth Higher School in Kanazawa. In 1901, Setsumon formally received him as a lay

¹⁵ Faure 1993: 212, 225.

¹⁶ Ibid.: 242.

¹⁷ Ibid.: 215.

disciple (*koji* 居士) and gave him the name Sunshin (Inch Mind). Subsequently, in Kyoto, Nishida took part in *sesshin* (an intensive Zen practice) under the guidance of master Kokan Sōhō (1839-1903) at Taizōin, one of the subtemples of Myōshinji.

Convinced that Zen should be explained in philosophical terms, Nishida never discarded his philosophical approach. Perhaps it is for this reason that he encountered so many difficulties in his *kōan* practice. Even in 1903, when master Kōjū Sōtaku (1840-1907) verified that Nishida had passed the *kōan* “Mu,” which indicated that he had experienced *kenshō* (initial awakening¹⁸), Nishida remained unsatisfied. He wrote to Setsumon about his doubts, although his teacher in Kanazawa merely replied stressing that he should not doubt the validity of Zen training. In a letter to Suzuki Daisetsu, Nishida complained, “What good is it if the master considers that I have passed a *kōan*, and yet I am not satisfied? There are Zen practitioners who pass one *kōan* after another, thereby achieving seniority status. I am impressed by neither their behaviour nor by what they say”.¹⁹ Years later, after Nishida’s death, Suzuki Daisetz commented on this problem: “There are those cases, especially with a man like Nishida, who has a rational, logical mind. But Nishida must have grasped something. Otherwise, the kind of philosophy he developed would never be possible”.²⁰

Although Nishida abandoned his formal Zen practice in 1904 and thereafter solely devoted himself to philosophy, in Suzuki Daisetz’s view, it was in 1923 that Nishida’s final breakthrough in Zen took place, nearly twenty years after he had ceased his practice. Nishida said to Suzuki: “My thoughts have reached the point where they cannot be explained by the framework of conventional philosophical language”.²¹

His philosophy began a new phase at around the same time. He proposed a philosophy of “absolute nothingness” (*zettai mu* 絶対無) and a logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. Even if one doubts that the new phase of his philosophy was connected with his “final breakthrough,” it is evident that Nishida linked his logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity to the Zen tradition. Nishida’s philosophical approach to Zen was expressed in a letter he wrote to Nishitani Keiji (1900-1990) in 1943. “It is

¹⁸ *Kenshō* – is sometimes translated as ‘initial awakening’ in relation to the idea of grades in Zen practice. However, in some phrases it is directly related to Enlightenment – *kenshō godō* 見性悟道, *kenshō jōbutsu* 見性成佛.

¹⁹ Yusa 2002: 75.

²⁰ Ibid.: 73.

²¹ Ibid.: 190.

true that my philosophy is related to Zen experience. Most people do not know what Zen is. I believe that the essence of Zen is grasping reality itself (*genjitsu haaku* 現実把握). I always wanted to translate Zen experience into the language of philosophy, although I may not have succeeded in my attempt. But to do so was my most important ambition from the time I reached thirty.”²²

Nishida’s philosophy is not Zen philosophy, although it is inspired by Zen. He continued dialogue with Western philosophy all his life and also tried to resolve many problems that were not discussed by Zen masters, such as the problem of the philosophy of science.

In his essay *Bashoteki Ronri to Shūkyōteki Sekaikan* (Logic of Topos and Religious Worldview) Nishida makes clear his own definition of *kenshō* (‘seeing one’s nature’). According to him, ‘seeing one’s nature’ means to penetrate to the roots of one’s own self, to the bottom (*kontei* 根底) of absolute contradictory self-identity²³.

For the purpose of this article it is not necessary to answer the question “Was Nishida Kitarō really enlightened?” I would like to argue that Nishida’s philosophy offers a coherent interpretation of Zen Philosophy and Zen Ethics.

Nishida Kitarō’s logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity (the logic of paradox) and Zen kōans

It should be noted that Nishida distinguished three types of discrimination:

1. irrational indiscrimination (*higōriteki mufunbetsu* 非合理的無分別), which is not logical. In the case of irrational discrimination we cannot judge irrational statements to be true or false, since such statements are chaotic and have no logical rules to govern them, so we simply reject them without analyzing them.

2. rational discrimination (*gōriteki funbetsu* 合理的分別), which is in compliance with the principle of non-contradiction (“A” is not “non-A”)—formal logic. It should be noted that to designate formal logic Nishida also uses such terms as ‘abstract logic’ (*chūshōteki ronri* 抽象的論理), ‘objectifying logic’ (*taishōteki ronri* 対象的論理). In the case of formal logic we regard true judgment as affirmation or negation, so we can call it “two-value” logic (affirmation or negation).

3. ‘discrimination without discrimination’ (*mufunbetsu no funbetsu* 無分別の分別), which is in compliance with the principle of self-contradiction—

²² Muramoto 1997: 91.

²³ NKZ vol. 11: 445-446.

the truth is both affirmation and negation at the same time and in the same respect, so it is a “one-value” logic of absolutely contradictory identity (the complete logic of paradox).

The principle of non-contradiction of formal logic (“A” is not “non-A”) is only one aspect of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity (“A” is not “non-A” and “A” is “non-A”). That is why “rationality” of formal logic is included in the logic of paradox as one of its aspects—formal logic is the aspect of self-determination of the reality in self-negation. Delusions arise if one becomes attached to objective determination and thereby is not able to grasp the whole structure of absolutely contradictory self-identity.²⁴ To designate the logic of absolute contradictory self-identity, Nishida also uses such concepts as ‘concrete logic’ (*gutaiteki ronri* 具体的論理), ‘true dialectic’ (*shin no beshōhō* 真の弁証法), and ‘logic of paradox’ (*hairi no ri* 背理の理). From the point of view of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity, the truth (the judgment which is truly adequate to the reality conceived as absolutely contradictory identity) is a paradox, i.e., affirmation and negation at the same time and in the same respect. That is why the logic of absolutely contradictory identity is “one-value” logic, which is ‘a standpoint without a standpoint’ (*tachiba naki tachiba* 立場なき立場).²⁵

Nishida states that his logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity is a paradox from the point of view of formal logic. He also uses such expressions as *hairi no ri* to designate his logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. The meaning of the word ‘paradox’, which in Greek means “a judgment opposed to the prevailing opinion” (*gyakusetsu* 逆説) is connected with the problem of self-contradiction. Since the principle of non-contradiction is the demarcation line of formal logic, paradoxes are thought to be absurd, since they are considered to be caused merely by erroneous reasoning. Therefore, much effort has been given to “solving” such paradoxes in philosophy and science. However, Nishida’s ‘absolutely contradictory self-identity’ is a paradox which cannot be solved by proving that paradoxical self-contradiction is only superficial and can be explained in terms of formal logic. In this article the word ‘paradox’ is defined as “one dimensional self-contradictory judgment,” and “one dimensional” means that self-contradiction belongs to the same temporal and spatial aspect. Nishida’s ‘absolutely contradictory self-identity’ is a synonym for a thus-defined ‘paradox’. I am proposing that Nishida’s logic of absolutely

²⁴ NKZ vol. 11: 445-446.

²⁵ NKZ vol. 8: 570.

contradictory self-identity is the most complete expression of the logic of paradox.

According to Nishida, the Buddhist notion of “form is emptiness and emptiness is form” (*shiki soku ze kū* 色即是空; *kū soku ze shiki* 空即是色) complies with the principle of self-contradiction of the logic of paradox. (Form (A) is emptiness (not-A) and yet emptiness (not-A) is form (A).) Nishida states it very clearly: “Emptiness is form and form is emptiness as absolutely contradictory identity of affirmation and negation.”²⁶ He also emphasizes that to grasp the meaning of ‘seeing into one’s own nature’ (*kenshō*) is “to grasp fully the logic of paradox.”²⁷ “Zen speaks of *seeing into one’s own nature and attaining enlightenment* (*kenshō jōbutsu*). But this Zen phrase must not be misunderstood. *Seeing* here does not mean to see anything externally as an object; nor does it mean to see an internal self through introspection. The self cannot see itself, just as an eye cannot see itself. And yet this does not mean that we can see the Buddha-nature transcendently either. If it were seen in that way [as an object] it would be a hallucination.”²⁸

For Nishida, the functional meaning of Zen *kōan* is a tool or means (*shudan* 手段) that helps in grasping the paradoxical structure of reality. He quotes the following *kōan* to explain his point of view: “One day Shoushan Shennian²⁹ taking up a bamboo stick, said: ‘When you call this a bamboo stick, you are wrong; and when you don’t call it a bamboo stick, you are also wrong. What, then, do you call it?’”³⁰ Shoushan’s words can be taken as expressing the direct paradoxical judgment: “Calling a bamboo stick a bamboo stick is wrong and is not wrong at the same time and in the same respect.”

It is important to take into consideration the usage of direct and indirect paradoxical judgments and concepts in Nishida’s philosophy. *Kōans* not only function as “tools,” but they are also descriptive—they are paradoxical judgments describing the true reality, i.e. the structure of reality, which complies to the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. Nishida stated that the words of Zen masters should be understood in terms of the logic of absolutely contradictory identity.³¹ He sometimes uses direct paradoxical judgments, stating for instance that “the world of absolutely

²⁶ NKZ vol. 11: 18.

²⁷ NKZ vol. 11: 446.

²⁸ Ibid.: 424-425.

²⁹ Jpn. Shuzan Shōnen, (926-993).

³⁰ Ibid.: 446.

³¹ Ibid.: 430-431.

contradictory identity is self-identical in itself and at the same time is not self-identical in itself³² or “the world of absolutely contradictory identity is always determined and at the same time it is always changing.”³³ He also uses direct paradoxical concepts such as ‘immanent transcendence’ (*naizaiteki chōetsu* 内在的超越) or ‘discrimination without discrimination’ (*mufunbetsu no funbetsu* 無分別の分別). In his philosophy the reality is regarded as ‘continuation without continuation’ (*hirenzoku no renzoku* 非連続の連続),³⁴ and inner unity of the self as ‘unity without unity’ (*tōitsu naki tōitsu* 統一なき統一).³⁵

However, direct paradoxical judgment and concepts alone may not be sufficient to communicate to others the vision of reality as absolutely contradictory self-identity. Nishida had to explain that his approach is not irrational or at its best mystical (in the sense that “mysticism has nothing to do with objective knowledge”). That is why he used indirect paradoxical concepts and judgments to link his common sense/formal logic vision of reality with his vision of reality as absolutely contradictory self-identity. Indirect paradoxical concepts explain various aspects of absolutely contradictory self-identity.

Let us consider the notion of ‘absolute nothingness’ as an indirect paradoxical concept. It is not a direct paradoxical concept because the ‘name’ of this concept itself is not self-contradictory (there is no self-contradiction in the name of ‘absolute nothingness’ as there is in the case of ‘immanent transcendence’). However, ‘absolute nothingness’ is defined as nothingness identical with being (*u soku mu* 有即無), and that is why its meaning is paradoxical.

Nishida’s concept of ‘topos of absolute nothingness’ must not be objectified but also treated as an indirect paradoxical concept. ‘Topos of absolute nothingness’ is the spatial aspect of absolutely contradictory identity, and as such is also a paradox: place/topos of ‘absolute nothingness’ is the ‘final place’ (*kyūkyokuteki basho* 窮極の場所) which has no place; that is why it is ‘groundless ground’ (*mukiteiteki kitei* 無基底の基底).³⁶ If it had its place, it would not be the final place. ‘Absolute nothingness’ can be regarded as the field of consciousness in only one of its many aspects. Forgetting about the whole paradoxical structure of

³² NKZ vol. 9: 278.

³³ Ibid.: 301.

³⁴ NKZ vol. 6: 217.

³⁵ Ibid.: 219.

³⁶ NKZ vol. 11: 18.

absolute nothingness leads to the mistaken conclusion that the field of consciousness is something out of which the individual consciousness emanates. ‘Topos of absolute nothingness’ (the spatial aspect of absolute contradictory identity) is the paradoxical state, in which all individual entities are unique and separated, and yet are mutually unhindered and interfused—a state which cannot be objectified.

Nishida warns that the state of contradiction can neither be thought of from the standpoint of subject-object dualism nor can it even be imagined, therefore it is a grave mistake to objectify its approach. The world of absolutely contradictory identity in its spatial/ topological aspect is ‘groundless ground’ since there is no foundation of beings which can be separated from other beings, just as there is not anything that emanates being. Nishida believed, it should be noted, that the Buddhist expression “because there is no place in which it abides, the Mind arises” should be understood as implying the ‘topos of absolute nothingness’ or ‘groundless ground’.³⁷

Nishida emphasized that the relation of ‘one’ and ‘many’ is a relation of absolutely contradictory self-identity: ‘many’ remain ‘many’ and at the same time is ‘one’; ‘one’ remains ‘one’ and simultaneously is ‘many’.³⁸ ‘One’ cannot be regarded as the foundation of ‘many’, since in such a case the relation of ‘one’ and ‘many’ could not be ‘absolutely contradictory self-identity’ in which no element is regarded as a fundamental element or at least as more important than the others. Nishida states that the world of absolutely contradictory self-identity of ‘one’ and ‘many’ means that “innumerable things always contradict one another and at the same time are ‘one’.”³⁹ Nishida compares such a paradoxical state to an infinite sphere, which has no circumference and its center is everywhere. Such an infinite sphere is groundless (*mukiteiteki*) and reflects itself within itself.⁴⁰ It should be noted that such a vision of reality as infinite with the center at any point is reminiscent of the notion of “the mode of existence in which all phenomenal things are mutually unhindered and interfused” (*jijimuge*) of the Kegon school.

In fact, Nishida’s absolutely contradictory self-identity of one and many should be regarded as exactly such a paradoxical state in which all individual entities are unique and separated and yet are mutually unhindered and interfused, and that is why they are ‘one’. In such a vision

³⁷ NKZ vol. 11: 415.

³⁸ NKZ vol. 6: 170.

³⁹ NKZ vol. 11: 18.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*: 18.

of reality, there is no single element which is more real than others and can be regarded as lying beyond or behind the interdependence of all individual entities. In Kegon thought, the state of all phenomenal things being mutually unhindered and interfused was compared to ‘Indra’s Net’, a net of jewels in which each jewel reflects all other jewels. It is easy to imagine that one jewel reflects the jewels that are close to it, but it cannot be imagined that it reflects all jewels, no matter how far they are from it. Nishida expresses the same idea of unhinderedness, quoting Zen master Panshan Baoji (Jpn. Banzan Hōshaku, 720-814), a disciple of Mazu Daoyi (Jpn.. Basō Dōitsu, 709-788):

“It is like waving a sword in the air. It does not leave any trace as it cleaves the air. The blade is also untouched. The individual self and the world, individual entity and totality, are in a relation of absolutely contradictory identity.”⁴¹

Relation of “Mind” and “Buddha” as Absolute Contradictory Self-Identity

Many passages in Nishida’s essay *Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan* (Topological Logic and Religious Worldview) express his conviction that the relation of ‘Mind’ and ‘Buddha’ in the Buddhist tradition must be understood in terms of the logic of paradox. He writes, for example, “Whole Mind is Buddha” (*zenshin soku butsu* 全心即仏), “Buddha is wholly man” (*zenbutsu soku jin* 全仏即人), and “no difference between Buddha and man” (*jinbutsu fui* 人仏不異).⁴² “Mind in itself is Buddha, Buddha in itself is Mind,” he says, yet this “does not mean that Buddha and Mind are identical from the point of view of objectifying logic/formal logic.”⁴³ In this context ‘Mind’ (Jpn. *shin* 心; Sk. *citta*; Ch. *xin*) means the conceptual, discriminating mind, which distinguishes between subject and object. Individual self is the same as Buddha—such a statement is contradictory since individual self is relative and Buddha is absolute.

Zen masters often referred to the notion “Mind is Buddha.” It should be noted that one of the *kōan* from the collection *The Gateless Gate* (*Mumonkan*) directly expresses this truth: “Mind is Buddha” (*sokushin sokubutsu* 即心即仏).⁴⁴ Mazu Daoyi also stressed that “Outside mind there is no Buddha, outside Buddha there is no mind.”⁴⁵ The same truth was

⁴¹ NKZ vol. 11: 430.

⁴² Ibid.: 430.

⁴³ Ibid.: 423.

⁴⁴ Nishimura 1996: 135.

⁴⁵ Dumoulin 1979: 57.

expressed by the Japanese Zen Master Shinchi Kakushin (1207-1298), whose words Dumoulin rendered in verse:

*Mind is the Buddha.
The Buddha is mind.
Mind and Buddha, such as they are,
Are the same in the past and the future.*⁴⁶

If the sentence “Mind is Buddha” were to be interpreted from the point of view of formal logic, the conclusion would be that no religious practice is required. “Mind” and “Buddha” would be synonyms, and would not be different from each other at all. However, all Zen masters claim that people must follow religious practice to realize their ‘buddha-nature’. Hakuin Ekaku (1689-1769) wrote: “Yet sentient beings do not know how close it [Buddha] is, and search for it far away. How sad!”⁴⁷. How could it be that, as Ikkyū Sōjun (1394-1491) stated, “we have one moon [Buddha nature], clear and unclouded, yet are lost in darkness.”⁴⁸

Nishida maintained that the identity of the individual self and Buddha should not be understood in terms of formal logic, since it makes sense only from the point of view of the logic of absolutely contradictory identity. From the point of view of formal logic the statement “Mind is Buddha” means that two elements are identical; they are only different names for the same thing (A=A). From the point of view of the logic of contradictory identity, however, “identity” is always contradictory—the individual self *is* Buddha and *is not* Buddha at the same time and in the same respect. “Mind is Buddha, Buddha is Mind”—this true statement does not mean that the world is an emanation of the Mind. An individual self (*shin* 心) is not an individual self (*hishin* 非心), and that is why it is an individual self (*shin* 心). The relation of Buddha and human beings must be understood as “contradictory identity” in compliance with “‘is’ and ‘is not’ logic” (the so-called *sokuhi* 即非 logic, *soku no ronri* 即の論理) characteristic of *The Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* (Sk. *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, Jpn. *Hannya Haramita Kyō*).⁴⁹ The *sokuhi* logic of *The Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* expresses the truth that the true ‘absolute’ must be ‘absolutely contradictory self-identity’.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Dumoulin: 1990: 30.

⁴⁷ Stevens 1993: 7.

⁴⁸ Ikkyū 1982: 79.

⁴⁹ NKZ vol. 11: 446.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*: 405.

Nishida took the words of the famous Japanese Zen master Shūhō Myōchō, known as Daitō Kokushi (1282-1338) to be the best expression of the paradoxical relation between the relative ‘Mind’ and the absolute ‘Buddha’: “Separated by a billion eons (kalpas), and yet not separated even for a moment. Always face to face, yet never met.”⁵¹

The logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity neither nullifies the self nor merely signifies that the self becomes Buddha or comes closer to Buddha. It indicates rather that the relation of the self and ‘the absolute’ are always ‘reciprocal polarization’ (*gyaku taiō* 逆対応)⁵², i.e. one becomes the other through self-negation. According to Nishida, Dōgen’s (Dōgen Kigen, 1200-1253) saying “to study the way of Buddha is to study the self, to study the self is to forget the self” should be understood in this context.⁵³ The logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity can also be seen in such Buddhist concepts as “passions are Enlightenment” (*bonnō soku bodai* 煩惱即菩提 or “samsara is nirvana” (*shōji soku nehan* 生死即涅槃).

If it is admitted that the reality experienced in Enlightenment is absolutely contradictory self-identity, it must also be admitted that only judgments in which the opposites are contradictory identical (paradoxical judgment) are adequate to such reality. This is not the problem of finding or not finding sufficient expressions to describe the experience of ‘Enlightenment’. It is the problem of shifting from formal logic to the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. Nishida calls such a ‘shift’ ‘the overturning of the self’ (*jiko no tenkan* 自己の転換).⁵⁴ What is the difference between attaining ‘buddha-nature’ by transformation and attaining ‘buddha-nature’ by shifting?

Let us compare this difference to a visual change in the perception of geometrical figures. If one sees a square and then after sees a triangle in the same place, that means either the square was replaced by a triangle or by some transformation a square was changed into a triangle. However, when one is looking from the point where diagonals of a square, which is the part of a cube crosscut, one sees a square and then if one changes one’s point of view even a little bit, one can see a cube, although no transformation has taken place. In such cases the change from a square to a cube will be due to a shift in point of view.

Another argument that the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity constitutes the structure of reality revealed in the experience of

⁵¹ Ibid.: 399.

⁵² Ibid.: 415.

⁵³ Ibid.: 411.

⁵⁴ Ibid.: 425.

Enlightenment is the Zen term *munen* 無念 (‘non-thinking’). Both Nishida and Suzuki Daisetz argued that true insight into reality is possible only as ‘discrimination without discrimination’, a notion which is a paradox itself. It should be noted that the term ‘no-thinking’ (*munen*) is interpreted by the Sixth Patriarch, Huineng (Jpn. Enō, 638-713) as “thinking while not thinking,”⁵⁵ which is exactly the meaning of Nishida’s concept of ‘discrimination without discrimination’. Huineng taught: “This Dharma-door of mine, from the past onwards, from the beginning has been established with no-thought as its doctrine, no-mark as its substance, no-dwelling as its basis. *No-thought means to be without thought while in the midst of thought.* No-mark means to be apart from marks while in midst of marks. No-dwelling is the basic nature of human beings.”⁵⁶

The same logic of paradox can be seen in the Zen term ‘No-Mind’ (*mushin* 無心). Dahui Zonggao (Jpn. Daie Sōkō, 1089-1163) said: “The so-called No-Mind is not like clay, wood, or stone, that is, utterly devoid of consciousness; nor does the term imply that the mind stands still without any reaction when it contacts objects or circumstances in the world. It does not adhere to anything, but is natural and spontaneous at all times and under all circumstances. There is nothing impure within it; neither does it remain in a state of purity.”⁵⁷ Dahui complies to the logic of paradox, when he states that: There is nothing impure within No-Mind; neither does it remain in a state of purity.

I think that Nishida’s logical approach to Zen—in terms of his logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity—provides a coherent explanation of inner logical structure of such Zen concepts as No-Mind. The limited scope of this article does not allow us to reflect on how Nishida’s logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity is useful in interpreting such problems as the meaning of Zen metaphors, levels of meanings in *kōan* (including the typology of paradoxical judgment in *kōan*), or relations of Zen to the doctrine of other Buddhist schools.⁵⁸

From the point of view of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity, the orthodoxy of Zen is not any “formal logic doctrine” but the structure of paradox itself. Only those Zen statements which comply with the logic of contradictory self-identity indirectly (as a ‘skillful means,’ *hōben* 方便) or directly can be labeled “orthodox.” Each thesis alone, and each antithesis

⁵⁵ Yampolsky 1967: 138.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*,: 162.

⁵⁷ Chang 1957.

⁵⁸ Kozyra 2003.

alone is only the “partial truth,” while the truth of Zen itself is the absolutely contradictory self-identity of any thesis and its antithesis. According to Nishida, the main function of *kōan* is to describe the nature of reality revealed in the experience of Enlightenment in compliance with the logic of paradox. Nishida would not agree with Faure that the enigmatic structure of *kōan* is not the expression of the unique “will to truth” but rather of a “will to power.”⁵⁹ According to Nishida, *kōans* are direct reflections on the experience of absolutely contradictory identity, and as such they are direct or indirect paradoxical judgments. As a method of Zen religious practice, *kōans* also play the role of “catalysts of Enlightenment”; they “catalyze” a reaction that can be described as a shift from the formal logic of perspective to the perspective of the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity. Zen *kōan* are definitely expressions of a ‘will to truth,’ and only by the distortion of their original meaning and purpose could they become the expression of ‘will to power.’ To overlook the paradoxical structure of indirect paradoxical concepts and judgments in Zen tradition is to forget that “the finger pointing to the moon remains a finger and under no circumstances can be changed into the moon itself.”⁶⁰

II Zen Paradoxical Ethics

The following key issues need to be considered when analyzing Zen Ethics: the critique of formal ethics rooted in the duality of good and bad, the contemplation of the essence of ‘great compassion’ (*daihi*) and the differences between ‘paradoxical ethics’ and formal ethics.

Dualism of Good and Evil as an Obstacle on the Way to Enlightenment

Why should a Zen disciple not distinguish between good and evil or sacred and profane?

Under Nishida’s ‘logic of paradox’, choosing between any pair of opposites, including good and evil, is an obstacle to overcoming epistemological dualism, considered to be an essential condition for ‘Enlightenment. The distinction between good and bad, so important for the norms of social life, turns out to impede those seeking ‘Enlightenment’. This is why Huineng taught his pupils: “Don’t think about what’s good, don’t think about what’s bad”⁶¹.

Sengcan (Jpn. Sōsan, ?-606?), the Third Zen Patriarch wrote:

⁵⁹ Ibid.: 215.

⁶⁰ Suzuki 1969: 78.

⁶¹ Nishimura 1996: 98.

*Ignorance begets the duality of calm and anxiety [...],
Gain and loss, good and evil –
Let's discard these concepts*⁶².

The necessity of going beyond the duality of opposite notions also applies to the *sacrum-profanum* dichotomy. Linji Yixuan (Jpn. Rinzai Gigen,?-866) taught: “If you love what’s sacred and hate what’s worldly, you will drift on a sea of births and deaths, and in the end you will drown in it.”⁶³ Such names as ‘Buddha’ or ‘Enlightenment’ are only intermediate concepts pointing to the reality of ‘Enlightenment’, which cannot be objectified. “If you look for ‘buddha’, you become a slave to the concept ‘buddha’”⁶⁴, taught Linji, who had in mind the concept ‘buddha’ as the object of the subject’s cognition. Wherever there is a duality of subject and object of cognition, there can be no change of perspective in perceiving reality, which is why emancipation cannot take place. It is in this context that the following words of Linji should be understood: “If you meet ‘buddha’, kill ‘buddha’”⁶⁵. ‘Buddha’, or ‘enlightened self’, means going beyond all duality, thus it cannot be an object of perception. A student of Zen must kill ‘buddha’, that is, reject the concept of ‘buddha’ in order to realize that the ‘individual self’ is contradictorily identical with the ‘enlightened self’. A similar purpose lies behind other seemingly blasphemous statements by Linji, such as deeming ‘final emancipation’ or ‘enlightenment’ to be hitching posts for asses⁶⁶. For only fools allow themselves to be tied to intermediate concepts without realizing that they are merely ‘a finger pointing to the moon’, not the moon (essence of reality). Huangbo Xiyun (Jpn. Ōbaku Kiun, ?-850) warned that ‘buddha’ cannot be treated objectively, because then the “path of ‘buddha’ will lead you astray just as the path of demons”⁶⁷.

The following words of Daitō Kokushi mean much the same:

*Breaking through [to ‘Enlightenment’ – A. K.], I set aside
all ‘buddhas’ and patriarchs*⁶⁸.
Ignorance and ‘Enlightenment’ –

⁶² Suzuki 1962: 126.

⁶³ Iriya 1996: 52.

⁶⁴ Ibid.: 83.

⁶⁵ Ibid.: 96.

⁶⁶ Ibid.: 35.

⁶⁷ Blofeld 1973: 75.

⁶⁸ Kenneth Kraft 1992: 192.

*those are deceptive words
always deluding monks*⁶⁹.

Bassui Tokushō (1327-1387) taught: “When ignorance appears, break through it, even if you encounter ‘Enlightenment’, ‘Buddha’ or a demon as ignorance”⁷⁰.

Such concepts as ‘Buddha’ or ‘Enlightenment’ point only indirectly to the true essence of reality, which is ‘absolutely contradictory self-identity’. No concept which can be negated in such a way as to generate an opposite concept can be treated as commensurate with reality, even if it is a sacred name. If we consider the word *dharma* (Chin. *fā*; Jpn.. *hō*) to refer to all objects of cognition distinguished by negation, the words of the *Perfect Wisdom Sutra* – that there are no better or worse dharmas – become comprehensible”⁷¹. All dharmas are empty, that is, have no permanent nature, thus we cannot determine their hierarchy.

Mazu Daoyi emphasized that the concept of evil is as empty as all other dharmas:

*Do not become attached to good,
do not reject evil.
Defilement and purity –
If you are not dependent on them,
You will comprehend the empty nature of evil.
You can never grasp it at any moment,
Because evil has no constant nature*⁷².

Mazu stressed that “you cannot get attached to anything, even the dharma ‘buddha’”⁷³, precisely because all dharmas are empty. Recognizing the superiority of one dharma over another (for instance, the dharma ‘buddha’ over the dharma ‘tree’) can occur only due to their utility in leading people to ‘Enlightenment’. That is because such concepts as ‘cosmic body of Buddha’ or ‘Enlightenment’ often become an ‘appropriate way’ by which Zen masters lead people to emancipation. These sacred concepts, however, can become obstacles to attaining the experience of ‘Enlightenment’ if they are regarded as direct signs, that is, commensurate with reality.

⁶⁹ Ibid.: 16.

⁷⁰ Dumoulin 1990: 200.

⁷¹ Conze 1968: 115.

⁷² Dumoulin 1979: 57.

⁷³ Ibid.: 57.

Many seemingly blasphemous statements by Zen masters are meant to stress that absolutely everything has the ‘nature of buddha’. Yunmen Wenyan (Jpn. Unmon Bun’en, 864-949), when asked about the ‘nature of buddha’, replied that it can even be found in excrement⁷⁴. Some scholars see in these words the influence of Chuangzi, who, when asked where the ‘Way’ is, replied, “The ‘Way’ is in urine and feces”⁷⁵.

A person who does not understand the ‘emptiness’ of good and evil cannot fathom the essence of reality. This is precisely why Baizhang Huaihai (Jpn. Hyakujō Ekai, 720-814) stated that rejecting the duality of good and evil is a condition for ‘Enlightenment’. “When you forget about what’s good and what’s evil, about secular life and religious life, when you forget about all dharmas and do not allow any thoughts relating to them to arise, when you relinquish body and mind – then you will achieve complete freedom”⁷⁶.

This type of approach by Zen masters to the dualism of such opposite concepts as good-evil or sacred-profane is the reason why objects of Buddhist veneration had no absolute value for them – at most, such objects had relative value due to their utility on the path to ‘Enlightenment’. Zen masters warned that excessive attachment to Buddhist religious objects could be barriers on the path to the experience of ‘Enlightenment’. For example, Dōgen cited the legend of a monk who always carried a casket with a golden statuette of Buddha Śākyamuni, which he venerated every day by burning pastilles and praying. A Zen master commanded him to throw away the casket, as the master saw excessive attachment to form in his behaviour. The monk, however, did not want to do this and intended to leave the monastery. Before he left, the master summoned him and told him to open the casket. Inside was a venomous snake. Dōgen commented on this parable as follows: “Images of Buddha and relics should be accorded respect, because statues or pictures present the one who attained ‘Enlightenment’, and relics are his remains. It is mistaken to expect, however, that ‘Enlightenment’ will occur as a result of venerating religious objects. This mistake condemns you to the torment of venomous snakes and evil forces”⁷⁷.

Religious objects thus do not have absolute value. This is reflected in the behaviour of Danxia Tianran (Jpn. Tanka Tennen, 739-824), who spent a night in a ruined temple together with two other monks, and since it was very cold, he started a fire using wood from a Buddha statue. When his

⁷⁴ Nishimura 1996: 73.

⁷⁵ Buswell 1997: 335.

⁷⁶ Dumoulin 1988: 171.

⁷⁷ Dumoulin 1979: 99.

companions asked him why he destroyed the Buddha statue, he replied, “I only looked for the sacred remains of Buddha”. One of the monks said, “But Buddha’s remains are not in a piece of wood”. To which Danxia responded, “So I burned only a piece of wood”⁷⁸. According to Dōgen, Danxia’s behaviour was an expression of absolute freedom from form⁷⁹.

As Daisetz Suzuki correctly observed, Danxia’s behaviour did not at all mean that Zen masters called for the destruction of Buddhist statues. This parable merely serves as a reminder that attachment to religious forms should not eclipse religious spirit.

This is why Myōan Eisai (1141-1215) gave a large starving family a piece of copper meant to serve as the halo on a Buddha statue – he did not have anything else to give them. When other monks criticized him for this, Eisai said that Buddha sacrifices even his entire body if the hungry need it⁸⁰. The issue of religious objects in Buddhism must be considered also in the context of ‘an expedient mean’ (Jpn.. *hōben*), which a master should choose to fit the specific situation. Daitō Kokushi stressed that the most important thing is to go beyond the duality of all concepts, including the duality of sacred and profane. He admitted, though, that the adoration of Buddhist statues or the financing of temples helps many people to strengthen their karmic bonds with Buddhism⁸¹.

‘Great Compassion’ as an Ethical Ideal

Transcending the duality of good and evil does not mean that persons who have attained ‘Enlightenment’ behave randomly and chaotically – instead, their behaviour is governed by the ‘logic of paradox’. They are not unconstrained hedonists, because the freedom attained in the act of ‘Enlightenment’ means freedom from all desires considered to give rise to suffering. Furthermore, in the act of ‘Enlightenment’, they become aware of their paradoxical identity with the entire universe. Due to an experience of ‘absolutely contradictory self-identity’ with everything that exists, they are capable of perfectly empathizing with everything that exists, which is why they are filled with ‘great compassion’.

The Sanskrit concept *mahākaruṇā* (Chin. *taibei*; Jpn. *daihi*) is usually translated as ‘great compassion’, but it should be noted that from the standpoint of the ‘logic of paradox’ it means total acceptance resulting from the structure of reality as ‘absolutely contradictory self-identity’. For

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Stryk, Ikemoto 1981: 16.

⁸¹ Kraft 1992: 119.

true compassion is possible only when the subject and object of cognition are identical. It is only under the ‘logic of paradox’ that you can love others as yourself, because others are you, and you are identical with them. As opposed to ‘The Smaller Vehicle’ of Buddhist teachings, in ‘The Great Vehicle’ ‘Enlightenment’ is always connected with the will to emancipate all beings. Being aware that “form is emptiness” means awakening ‘perfect wisdom’. By extension, understanding that “emptiness is form”, thus ultimately grasping the ‘absolutely contradictory self-identity’ of ‘emptiness’ and form, engenders ‘great compassion’. Those who have attained enlightenment feel unity with all suffering beings, which is why compassion is their natural state. They spontaneously act for the good of all beings, striving to emancipate them from the circle of birth and death. Because they are contradictorily identical with the entire universe, ‘great compassion’ does not refer only to ‘sentient beings’ – in this context, Dōgen stated that “‘great compassion’ is also shown in birds or flowers”⁸². According to Abe Masao, the indissoluble tie between ‘perfect wisdom’ and ‘great compassion’ was expressed most fully in the following passage from a translation of the *Heart Sutra* by Xuanzhuang (Jpn Genjo, 600-664): “When Avalokiteśvara (Jpn.. Kannon) practices the excellence of the ‘supreme wisdom’, he sees five aggregates creating the illusion of a separate ‘I’ as ‘emptiness’ and frees all people from all suffering”⁸³. In the *Nirvana Sutra*, ‘great compassion’ is considered to be an attribute of ‘buddha-nature’⁸⁴. Abe agreed with Suzuki Daisetz’s view that many Zen practitioners identified ‘Enlightenment’ only with ‘perfect wisdom’ without attaching importance to the meaning of ‘great compassion’⁸⁵. He emphasized that it is impossible to separate these two concepts, though he pointed out that ‘great compassion’ is not the result of moral self-perfection, but the “direct action of the ‘individual self’ that is ‘non-self’, because it transcends the duality of all opposites, including the good-evil opposition”⁸⁶. Abe cited the following parable about the master Zhaozhou Congshen (Jpn. Jōshū Jūshin, 778-897). When asked whether ‘buddha’ is free from all desires, Zhaozhou replied in the negative: ‘buddha’ is overflowing with the desire to emancipate all suffering beings⁸⁷. Dōgen also stressed that the essence of Buddha Śākyamuni’s teaching is ‘great

⁸² Abe 1985: 114.

⁸³ Cleary 1991: 158.

⁸⁴ Suzuki 1948: 117.

⁸⁵ Abe 1985: 79.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

compassion’: “The compassion of Tathagata cannot be expressed in words. Everything he did was for the good of sentient beings”⁸⁸.

Perfect compassion is possible only if the subject (I) and the object of cognition (for instance, another person) are one, though they preserve their separate characteristics. Masao Abe cites Vimalakirti: “I am sick because other people are sick” - this sentence can also be interpreted in accord with the ‘logic of paradox’⁸⁹.

The state of ‘Enlightenment’, deemed ‘non-self’, proves to be compassion so profound that we cannot imagine it. This is why those who set off on the path of ‘enlightenment’ make the following vow: “I pledge to emancipate countless beings”. As Chen-chi Chang rightly noted, ‘great compassion’ is unconditional love that can be realized only by reaching ‘true emptiness’⁹⁰. He emphasized that ‘great compassion’ is unrelated to righteous retribution, because according to karmic law, he who does evil must reap the consequences – evil begets evil. There is no just judge who orders and rewards⁹¹.

The Enlightened person expresses their ‘great compassion’ in acts that others consider to be good as well as acts considered to be bad. It is in this context that the passage from the *Vimalakirti Sutra* – where Bodhisattva attained ‘enlightenment’ while taking the path of evil – should be understood⁹². Zen ethics distinguishes no acts considered bad always and everywhere. ‘Great compassion’ can be expressed in many different forms depending on the situation, because it is not the letter of the law – it has much in common with the evangelical spirit of love.

The concept of ‘great compassion’ is paradoxical, because those who demonstrate ‘great compassion’ cannot pass to the opposite state – they are unable to act without compassion. It means final, total, timeless affirmation. It should not be supposed that Buddha loves a man for abiding by ethical precepts, or for deserving Buddha’s love in some other way. It was precisely for the purpose of distinguishing ‘great compassion’ from the concept of love conditioned by the concept of absence of love that Buddha Sakyamuni taught the following in the *Lotus Sutra*:

*I neither love nor hate anyone,
I am not attached to anything.*

⁸⁸ Dumoulin 1979: 99-100.

⁸⁹ Abe 1985: 79.

⁹⁰ Chang 1959: 158.

⁹¹ Ibid.: 160.

⁹² Komatsu 1984: 284.

*I convey true knowledge all the time*⁹³.

This approach signifies not indifference, but unconditional love that rejects no one and no thing. Without the spiritual breakthrough of ‘Enlightenment’, this state is unattainable for man – he cannot love unconditionally to the point where even speaking about love would be impossible because no other emotion could exist from which it could be distinguished. Those filled with ‘great compassion’ are incapable of hatred or indifference. This state of absolute acceptance cannot be achieved by persistent religious practice. It is as unfeasible as the evangelical injunction to love thy enemies, that is, the demand made upon Christians to emulate Christ and, after receiving a blow to one cheek, turn the other cheek without feeling hatred toward the perpetrator. We come to the conclusion that ‘great compassion’ is the supreme value (thus the supreme good), yet it is a paradoxical value because it is not conditioned on its negation. In this sense, Great Compassion can be regarded as an indirect paradoxical concept.

The necessity of overcoming epistemological dualism (including dualism of good and evil) on the way to Enlightenment does not lead to the conclusion that good deeds do not make sense. However, one must not forget that we never encounter abstract good or evil, but concrete acts whose effects are felt as good or evil. Deeds treated as good in certain eras are treated as bad in others (slave holding, for instance – Aristotle considered slaves to be “tools endowed with a soul”⁹⁴). Furthermore, changing circumstances determine the value of an act – killing a man on the street in peacetime is bad, but killing an enemy soldier on the battlefield is considered praiseworthy. Good in the human world is never perfect – often it is merely a lesser evil. The motives behind ethical actions are important, as insincere intentions can lie behind so-called good deeds (for instance, enjoying a feeling of moral superiority over others). We must keep in mind that a longing for absolute good lies behind Zen masters’ denial that ethical self-perfection has any value. They believed that absolute good can flow only from ‘great compassion’, which is closely related to ‘Enlightenment’. Zen practitioners were thus advised not to try to perfect themselves ethically, but to strive for ‘Enlightenment’ at all costs, as this is the source of absolute good. The enlightened do not do good by automatically abiding by specified rules. Instead, they demonstrate the spirit of ‘great compassion’ in a manner suitable for the situation in which

⁹³ Murano 1974: 101.

⁹⁴ Łanowski 1978: 119.

they find themselves, in accordance with the principle of choosing the ‘appropriate means’. Thanks to this, all beings can be led to emancipation. It is in this context that the following words of Daitō Kokushi should be understood: “When you succeed in making the ‘Enlightened self’ your own, then even if you do not seek perfection, perfection will appear in you by itself”⁹⁵. Dōgen taught: “The best way is to rid yourself of attachment to your ego, so that you can perform good deeds for others without expecting a reward. There is no rejection of ego if there is no desire to help others. But in order to achieve this state, you must first realize that everything is ‘emptiness’”⁹⁶. Musō Soseki (1275-1351) taught that the perfect doing of good is possible only after attaining ‘Enlightenment’, which is why perfecting oneself ethically should not be the aim of religious practice⁹⁷. He emphasized the paradoxical character of compassion, stating that it has no object.⁹⁸ Those who have attained ‘Enlightenment’ bestow ‘great compassion’ upon all beings regardless of whether they are good or evil. Overcoming the duality of good and evil, or transcending epistemological duality, enables ‘great compassion’ to emerge, the fulfillment of humanity’s dream of not having to choose between good and evil, but merely to act in accordance with the spirit of love. The essence of ‘great compassion’ can thus be expressed by citing the words of St. Augustine: “Love and do what you want”⁹⁹.

According to Nishida, “love is an imperative flowing from the depths of the human heart”¹⁰⁰. According to Nishida, few people know what love really is. True love is not instinctive, not physical infatuation, not the desire to possess someone only for oneself, not acceptance understood as a reward for obedience or success. Absolute love means compassion that’s possible precisely because ‘I’ is contradictorily identical with ‘you’. Love, thus understood, is an absolute imperative stemming from the nature of reality¹⁰¹. Nishida wrote: “We find compassion at the foundation of our ‘self’, because all opposites become unified in true compassion on the principle of ‘absolutely contradictory self-identity’”¹⁰². ‘Great compassion’ occurs only as the result of self-negation, when you discover that you are absolutely contradictorily identical with the Absolute. The only path to

⁹⁵ Kraft 1992: 115.

⁹⁶ Takahashi 1983: 28.

⁹⁷ Cleary 1994: 2.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Tatarkiewicz 1990, vol. 1.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.: 436.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.: 437.

¹⁰² Ibid.: 445.

‘great compassion’ is the spiritual breakthrough known in Buddhism as Enlightenment, not ethical self-perfection. Nishida cites the words of the Zen master Shidō Bunan (1603-76) in this matter: “While alive, be like the dead. Whatever you might do in this state of empty self will be good”¹⁰³. Great compassion can be spontaneously expressed only by someone, who experiences the paradoxical state in which “one is all and all is one” - here is a logical link between the epistemological aspect and the ethical aspect of Enlightenment – the experience of paradoxical identity with everything that exists is the reason of “feeling what is felt by others” and therefore the source of Great Compassion.

‘Paradoxical Ethics’ Versus Formal Ethics

In the logic of paradox (the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity) the truth is both affirmation and negation at the same time and in the same respect, so it is a “one-value” logic – truth is only the paradoxical unity of the opposites. That is why choosing one of the opposites (breaking rules as the opposite of not-breaking rules) does not comply to the logic of paradox. The problem of breaking the rules or not breaking the rules in Zen should be analyzed also in the above context. If one chooses only one of the opposites (chooses to break rules) it means that one’s behaviour does not comply to the logic of paradox.

Zen masters were aware that teaching the necessity of overcoming the duality of good and evil could be understood as moral indifference or, worse, praise of actions heretofore considered evil. This duality cannot be transcended by choosing what is generally considered to be bad. This is why Zen practitioners, who regarded breaking all socially recognized rules to be an expression of ‘enlightenment’, were admonished by their masters. For example, Ikkyū Sōjun rebuked one of his pupils who delighted in desecrating Buddhist religious objects. The pupil slept on an altar among Buddhist statues and used Buddhist sutra scrolls as toilet paper. When asked by Ikkyū why he did these things, he replied he could do so because he was a ‘buddha’. Then Ikkyū asked him, “Since you are a ‘buddha’, why don’t you wipe yourself with clean, white paper instead of paper covered with ink writing?” The pupil was unable to answer. Asked for his verse expressing ‘Enlightenment’, he recited:

*When I sit in zazen meditation
at the Fourth and Fifth Avenue bridges [of the capital – A. K.],
all the people walking past,*

¹⁰³ Ibid.: 437.

*are like trees in a dense forest*¹⁰⁴.

The pupil's words attest to the fact that he had not come to grasp the true meaning of 'emptiness'. According to the famous Buddhist teaching: "form is emptiness and emptiness is form" (*shiki soku ze kū, kū soku ze shiki*). During a disciple's meditation, people ceased to be people for him, because he stopped on one aspect of the truth – he reached only the state in which "form is emptiness", but he did not reach the state in which "emptiness is form", since he had broken away from the 'ordinary perspective' of perceiving reality. Ikkyū thus corrected him, stressing that people walking by someone who has attained 'Enlightenment' are not like trees in a dense forest – "they are as they are"¹⁰⁵. Identity of form and emptiness is self-contradictory, one should not forget that emptiness is not simply the negation of form.

Constantly rejecting ethical norms recognized by society is not an expression of 'Enlightenment' – it merely shows that the duality of opposite concepts has not been overcome. Spectacular cases of breaking all rules were incidents justified by the given circumstances, not a regular practice of Zen masters.

I feel Dōgen made a highly apt remark concerning this problem: "Some Zen monks make a great mistake by doing evil under the pretext that they don't have to do good or accumulate good karma. I have never heard of any [Buddhist – A. K.] teaching that would bid monks to rejoice in doing evil"¹⁰⁶. Dōgen encountered this erroneous interpretation in China as well as Japan. He considered this mistake to stem from the treatment of Zen in a manner abstracted from Buddhist teaching as a whole.

Zen ethics relating to the concept of 'great compassion' can be called 'paradoxical ethics'. The notion of 'great compassion' is an intermediate paradoxical concept, because it is not conditioned on its negation. It is not the opposite of the absence of compassion, but total, unconditional acceptance. This is precisely why the culmination of Bodhisattva's practices is the 'state of cloud dharma' (Sk. *dharma-meghā bhūmi*; Chin. *fayundi*; Jpn. *hōunji*), in which Bodhisattva does not scorn anything and aspires to emancipate all suffering beings, like a cloud that sprinkles rain upon all thirsty plants, including the basest weeds¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁴ Stevens 1993: 36.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Takahashi 1983: 23.

¹⁰⁷ A reference to a parable from Murano 1974: 99.

‘Great compassion’ is inextricably linked to ‘Enlightenment’, and it cannot be demonstrated by someone who has not experienced ‘Enlightenment’. Zen practitioners should aim for ‘Enlightenment’ without devoting attention to distinguishing between good and evil, which would inevitably lead to epistemological duality. ‘Paradoxical ethics’ differs from formal ethics in that it does not establish any Ten Commandments or other moral principles – instead, it is the spirit of the law.

Zen masters were aware that teaching about overcoming the dualism of good and evil could be erroneously understood as encouragement to break all moral precepts. This is why they emphasized the necessity of abiding by Buddhist commandments and warned against committing the ‘Ten Evil Deeds’ or the ‘Five Gravest Offenses’¹⁰⁸ in their preaching to laymen. They also advised observance of Confucian ethics, which also lay at the foundation of social relations in feudal Japan.

Dōgen considered loyalty to one’s feudal lord to be consistent with Buddhist doctrine. He also stressed that there is no conflict between filial loyalty and becoming a monk, because the merits accumulated by a son-turned-monk enable emancipation not only of his parents in this incarnation, but also his parents in the six previous incarnations¹⁰⁹. According to Dōgen, everyone should try “to refrain from evil and do good” (Jpn.. *shiaku shūzen*) while keeping in mind their limitations and the relativity of the concept of good. People should behave in accordance with the teachings of Buddha and do good unto others even when such deeds are truly slight and have no lasting effects¹¹⁰. Dōgen stated that any deed whose purpose is to win praise is not a good deed. He taught: “You should do good while concealing yourself from people’s sight, but if you do something bad, admit to it and rectify the evil you have done”. He emphasized that Zen practitioners should concentrate completely on seeking the way to ‘enlightenment’ without being concerned about criticism from others, provided the practitioners are convinced they are right. They should not spend time reproaching others’ faults, because such an attitude entails entangling oneself in the duality of good and evil¹¹¹.

¹⁰⁸ The ‘Ten Evil Deeds’ (*jūaku*) are: ‘killing’ (*sesshō*), ‘stealing’ (*chūtō*), ‘adultery’ (*jain*), ‘lying’ (*mōgo*), ‘harsh words’ (*akku*), ‘uttering words which cause enmity between two or more people’ (*ryōzetzu*), ‘engaging in idle talk’ (*kigo*), ‘greed’ (*ton’yoku*), ‘anger’ (*shinni*), ‘wrong views’ (*jaken*). The ‘Five Gravest Offenses’ (*gogyaku*) are: ‘matricide’ (*setsumo*), ‘patricide’ (*setsupu*), ‘killing an arhat’ (*setsuvarakan*), ‘wounding the body of Buddha’ (*shutsubusshinketsu*), ‘causing disunity in the Buddhist order’ (*hawagōsō*).

¹⁰⁹ Dumoulin 1979: 97.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.: 98.

Hakuin Ekaku warned feudal rulers that excessive oppression of their subjects would lead to rebellion, which could result in the extinction of their clan¹¹². Some of his advice must have shocked those to whom it was addressed. For instance, he wrote a letter to Lord Nabeshima of Okayama recommending that the ruler “wash the hooves of his vassals’ horses whilst smiling”¹¹³. Some Zen masters referred to the concept of punishment in successive incarnations for bad deeds. For example, Ikkyū Sōjun said that killing causes you to be reborn in hell; lust, in the world of hungry ghosts (Jpn.. *gaki*); stupidity, in the world of animals (Jpn.. *chikushō*); anger, in the world of fighting demons (Jpn.. *ashura*) – but abiding by Buddhist moral precepts enables you to be reborn in the world of people (Jpn.. *ningen*)¹¹⁴.

The introduction of detailed monastic rules was meant to show that the freedom of ‘Enlightenment’ is not based on the permanent rejection of all principles and duties. In India, monks were itinerant, collecting alms and leading an ascetic life. In China, under the influence of local customs, monks also had to work the fields in order to satisfy their daily needs, though they did not give up the practice of collecting alms. The Fourth Patriarch, Daoxin (Jpn Dōshin, 560-651), introduced rules regulating the lives of his purported 500 pupils. The first rules regulating a monastic community are believed to have been established by Baizhang Huaihai, though the text of these rules has not survived. The oldest entirely extant set of rules regulating Zen monastic life dates back to 1113, and was brought to Japan before the end of that century¹¹⁵. Many Japanese Zen masters used Chinese instructions as models in formulating their own monastic regulations. A third of Dōgen’s *Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma* is just such a collection of detailed instructions concerning, among other things, the way monks should clean their teeth¹¹⁶. The most important rules concerned the prohibition of killing, stealing, lying, sexual relations and drinking alcohol. Numerous rules in contemporary Zen monasteries in Japan prescribe how monks should behave not only during meditation, but also while eating or when outside the monastery¹¹⁷. Although pupils had to break all the rules occasionally in order to express their ‘Enlightenment’, over time it became a tradition in the Japanese Rinzai school to limit such eccentric behaviour solely to private meetings

¹¹² Yampolsky 1971: 194.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*: 220.

¹¹⁴ Stevens 1993: 45.

¹¹⁵ Kraft 1992: 103.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Nishimura 1973.

with the master. On these occasions, the pupil could express the freedom stemming from ‘Enlightenment’ in the most shocking ways.

The complete absence of discipline in monastic life was sharply criticized, as is evident in Eisai’s comments on the Daruma school. Eisai deplored the fact that adherents of this Japanese Zen school “eat when they are hungry and rest when they are tired”¹¹⁸. The school’s founder, Nōnin, taught: “There are no precepts that you should be guided by, there is no religious practice. No lusts exist initially, everyone is enlightened from the beginning. That’s why we do not practice and do not observe rules. We eat when we are hungry, we rest when we are tired. Why recite invocations to Buddha, why make offerings, why refrain from eating fish and meat, why fast?”¹¹⁹ Eisai, a staunch supporter of monastic discipline, believed the Daruma approach led to corruption. Unfortunately, we know too little about the Daruma school. Its downfall and absorption by the Sōtō school was primarily the result of Nōnin’s failure to obtain direct confirmation of his ‘Enlightenment’ from a Chinese Zen master¹²⁰.

Ignoring all rules is incorrect from the standpoint of the ‘logic of paradox’, because it betrays an attachment to breaking rules as the antithesis of following them, in which case conceptual duality is not transcended. Eisai’s critical remarks were justified, however, only if Nōnin and his pupils did in fact believe that the way to ‘Enlightenment’ was breaking all ethical precepts.

Strict monastic discipline was also necessary to deal with down-to-earth problems that priors faced. The ban on women (including nuns) staying overnight in male monasteries was no doubt meant to insulate Zen pupils from dangerous temptations. Monastic discipline, for example, in 14th-century Daitokuji must have been in a sorry state, since Daitō Kokushi was forced to implement the following punishments: novices who failed to memorize the sutras used during the three daily ceremonies were to be deprived of their vestments and bowl (attributes of a monk), then expelled from the monastery; other transgressions were to be punished by whipping (five lashes) or deprivation of meals for an entire day; monks holding prominent positions who behaved improperly were to lose the prior’s favor forever¹²¹.

We must keep in mind that monks in monasteries where discipline was not properly enforced often led idle lives, neglecting their spiritual

¹¹⁸ Dumoulin 1990: 9.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Kraft 1963: 143.

¹²¹ Kraft 1992: 122.

development. Moreover, the majority of novices were young boys turned over to monasteries by their families despite not showing any particular religious predilections. Buddhist monasteries were important educational centers before the rise of a well-developed neo-Confucian school system. Masters often reproached monks for their love of luxury. “Do not become attached to worldly things; devote yourselves entirely to searching for the ‘Way’. Buddha taught: ‘Have for property only vestments and a bowl, and if you receive food from someone as alms, do not consume it all and share it with the needy.’ If keeping food for later is not allowed, it’s all the more blameworthy to have a fondness for worldly goods”¹²². Daitō Kokushi pointed out however, that while the rules he advised were appropriate for monastic life, they “should not be treated as the most important, are not the essence of Buddhist practice, as they do not constitute the path to ‘Enlightenment’”¹²³. Bankei Yōtaku (1622-1693), too, expelled pupils from the monastery for various transgressions, though he took back those who repented. He told higher-ranking monks to set an example for novices through their behaviour and applied the penalty of expulsion from the community, though only as a last resort¹²⁴.

Zen masters stressed that the pressure of external restrictions in monastic life should have no effect on generating internal freedom, which should be manifested in every situation. This is the sense behind the following verses: “Carrying buckets of water, toting kindling – how unfathomable, how amazing”¹²⁵.

It is thus clear that the ethics of ‘great compassion’, which goes beyond good and evil, does not mean rejection of all ethical principles recognized by society. Only those who attain ‘enlightenment’ can break all rules in the name of ‘great compassion’, which can be expressed in any form depending on the situation.

The Buddhist concept of ‘great compassion’ is often interpreted as passive identification with the downtrodden, which does nothing in a practical sense to ‘improve the world’. This view is evident, for instance, in commentary by Paul Tillich on the subject of Buddhist ethics¹²⁶. ‘Great compassion’ is clearly not linked to any specific commandments or concrete program to better the world. It can be expressed in any form depending on the situation, it does not necessitate any particular reforms of the social system. As the ‘spirit of the law’, it transcends specific ethical

¹²² Dumoulin 1979: 98.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Haske 1984: 154.

¹²⁵ Shibayama 1980: 267.

¹²⁶ Abe 1985: 183.

rules precisely because they are not immutable. Suzuki Daisetz Suzuki describes the state of the enlightened as holy and distinguishes it from a moral outlook. “A moral person will never be holy so long as he remains within the sphere of morality, which is a relative sphere. Morality is never innocent, spontaneous, unconscious of itself”¹²⁷.

Nietzsche’s words – that what is done out of love always happens beyond good and evil¹²⁸ – acquires new meaning from the standpoint of the ‘logic of paradox’. Nietzsche himself may well have sensed this meaning when he wrote: “What else is love but understanding and rejoicing in the fact that another person lives, acts, and experiences otherwise than we do? In order to bridge these opposites with joy, love must not eliminate or deny them”¹²⁹.

In this article, Nishida’s logic of paradox (logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity) has been traced in Zen masters’s teaching on ethics. I have tried to prove that only by taking into consideration the paradoxological structure of Zen discourse on ethics, can one explain the logical connection between the epistemological aspect of Enlightenment and the ethical aspect of Enlightenment. Such a paradoxological structure can also be seen in Zen masters’s admonitions which can be summarized as follows: Do not choose good or evil but at the same time do not choose evil, although the way to such a goal is not a moral discipline.

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¹²⁷ Suzuki 1952: 606-607.

¹²⁸ Nietzsche 1973: 65.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*: 110.

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Yamada Taichi's Work – The Scope of Metamorphoses of Popular Drama and Novels in the 1980s During the „Bubble Culture“

The Breakdown Between the Postwar and Post-*senjo* Periods

Many events contributed to the „chaotic energy“¹ of the 1980s which encouraged Japan's emergence from the „post-war period“ (*senjo*), a time that was both romantic and modernistic at the same time. That this kind of „change“ took place is confirmed by the increased role of „media culture,“ as well as „street culture,“ but most of all by the growth of importance of „mass culture.“ This breakdown (*danzetsu*) of the earlier, „post-war“ tendencies happened in 1984-1986, the years considered the starting point of the so-called „post-*senjo*“ period. We can assume that in 1986-1988 Japanese society passed into „*baburu bunka*“ (the bubble culture). As Hara Hiroyuki points out, this period of breakthrough and breaking off from „post-war times“ was also the time when Japanese society entered an „unknown and not necessarily happy period.“² It moved from the previously unheard of economic growth to the *bubble economy* (*baburu keizai*), and later to the „lost decade“³ of the 90s, when the recession and ominous, frightening „third page news“⁴ changed the social mood, but first of all deepened the pessimism of the Japanese, who in earlier decades got accustomed to a relatively high standard of living or at least felt that they had guaranteed lifetime employment.

How to Describe the 1980s

Undoubtedly the 80s in Japan can be described in various ways, all depending on how we select and assess particular political, social and cultural phenomena. We could concentrate on positive achievements, or stress dramatic, even tragic, events. Both were important for the Japanese nation and helped determine the state of mind of „ordinary people“ as well as that of writers and poets. But when examining individual cases, one can get the impression that the family life of communities and spiritual lives of individuals flow in separate rhythms, unconnected directly to political events. Also, the usual chronicle of events does not allow one to draw conclusions about what was most important in bringing about the future

¹ Hara 2006: 6.

² Ibid.

³ Kingston 2001: 104.

⁴ Local news printed on page 3 of four-page newspapers.

drastic changes that resulted in the crisis and breakdown of hope in everyday life of society.

The beginning and end of the 1980s were marked by tragic events: the beginning by the death of the premier Ōhira Masayoshi while performing his professional duties (June 12, 1980), and the end by the death of Emperor Hirohito on January 7, 1989, which ended the Shōwa period. Between those we note other „great events“⁵. Some of them were unfortunate, like the tragic mining accident in Yubari (1981), the aeroplane accident near Haneda airport, the New Japan Hotel fire in Tokyo, the conviction of former premier Tanaka in connection to the Lockheed corruption scandal (1983), the shooting down of a Korean Airlines passenger plane near Japan (1983), the Japan Airlines jumbo jet accident (1985), along with several volcano eruptions and earthquakes. Of course, one could also list happy or neutral events as well, such as the visit of Pope John Paul II to Japan (1981), EXPO PŌTOPIA in Kobe (1981), the technology EXPO in Tsukuba (1985), the first post-war visit by a Japanese prime minister to the Yasukuni Shrine, the opening of the new bullet-train line in northern Japan (1982), the Plaza (Hotel) Accord that raised the value of yen compared to other currencies (1985), the privatization of national railways (1987), two Nobel prizes (awarded to Fukui in 1981 and Tonegawa in 1987), the opening of the Seikan (Aomori-Hakodate) Railway Tunnel, and many others.

Among the important events of the 80s, one could also include the most watched and reviewed films (like Kurosawa's *Kagemusha* from 1980), the most important musical and sports events (including sumo results) and other achievements in numerous areas of Japanese culture.

Which events were most important? Nobody can answer that question, and it is particularly hard to objectively determine which were most important for the development of the country. The choice of events and their assessments tend to be subjective even if they are made by competent bodies, since usually the events that seem most important always pertain to a sphere to which each person belongs, in which he or she is most deeply submerged. However, results of certain actions only become evident years later, particularly in the sphere of economics and social mechanisms. Their effects also depend on outside forces and cannot be foreseen just on the basis of observation of current events. One such effect of the economic boom and the so-called „bubble economy“ hidden within it (particularly in the second half of the decade) was the recession of the early 90s. At the end of the 80s, optimism, hope, feelings of pride and even conceit

⁵ See: <http://www.001.upp.so-net.ne.jp>, accessed on 2009.03.20.

prevailed, moods best portrayed and penetrated by literature, film and radio shows.

The Importance of Popular Literary Works

I am interested in literary works created during that decade, although they do not directly reflect contemporary social, political, economic or cultural events. They grew out of a more longlasting flow of events, but mostly out of the individual existence of their creators. However, we can note the time of their publication, their reception by readers and critics. By doing this, we can establish which novels were most read and discussed and draw conclusions about the importance of literary works and readers' tastes at the time.

Traditionally we divide literature into „pure“, sometimes also called „high,“ and the other literary trend called popular literature. The writers of the former and their works bring changes into literary history, the latter, while satisfying the needs of most readers, is rejected by critics and literary historians. However, due to its narrativity and fabular content, its connection to the most famous human archetypes, and its classic form accompanied by a direct reaction to the surrounding world, as well as the theatrical representation of events presented in a simplified narrative form, popular literature is also highly valued by TV producers who use it as a basis for screenplays. In particular, historical novels have long been used by television in the production of historical dramas. Popular literature provides characters, narration and lifestyle models, as well as ideas which allow the Japanese to interact with each other and with reality as well as to come to judgments on that reality, which is why popular narratives in printed and visual form are so important.

At the same time, the division into „pure“ and „popular“ literature is not clear-cut, especially since the term „mass literature“ also functions within this cultural paradigm, although this term is often reserved for products of low literary value. Among popular novels in Japan (where the term *taishū shōsetsu* is not always deprecating) there are many ambitious works that stand out owing to their correct diagnosis of social ills and realistic descriptions of reality, which used to be within the domain of high literature.

Therefore, since the end of the 70s many so-called popular works have been included in the collections of contemporary novels. For example, in Shinchō's *Gendai Bungaku*⁶ Matsumoto Seichō's crime novels are placed

⁶ Shinchō's *Gendai Bungaku*: Contemporary Literature series (80 volumes) published by Shinchōsha in 1978-1979.

next to Kawabata Yasunari, and a few representative Japanese writers combine in their works the features of both trends: among the most famous, the names of Murakami Haruki, Murakami Ryū should be mentioned. Also for those reasons, „popular“ (also „mass“) literature deserves more serious consideration, particularly since this great trend started to take itself seriously and turned into ambitious fiction. Now it satisfies the same needs of readers that used to be satisfied for most of the 20th century by „pure“, „high“ or so-called „problem“ (devoted to exploring social problems) literature concerned mostly with searching for new means of expression, new topics or multifaceted situations. The main feature of its language is that it is rich in metaphor and imagery.

Since the 90s „popular literature“ – I am referring here mainly to novels and TV dramas – became the main paradigm in the mass culture of Japan and has been represented by such women writers as Miyabe Miyuki, Takamura Kaoru, Kirino Natsuo, and Miyao Tomiko, as well as by Ekuni Kaori, Yamada Eimi, Asada Jirō, Ishida Ira and other writers who were awarded, among others, the Naoki Sanjūgo and Yamamoto Shūgorō prizes. However, in the 80s, often called the „bubble decade“ with regards to the economic situation, and the „cultural bubble decade,“ the achievements of „pure literature“ writers (who were awarded the Akutagawa prize and many other prizes traditionally awarded to „pure“ literature) still played an important role and this trend should be characterized before we move on to popular writing. It is also worth asking whether the fact that their works were written in that decade could mean that they were somehow less valuable than works written in the 60s or 70s. Of course, we should wait a little longer before passing such value judgments, but it would be interesting to look for particular features characteristic of that decade. Let us take a closer look at that decade from the point of view of printed and, later, visual culture, which are connected by mutual influence rather than a one-sided parasitic one.

Writers and Their Works in the 80s.

In 1980, Murakami Haruki published his second book (*1973 nen no pinbōru*), and Murakami Ryū gained renown owing to his novel *Koinrokkā beibiizu* (*Coin Locker Babies*). The mood of opulence and free consumption was well expressed by Tanaka Yasuo in his novel *Nanto naku kurisutaru* (*Somehow Crystal*), the title of which became the name of the „crystal tribe“ (the Japanese yuppies). Endō Shūsaku (*Samurai – The*

*Samurai*⁷), Nakagami Kenji and Furui Yoshikichi continued to publish new works.

In the following year, Kuroi Senji published a novel called *Gunsei (Life in the Cul-De-Sac)*, Inoue Hisashi's *Kirikirijin (Kirikiri People)* appeared. Ōe Kenzaburō wrote *Rein torii o kiku onnatachi (Women Listening to a Rain Tree)*. Inoue Yasushi, Haniya Yutaka and Oda Minoru also came up with new novels. Among women writers, the most noticeable are Tsushima Yūko (*Yama o hashiru onna – Woman Running in the Mountains*), Hayashi Kyōko, Tomioka Taeko and Miyao Tomiko.

In 1982, Murakami Haruki published *Hitsuji o meguru bōken (A Wild Sheep Chase)*, and Maruya Saiichi a novel called *Uragoe de utae kimigayo (Sing Kimigayo in a falsetto)*. Apart from Tsushima Yūko, other women writers who should be mentioned are Enchi Fumiko, Sata Ineko, Ōba Minako, and Hayashi Mariko.

In 1983, Ōe Kenzaburō, still active during this decade, published *Atarashii hito yo mezameyo (Rouse Up O Young Men of the New Age!)*, and books by Nakagami Kenji, Kaga Otohiko and Minakami Tsutomu appeared. Tsushima Yūko published *Hi no kawa no hotori (On the Banks of the Fire River)*. Kurahashi Yumiko, Ōhara Tomie, Tomioka Taeko, Mori Yōko and Kanai Mieko continued producing new works.

Notable titles published in 1984 included a new book by Abe Kōbō, *Hakobune Sakura Maru (The Ark Sakura)*, and the next part of the novel *Shirei (or Shiryō)* (*Ghosts of the Dead*) by Haniya Yutaka. New works by Ōba Minako, Setouchi Harumi, Ishimure Michiko, Kanai Mieko, Saegusa Kazuko and Masuda Mizuko (*Jiyūjikan – Free Time*) were also published in that year.

In 1985, an ambitious work by Murakami Haruki titled *Sekai no owari to hādoboirudo wandārando (Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World)* and *Yoru no hikari ni owarete (Pursued by the Lights of the Night)* by Tsushima Yūko appeared. Yamada Eimi with *Bedo taimu aizū (Bedtime Eyes)* also piqued readers' interest.

In 1986, a novel by Endō Shūsaku called *Skyandaru (Scandal)* was published. Other works that should be mentioned include *Shinguru seru (Single Cell)* by Masuda Mizuko and *Amanonkoku ōkanki (Travel to Amanon)* by Kurahashi Yumiko.

The following year, 1987, saw the publication of Murakami Ryū's *Sixty-Nine*, Murakami Haruki's *Noruei no mori (Norwegian Wood)*, *Natsukashii toshi e no tegami (A Letter to the Years I Miss)* by Ōe Kenzaburō and Yoshimoto Banana's *Kicchin (Kitchen)*.

⁷ Bold type: published in Polish.

In 1988, Murakami Haruki's *Dance, Dance, Dance* and Yoshimoto Banana's *Tsugumi* were published. Other works worthy of attention included books by Endō Shūsaku, Ōe Kenzaburō, Yamada Eimi, Masuda Mizuko, and Kisaki Satoko.

New works published in 1989 include *Jinsei no shinseki* (A Relative of Life; published as *An Echo of Heaven*) by Ōe, *Oni no ki* (Devil's Tree) by Masuda Mizuko as well as titles by Ōba Minako, Ōhara Tomie, and Saegusa Kazuko.

New novels and stories by Kaikō Takeshi, Ogawa Kunio, Furui Yoshikichi, Ōe Kenzaburō, Hayashi Kyōko, Tomioka Taeko, Kakuta Mitsuyo, Kōno Taeko, Yamada Eimi, Masuda Mizuko, Ogawa Yōko and Ogino Anna were published in 1990.

Bestsellers and Prizes

During that decade, the writer who received the most prizes was Shiba Ryōtarō, whose historical writing has been read and eagerly watched on TV in Japan since the 60s. At the beginning of the 80s the novel *Kō to Ryūhō* (Xiang Yu and Liu Bang, 1980) about unrest in Han-dynasty China became a bestseller. The following year, *Madogiwa no Totto chan* (Totto in the Window), an autobiographical novel by the actress Kuroyanagi Tetsuko about her childhood, gained great popularity. Second place went to the previously mentioned *Nantonaku kurisutaru* (Somehow Crystal) by Tanaka Yasuo.

In 1982, two books generated a great deal of interest: a documentary novel *Akuma no hōshoku* (Satanic feast) by Morimura Seiichi and *Tōge no gunzō* (Group from the Pass) by the intellectual and politician Sakaiya Taiichi. In the coming years we need to underline the importance of the „mass“ literature of Watanabe Jun'ichi (*Ai no gotoku* – Like Love, 1984) and Akagawa Jirō (*Mikeneko hōmuzu no bikkuribako* – Tortoiseshell Cat Holmes's Box of Surprises, 1984). In 1982, *Tenshōin Atsuhime* (Princess Atsuhime, also known as *Tenshōin*) by Miyao Tomiko was one of the year's biggest bestsellers. It tells the story of a girl from the Satsuma clan who becomes a shogun's wife and about whom a serial drama was produced and shown in 2008. A new work by Shiba Ryōtarō titled *Hakone no saka* (Hills of Hakone) also came out.

In 1985, *Toyotomi Hideyoshi*, a novel by the previously mentioned Sakaiya Taiichi became a bestseller together with *Sanada Taiheiki* (The Chronicle of the Great Peace of Sanada Family) by Ikenami Shōtarō.

In 1986, Watabane Jun'ichi wrote another bestseller – *Keshin* (Incarnation). It was joined on the bestseller list by *Chika kakumei* (Revolution of the Intellect) by the previously mentioned Sakaiya Taichi.

It is during that decade that a book of poetry, *Sarada kinenbi* (Salad Anniversary, 1987) made it for the first time onto the bestseller list. Murakami Haruki's *Norwegian Wood* was on the list next to Watanabe Jun'ichi's *Wakarenu riyū* (Why We Can't Part). In the following year, Murakami's bestseller *Dance, dance, dance* was published, and in 1989 Yoshimoto Banana's *Kicchin* and *Tsugumi* reached the top two spots on the bestseller list. In 1990, a new novel by Watanabe Jun'ichi *Utakata* (Passing Moments) and *Ren'airon* (Theory of Love) by Saimon Fumi, a well-known essayist and manga artist, made it into the top ten.

During the economic boom of 1986-1991, later called the bubble economy, Murakami Haruki, Murakami Ryū, Yoshimoto Banana and Watanabe Jun'ichi gained great popularity. Although Endō Shūsaku, Ōe Kenzaburō, Abe Kōbō, Tsushima Yūko or Nakagami Kenji kept writing, their readership dwindled. However, owing to higher honoraria they all continued to do well financially.

Another characteristic phenomenon of that period was the airing of the serial drama *Dokuganryū Masamune* (Masamune, a One-Eyed Dragon, 1987) which contributed to the popularity of Sendai, a city which became a tourist attraction after the North bullet train line was opened. Sendai increased its infrastructure, organized many events related to the TV series on the topic of Date Masamune, a local hegemonic ruler of old times.

Other historical dramas popular at the time included *Shishi no jidai* (1980), *Onna taikōki* (1881), *Tōge no gunzō* (1982), *Tokugawa Ieyasu* (1983), *Sanga moyu* (1984), *Haru no hajū* (1985), and *Takeda Shingen* (1988) among others.

At the same time, the genre of TV family drama was developing. After her tragic death in 1981, the popularity of Mukōda Kuniko grew, but it was Yamada Taichi who really transformed Japanese home drama. As the author of books and TV plays popular in the 60s, 70s and 80s, he played a crucial role in the development of family dramas.

The importance of Yamada in the Development of TV Dramas in the Seventies

Yamada Taichi was born in Tokyo in 1934. He majored in Japanese studies at Waseda University and later worked for the Ōfuna Studios of Shōchiku, where he was an assistant to the director Kinoshita Keisuke. In 1965 he resigned from Shōchiku and continued as a freelance screenplay writer.

Recognition of his talent came early. He received many awards, mostly for TV dramas, including TV series such as *Pan to akogare* (A Bread and My Dream, 1969), *Sorezore no aki* (Pieces of Autumn), 1973, and *Ensen chizu* (Tokyo Suburbia, 1979)⁸.

Novels and TV Dramas

Yamada paid a lot of attention to the language of his screenplays. Many dramas were based on previously serialized novels, or he published novels after the TV series were broadcasted. Among those written almost at the same time (although it is believed that the screenplays were written first, and the novels followed) is *Ai yori aoku* (Deeper than Indigo, 1973) which consisted of 312 episodes (broadcast over 52 weeks) as a series of televised short stories, or a so-called serialized TV novel. Chūōkōronsha's novel was published in 1972 and 1973.

Another example of this genre is *Kishibe no arubamu*⁹ (The Album on the Shore) which was serialized in „Tōkyō Shinbun“ from December 15, 1976 to May 27th, 1977 – Yamada's second serialized novel after *Ai yori aoku*. Less than a month after publication, TBS started broadcasting the TV series. The third example is *Oka no ue no himawari* (Sunflower on the Hill, 1993). First the novel was born, and later the TV drama. Such a relation between screenplays and popular novels is also evident in the works of Mukōda Kuniko, whose screenplays became a basis for novels even without her participation – namely after her death.

Family in Times of Rapid Economic Growth

In the two most important TV series of the 70s, *Sorezore no aki* and *Kishibe no arubamu*, Yamada Taichi presented the life of a Japanese family in many, repetitive, ordinary and trivial scenes, such as sending the husband off to work and welcoming him back home, making meals, preparing baths, cleaning, knitting or part-time jobs done by the wife. There are also scenes from cafes and bars which very aptly illustrate the everyday life of a middle class street in Tokyo's suburbs. But hidden from the city's bright lights, tidy house, reputable company in a period of rapid economic growth lies a murky flow of suspicions, anger, misunderstandings and lies. The author shows another reality invisible from the outside, which is rarely seen by casual observers of the „Japanese way of life“.

⁸ Hirahara 1994: 53, 62,104.

⁹ Yamada 1985.

In family dramas, Yamada shows the mental scenery of human loneliness in the years of economic success. He sheds light on the internal reality of the Japanese and by doing so destroys the framework and style of earlier home dramas, where the unchanging functions of family members were shown as the basis of social order, framed by optimism and trust in the better future of one's children going through the educational process.

Images of Japan in the Writing of Yamada in the 80s.

The 1980s were an exceptional period in Yamada's life, marked by many works highly appreciated by viewers and critics, particularly the TV dramas which even now play an important role in the history of Japanese television. The decade began with a serialized drama called *Shishi no jidai* (Lion Age) on the transformations of the Meiji period. The show was broadcast by NHK all year long in 51 installments. It was awarded the Annual Television Award as The Best TV Show of the year. Yamada received the same award in the following year for the 14-part series *Omoidezukuri* (Precious Moments, 1981, TBS). He also continued working on a series *Otokotachi no tabiji* (The Roads Men Travel) he had started in 1976 and wrote the play *Senjō wa haruka ni narite* (The Battlefield in the Distance, 1982, NHK), which was awarded the Broadcasting Cultural Fund Award. The same was the case of the drama *Nagaraeba* (When We Are Old, 1982, NHK), which was awarded a prize at an art festival organized by the Ministry of Education's Culture Department.¹⁰

Another hugely popular series was the 12-part *Sōshun suketchibukku* (Sketch Book of Early Spring, 1983, Fuji TV), and *Yūgurete* (At Dusk, 1983, broadcast in six installments) as well as *Fuzoroi no ringotachi* (Assorted Apples, Season 1 –10 episodes, 1983, Season 2 –13 episodes, 1985, Season 3 –11 episodes, 1990, TBS), which were all awarded several prizes each. *Nihon no omokage* (Out of the East, 1984) also received several awards.

During the 1980s three of Yamada Taichi's novels were published, namely *Owari ni mita machi* (The Last Town We Saw – Apocalypse, 1984), *Tobu yume o shibaraku minai* (I Haven't Dreamt of Flying for a While, 1985) and *Ijintachi to no natsu* (Strangers, 1987).

Kuniko Mukōda Award

In 1982, the Kuniko Mukōda Award was established for outstanding achievement in television screenplay writing. It was a way of

¹⁰ See: <http://www.yamadataichi.com/bio./html>, accessed on 2009.03.20.

commemorating the writer who died tragically in 1981 and the importance of screenplay writers in audiovisual media. Earlier, in February 1982, Mukōda Kuniko was posthumously awarded the 33rd Broadcast Cultural Award.

Two years later, Yamada Taichi received the Mukoda Kuniko Award for the screenplay of *Nihon no omokage. Rafukadio Hān no sekai* (Out of the East. The World of Lafcadio Hearn), a four-part drama produced and broadcast by NHK. This award was an important sign marking the change of attitude towards the role of literature being used in TV shows and an expression of recognition of Yamada Taichi, an original playwright, screenplay writer and novelist for many years. Yamada was already a well-known screenplay writer for the TV theatre of Kinoshita Keisuke and a show called *Kinoshita Keisuke Hour* on TBS at the end of the 60s and beginning of the 70s. In the 70s he wrote many screenplays for TV series, among which *Kishibe no arubamu* (The Album on the Shore, 1977) deserves particular mention since it reinforced his achievement in modernizing TV drama about Japanese family life.

During the extremely active and creative period of the 80s, Yamada Taichi also wrote a series of dramas on ageing such as *Nagaraeba* (When We Are Old, 1982), *Fuyugamae* (When Winter Comes, 1985) and *Kesa no Aki* (An Early Autumn, 1987).

Strangers in the *Sketch Book of Early Spring*

The title of *Sketch Book of Early Spring*¹¹ foreshadows a poetic vision of the New Year Season and doesn't give any hint as to the topic of the work or its main problems, particularly since no character in the play makes any sketches in a sketch book during "early spring" or more concretely in the first month of the New Year. But there is no denying that the events take place during the New Year holidays, when younger children have more free time, and graduating high school seniors are preparing for college entrance exams. Already in the last weeks of the preceding year, the parents, for their part, are trying to spend more time on family matters and social life. They sum up their achievements of the previous year and hope for a better new year. During this peaceful period, the family life is interrupted by a "strange" man who seems detached from ordinary, everyday reality. He arrives from the past. At the beginning the stranger is identified as the "man from the Western (that is: European) house." Therefore, the title is enigmatic but attracts attention, encourages the viewer to watch the play, although it doesn't say anything about the serious

¹¹ Yamada 2003.

problems in the life of the Japanese family portrayed therein. Incidentally, most of Yamada's plays have such metaphorical and enigmatic titles.

Most of the events of "Sketch Book of Early Spring" take place in the dining room/kitchen (unlike older shows where it used to be the tea room – *cha no ma*). Here the white-collar worker father and his family meet. Members of the family talk and hold discussions. They express themselves freely and talk about their views on current topics. We get the impression that the dining room/kitchen has turned into a courtroom. There are no scenes of crying or screaming, although the father often raises his voice. Tear-jerking scenes (*shuraba*) characteristic of earlier shows like *Terauchi Kantarō ikka* (The Family of Terauchi Kantarō, 1974 written by Mukōda Kuniko) are practically non-existent. This is not really surprising, given that Yamada Taichi presents an educated family while Terauchi Kantarō was a stone mason.

The Threat to Ordinary Family Life – the Role Played by a Trickster

The show presents a family of four. The father, Mochizuki Seiichi, is a department manager in a small bank, the mother, Miyako, takes care of the house and works part-time in a flower store. Kazuhiko, the son, is a senior in high school preparing for college exams and the daughter, Yoshiko, is a junior high-school student.

The ordinary course of life is disturbed by the appearance of Sawada Tatsuhiko, a man who lives in a Western-style house. A young woman, Akemi, also appears and becomes a go-between, connecting the world of an ordinary family and Sawada, who lives an extraordinary life. The viewer, like in a mystery novel, only gradually finds out who the man is and how he lives. Facts from the past slowly come to light and disturb the family's peaceful life. The emotional life of the son in particular gets transformed, when Sawada (who turns out to be his natural father suffering from cancer and not intending to undergo treatment) accuses him of trivial behavior. The man barges into a quiet home like a tragic trickster and viciously attacks everybody belonging to the "trivial world."¹²

He is a man expecting death. Sawada Tatsuhiko, who Yamada attired in the robe of terminal illness, has the courage to express anger against the times of which the Mochizukis are typical representatives. Yamada concentrates on subtly delineating events, on the everyday worries of people who cannot live otherwise than in an ordinary, or even trivial way. They are contrasted with characters who attempt to live zealously. He ties them together at the same time, sending a message that we need to think

¹² Hirahira Hideo 1994: 92-102.

through the situation of a Japanese family in the 1980s. Yamada told the director of Chinjikai Theater, Kimura, that he himself lived rather ambiguously and that was why in the play he expressed an aversion towards himself, not only to a middle-class environment. During the Meiji period, expressions such as “civilization” or “civilizing oneself” were trendy and people lived under pressure of the times forcing them to compete with each other. And although it is believed that “civilizing gave some a kind of happiness, or maybe it only seems that way, when we slide on the surface of events of those times. In fact, those were barbarian times when people were forced into a pitiful state. “I believe that it is quite similar nowadays,” wrote Kimura Kōichi when talking about Yamada’s play. “I like people from Yamada’s dramas, many of them are utopians who are learning to walk in a funny way, but they still don’t know where to go.”¹³

On Student Life in an Education-first Society – Assorted Apples

Fuzoroi no ringotachi (Assorted Apples, 1983, 1985, 1991, 1997) was a series about the life of students of second- and third-tier schools that stirred great interest, particularly among young viewers. The title is a metonymy describing people who were rejected, sorted out from amongst first-class apples, like rejected products (*ochikobore*), rejected from the competition for a position in society. The main characters of the show belong to a lower class, they don’t like to answer questions like: „Where do you go to school?“ which became the title of the first episode of Season 1: *Gakkō wa doko desu ka*“. And it was an important question during those times: times of a developed society placing great importance on education (*gakureki shakai*) and paying special attention to which school one went to, since the best ones opened doors to future employment in the most famous firms and institutions. In Season 1 of Assorted Apples (1983) we meet young people: we see how these students behave, we observe their habits, the way they have fun, their first loves. Female students from a nursing school, placed at the very bottom of the prestigious school list, play an important role here. In Season 2 the main characters finish college – the first episode is titled „Where do you work?“ – and become members of the bread-winning class. In Season 3 they get married, later divorce and in Season 4 they are in their thirties and are again at a crossroads during the economic recession.

Images of Japan and the World of Lafcadio Hearn

The TV drama *Nihon no omokage Rafukadio Hān no sekai* depicts the life

¹³ Afterword to Yamada 1983: 653.

of Lafcadio Hearn, one of the most famous popularizers of Japanese culture, Yamada Taichi returns to images of Japan from the end of the 19th century. The show is divided into four parts with the following titles: „From New Orleans,“ „The Capital of the Land of Gods,“ „Shining at Night,“ and „Literary Episodes about Life and Death.“ In the first part, a man shows Hearn the room of his late daughter, whose ghost appears as well. It takes place in March 1884. At that time Hearn is interested in ghosts and writes about this topic for the „Times Democrat“ in New Orleans. However, the article doesn't meet with his boss's approval and he is told to write about the world exhibition taking place in that city. In the second scene of the show, two Japanese - Hattori Shingo and his assistant, Nishimura Shigenari - are in a bar watching a lonely Hearn drink. Hattori says:

This was the first time I saw Lafcadio Hearn. In a small bar on Bourbon Street. I was touched by his loneliness.¹⁴

When the drunken Hearn falls on the floor, Hattori tells his assistant to take care of him. Later, in another scene, Hattori suggest to Hearn a private visit to the Japanese section of the world exhibiton, which is how the connection of Hearn to Japan was created and where his fascination with Japanese crafts began.

In the second part of the show, the time and place change: it is the 23rd year of the Meiji period, or 1890. Owing to the support of director Hattori from the Ministry of Education in Tokyo, Hearn signs a contract to be an English teacher in a Middle School in Matsue with a salary of 100 yen a month. The Matsue episode opens one of the most important periods in his life, where he was charmed by the sounds of Japan. When Hearn later catches a cold in a traditional „paper house,“ he becomes somewhat disillusioned with Japan. Relations with many Japanese become troublesome. The family he lives with does not like it that he is served by Setsu (Koizumi), although Hearn earns their keep. The cold becomes a pretext for resigning the Matsue job and Hearn moves to Kumamoto, where he expects it to be warmer – not to mention that the salary is twice as high. However, he is disappointed: Kumamoto is not warmer, the scenery of the city being rebuilt after the Satsuma Rebellion (*seinan sensō*, 1877) and the accompanying noise are the reasons that he feels that the Japan he loved was left behind in Matsue, in spite of his loneliness there. The move to Kumamoto is presented in part three, but a few important

¹⁴ Yamada 2002: 13.

scenes still take place in Matsue (a scene at a shrine where a priest does not want to sell Lafcadio and Setsu a love doll (*enmusubibina*), scenes depicting the poverty of a former samurai, the wedding of Lafcadio and Setsu, farewell to Matsue and first impressions of Kumamoto). Part four shows the birth of Hearn's son, Kazuo in 1893. Later Hearn leaves Kumamoto, in 1894, and departs for Kobe to work for a magazine for foreigners. His interest in Western culture returns and an invitation to teach at the University of Tokyo for 400 yen a month follows. At that point Hearn has already written six books.

In this drama Yamada skillfully depicts how Hearn experiences the beauty of traditional Japan and his disappointment with the direction of the changes that are taking place there. Particularly interesting are scenes of Hearn's arrival in Matsue, a town located in the mystical land of Izumo, and the depiction of Hearn's sensitivity to the sounds of the morning. Ghost stories told by Koizumi Setsu, Hearn's future wife, and circumstances and problems related to Hearn's marriage also play an important role. Through the members of his own Japanese family and other teachers in the schools, Hearn meets the intellectual circles and ordinary people of those times, he notices the differences in the way the Japanese bourgeoisie think.

Through Hearn's words and actions, the author seems to express his own opinion about the modernization of Japan. Yamada thinks that during the modernization period the Japanese sensibility formed in earlier centuries was dispersed and he wonders what else was lost in the process. He feels that the Japanese must have lost some of the darkness, some of the irrational, incomprehensible things which constituted Japanese spirituality. Such traditional ways of thinking were repressed during the Meiji period, a period described in historical works and textbooks in such a positive light as an era of recognition of rationality, science, development and contempt for inefficiency.

In this drama the values of old Japan are represented by Nishida Sentarō, a teacher at Matsue's Middle School, and Hearn's friend. At the opposite pole is Sakuma Shinkyō, an English teacher at a Kumamoto high school, a rationalist and proponent of modernization in Japan. They are both representative characters of the era of Hearn's stay in Japan, when contradictions caused by modernization and competition were very strong. In the show, Hearn anxiously foresees the future of the country undergoing changes he cannot accept. It should be mentioned that Yamada wrote a theatre play on this topic in 1993 called *Nihon no omokage* (Out of the

East) which was staged by Chijinkai Theatre and directed by Kimura Kōichi¹⁵.

On Ageing and Death

In the 1980s, Yamada also wrote several touching plays about old age in which he presented ageing as an important contemporary social problem in Japan. Four of them (all shown by NHK and featuring excellent actors like Ryū Chishū, Uno Jūkichi, Sugimura Haruko and Yoshinaga Sayuri) should be mentioned: *Nagaraeba* (When We Are Old, 1982), *Fuyugamae* (When Winter Comes, 1985), *Kesa no aki* (An Early Autumn, 1987)¹⁶ and *Haru made no matsuri* (Until Spring Comes, 1989).

Nagaraeba is a one-part drama in which the author refers to the tale of the Obasuteyama. The protagonist is Ryūkichi, a craftsman who carves *ranma* (decorative windows). He becomes a problem for the family when they move to Toyama from Nagoya because he has to leave his wife behind in a Nagoya hospital. Another character of an old man is shown in the last scene of *Fuyugamae*. The protagonist, Keisaku, whose wife died six years earlier, sets out north to look for a place to commit suicide. He doesn't want to be a burden to anybody, doesn't want to „live like a piece of trash in a hospital or with his children...“ When he meets another lonely old man he agrees to prepare for winter with him. In spite of the impending tragedy the drama has a kind and bright note to it, a note of peace for the old protagonists, people who have lost their will to live, but will try to live through one more winter.

Kesa no aki portrays an old couple who meet after having separated 27 years earlier because of the terminal illness of their son who is over fifty. After he dies they separate again. Everybody goes back to their life, but it turns out that their son, Ryūichi, through his illness caused change to the normal flow of events, like a trickster. Thanks to him his father, Kōzō, and his mother, Taki, make peace with each other. It may have been too late, but at least this reconciliation and forgiveness gives them hope and meaning for the last few years of their lives.

Conclusion

The characters in Yamada's dramas are ordinary people, often helpless in everyday life. He observes how they act at home or in social relations. He recreates human dramas, taking on an accepting attitude, understanding their whims and fantasies. He carefully shows the relations of his

¹⁵ Yamada 2005.

¹⁶ Yamada 1994 (the full collection includes: *Nagaraeba*, *Fuyugamae* and *Haru made no matsuri*).

characters to society, raises many social and moral themes, particularly the most important educational problems of the Japanese family in a changing consumer society. However, his characters do not engage in politics. Their lives flow according to their own rhythm, unrelated to important events of that decade.

The plots of his dramas are relatively monotonous, without exultations or dramatic waves. But his characters carry in their hearts a wealth of emotions, contradictory feelings which result in verbal explosions. Their statements are often naïve, seemingly immature, provoking viewers, making them doubt and question. Maybe that lack of distance, the great familiarity between the drama and the viewers, is the cause of steady recognition and popularity of Yamada in Japan.

It is worth mentioning that Yamada Taichi wrote the above-mentioned screenplays during the growing popularity of the comical paradigm, particularly on Fuji television. Other TV series that gained recognition among viewers during that time included: the educational series *3 nen B kumi no Kimpachi Sensei* (Teacher Kimpachi From Grade 3B, 1980), *Kinyōbi no tsumatachi e* (To Wives on Friday, 1983-1985) about the lives of families in new residential areas (near Tama Centā Eki), a comical *Danjo shichinin natsu monogatari* (Summer Story of Seven Men and Women, 1986), *Tōkyō rabusutōrii* (Tokyo Love Story, 1991), a show based on the *manga* by Saimon Fumi or *Kita no kuni kara* (From the North, 1981-2002, Fuji TV), based on a screenplay by the renowned playwright Kuramoto Sō.

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**Ambassador Tadeusz Romer.
His Role in Polish-Japanese Relations (1937-1941)**

Tadeusz Romer (1894-1978) is one of the most important figures in the history of Polish diplomacy as well as the history of Polish-Japanese relations. He was the first and only ambassador of the Polish Republic in Tokyo before World War II, a position he held during a very difficult time, from 1937 to 1941. It was a tragic period for Poland, which was occupied by Germany and the Soviet Union from 1939 and saw its government forced into exile. By 1937, Japan was already conducting a full-scale war against China and preparing for a war against the United States and Great Britain, which would necessitate a change of allies.

I have already written about Tadeusz Romer several times¹ while discussing various topics on the history of Polish-Japanese relations, which I have researched for years. Now I would like to comprehensively discuss his most important activities in Japan. Romer played a very important role in building and then maintaining friendly relations between the two countries up until 1941, despite the war in Europe. He deserves credit for finalizing the process of transforming the diplomatic legations into embassies and normalizing relations between Poland and Manchukuo, the puppet state set up by Japan but never recognized by the League of Nations. He established the Polish Press Bureau in the Far East for the purpose of conducting propaganda in connection with Poland's increased interest in Japan stemming from the outbreak of war. He organized aid for Poles deported deep within the USSR, founded the Polish Committee to Aid War Victims and helped refugees from Poland, mainly Jews who fled Europe to escape the Holocaust. He also looked after them in Shanghai, after the Polish embassy in Tokyo was shut down. His efforts led to the establishment of the Polish Mutual Aid Society in Japan, which looked after Polish citizens who remained in the country following the official closure of the diplomatic post in Japan.

The most important sources of information about Romer's activities in Japan are the collections of documents: *Diplomatic Activities 1913-1975*, vol. 1: *Japan (1937-1940)*, vol. 2: *Japan (1940-1941)* (Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa; hereinafter referred to as "TRDAJ"), documents from the Polish Institute, and the General Sikorski Museum in London. The

¹ The first version of this paper was Pałasz-Rutkowska (in print). Also see: Pałasz-Rutkowska 1998: 112-127, 155-168; Pałasz-Rutkowska, Romer 1996: 119-140, 154-176.

quantity of these documents is amazingly high, as well as their reliability, thoroughness and detail. In spite of the ambassador's numerous duties at the mission in Tokyo, he regularly submitted detailed reports to his superiors at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – in Warsaw up to September 1939, then in Paris and finally in London, where the Polish government-in-exile settled. I also obtained important information from Tadeusz Romer's cousin, Andrzej T. Romer, and held a very interesting conversation with the ambassador's daughter, Teresa Romer, who in 2007 shared very private memories of her family's stay in Tokyo with me.

A Brief Biography

Tadeusz Romer was born on December 6, 1894 in Antonosz, in Kovyenskaya gubernya, Russia (currently the Kaunas region of Lithuania) into a Polish landed aristocratic family with patriotic traditions.² He studied law and political science at the University of Lausanne, where he obtained a Master's degree in Political Science in 1917. In 1915-1917 he was secretary of the Committee to Aid War Victims in Poland. In 1917, in Paris, he became the personal secretary of Roman Dmowski (1864-1939), president of the Polish National Committee, which represented Polish causes at international forums and strove to bring about recognition of Poland's independence. Together with Dmowski, he took part in the Paris peace conference that ended World War I.

In July 1919, Romer was appointed first secretary of the Polish legation in France. In 1921-1927 he held various positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw, including head of the Western Section in the Political-Economic Department (1925-1926). In 1928, he was named counselor to the legation in Rome, then assumed the post of ambassador there a year later, which he held until 1935. He spent the next two years as envoy to Portugal. From there, he left for the Far East, taking over the Polish mission in Tokyo in 1937 and remaining in the post until 1941, the period which is the subject of this paper. After the closure of the Polish embassy in Japan in late October 1941, Romer moved to Shanghai as Poland's special mission ambassador to the Far East. In mid-August 1942, when Polish diplomatic personnel were to be evacuated from China under an exchange of diplomats, Romer entrusted Polish refugee affairs to the Executive Board of the Union of Poles in China. Then, starting in autumn 1942, he held the crucial post of ambassador to the USSR, trying to

² An interesting exhibit about Romer was opened in 2006 in the Jan Paderewski Museum of Polish Emigration in Warsaw (authors: Katarzyna Szrodt, Małgorzata Dzieduszycka-Ziemilska); an abbreviated version was also shown in Japan, in the Polish embassy in Tokyo (April 2008).

stabilize bilateral relations and to take care of Polish citizens in that country. He managed, among other things, to obtain permission to evacuate 600 Polish children and the families of Polish soldiers who had not left together with General Anders' army. However, relations with the USSR were turbulent (due to the question of Poland's eastern borders and other issues) and were broken off in April 1943 after the Germans had discovered the mass graves of Polish officers at Katyń, and Poland demanded an investigation from the Soviets.

In May, Romer traveled to Teheran as the Polish plenipotentiary to the Middle East, and then from July 1943 to November 1944 he was the minister of foreign affairs of the Polish government-in-exile in London. Afterwards, he emigrated with his family to Canada. In May 1945 the war ended in Europe, and several months later the main states of the anti-Nazi alliance recognized the Soviet-backed Provisional Government of National Unity as the official government of Poland, thereby withdrawing recognition for the London-based government. Poland fell into the Soviet sphere of influence.

Tadeusz Romer never returned to Poland. He became a lecturer, then professor of French literature and culture at McGill University. But he continued to devote a great deal of his time to Polish affairs. In 1963-1978 he served as director of the Polish Institute of Arts and Science in Canada. He held many other posts and continued to work for the Polish community in Canada. He died on March 23, 1978, leaving his wife, Zofia Wańkiewiczówna, and three daughters.

In Japan

Tadeusz Romer was appointed a "special envoy and plenipotentiary minister of the Republic of Poland to the government of the Japanese Empire" by a decree of President Ignacy Mościcki (1867-1946) on February 1, 1937. Amidst the increasingly tense international situation in Europe, Polish minister of foreign affairs, Józef Beck (1894-1944), sought to maintain the country's neutrality, particularly in relation to its neighbours Germany and the USSR. Poland looked upon Japan (a country traditionally friendly toward it) and formulated its foreign policy toward Tokyo through the prism of its policy toward these two powerful neighbors. But Romer also knew that:

It's understandable, according to the old Polish saying, that the neighbor of our neighbor is our natural /.../ friend, because we can have many interests in common. And in fact Poland and

Japan, despite the enormous distance, despite the enormous difference in civilization and culture, have common interests/.../ mainly visible in general staff operations and military preparation.³

Raising the Legations of Japan and Poland to the Rank of Embassies

When Romer took charge of the Polish legation in Tokyo on April 26, 1937, he knew he would soon be promoted to the role of ambassador.⁴ Talks concerning elevation of the legations in Tokyo and Warsaw to embassy status probably began in early 1936. The talks were initiated by the Japanese, for whom Poland was attractive mainly due to its traditionally anti-Soviet policy and its geographical location between Germany and the USSR. Also important for Japan was Poland's support at the League of Nations, particularly in the matter of the Sino-Japanese conflict.⁵ The Polish side also wanted the establishment of embassies. Prestige was a consideration – Japan was the only major power in which Poland did not have an embassy. But political motives were more important – Poland could be more certain of receiving help from Japan in negotiations with Germany as well as the USSR in the event of a conflict with these countries.

Romer wrote on the matter to Minister of Foreign Affairs Beck on October 5, 1937:

On my way to minister Hirota [Kōki, 1878-1948; prime minister 1936-1937; EPR] on September 9, I took into consideration the fact that the moment was unusually propitious politically for obtaining the Japanese government's consent to establish embassies, since he must have been particularly interested in your friendly caretaking of Japanese interests in Geneva. /.../. [Hirota] declared that he had funds in the ministry's budget for the Warsaw embassy as of October 1 and wished to definitely finalize the matter at that time. To seal the deal, I proposed issuing a joint press release in Warsaw and Tokyo, to which Hirota eagerly assented.⁶

³ Pałasz-Rutkowska, Romer 1996: 121.

⁴ Japan recognized independent Poland on March 6, 1919 – Poles were notified thereof on March 22. This meant the official initiation of diplomatic relations. The Polish legation commenced operations in Tokyo in August 1920, and the Japanese in Warsaw in May 1921.

⁵ See in particular: Pałasz-Rutkowska 1998: 113-114.

⁶ R.354/37; TRDAJ vol. I.

Romer was promoted to the rank of ambassador on October 1, 1937, and on November 2 presented his credentials from President Ignacy Mościcki to Emperor Hirohito (1901-1989). As an ambassador he had to devote his attention to many important issues that were becoming increasingly difficult due to the development of events in the world at the time.

The Issue of Poland's Inclusion in the Anti-Comintern Pact

Japan and Germany gradually grew closer from the mid-1930s as a result of Japan's deepening pariah status on the international arena. This was due to Japan's expansionist foreign policy, upon which it embarked at the start of the decade, first attacking Manchuria (1931), then China (1937). After Japan left the League of Nations in 1933 because the world body refused to recognize the puppet state of Manchukuo, Tokyo began to seek new allies. Another motive was fear of the USSR's increasingly stronger position in the world and the possibility of conflict with it. On November 25, 1936 Japan signed the so-called Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany, to which Italy became a signatory on November 6, 1937. Officially, the Pact was directed against communism and the Communist International, but a secret clause clearly stated that it was aimed at the Soviet Union.⁷

The Japanese government, which was eager to find allies and aware that Poland had a friendly disposition toward Japan and was opposed to communism, began efforts to include it in the Anti-Comintern Pact. These efforts intensified toward the end of 1937, after the outbreak of war with China and the signing of the non-aggression treaty between the USSR and China. The Polish government adopted a pro-Japanese stance at the forum of the League of Nations, as Poland wanted Japan to assume the role of mediator in the event of conflict between Poland and Germany. However, Polish foreign minister Beck was opposed to joining any block, in line with his policy of maintaining a balance between the West and East. Ambassador Romer proceeded in accordance with Beck's instructions, as the following passage from his correspondence (November 26, 1937) indicates:

I distanced myself fairly categorically and completely unambiguously from all speculation about Poland's participation in any ideological block /.../. In order to counter tendencies to attribute to us the role of object or docile tool of other countries' interests in international relations, I strongly emphasized that the Polish government has and retains in this matter /.../ complete

⁷ Gelberg 1958 vol. 2: 437-438.

freedom of judgment and maneuver. /.../ Poland is combating this plotting [by the Comintern] domestically on its own in a determined and effective way. Nevertheless, its external position dictates that the Polish government in reference to its own role in this area adopts an understandable restraint, and this among other reasons explains [the Polish government's] firm decision to refrain from participating in any blocks. Min. Hirota assured me in his reply that the Japanese government well understands and completely appreciates the motives of Polish policy in this area.⁸

An agreement in the aforementioned matter was never reached, though the two countries continued to maintain friendly relations. Japan was interested in Poland's support in the League of Nations, which Poland – looking after its own sovereignty – sometimes provided. A top-secret document that Romer sent to the Polish ministry of foreign affairs (October 19, 1937) provides some evidence for it:

The warming of our relations with Japan under the influence of recent events has exceeded my expectations. Their reaction has been unexpectedly broad and deep, which can be explained by the widespread and not unjustified feeling here that Japan is threatened by political and economic isolation. Friendship shown in difficult moments is always all the more valuable. /.../ my relations with Hirota have become close, downright friendly. /.../ Especially in connection with our maneuvers at the League in Far East affairs, which in my opinion were conducted superbly in Geneva. I have remained in nearly daily personal contact with Hirota, who will not forget us for them.⁹

The Issue of Recognizing Manchukuo

The aforementioned stance was also connected with the highly delicate issue of recognizing Manchukuo. Poland, together with 41 other states in the League of Nations, adopted a resolution in 1933 stating that Manchuria should remain under the authority of China. However, several thousand Poles were living in Manchuria, and the Polish government was obliged to ensure their safety.¹⁰ The situation was complicated in August 1937, when

⁸ TRDAJ vol. I.

⁹ TRDAJ vol. I. Poland was represented at the forum of the League at that time by Tytus Komarnicki, who in accordance with instructions abstained from voting or even opposed resolutions concerning Japan.

¹⁰ See in particular: Pałasz-Rutkowska 2006.

Japan informed Poland that it intended to withdraw extraterritorial rights, and that Manchukuo would consent to the further existence of consulates only of those states that give her the right to open consulates on their territory. Romer, to whom the Polish consulate in Harbin was subordinated, established that representatives of Manchukuo had not broached the question of normalizing the legal status of consulates with other countries. He suspected that they were probably counting on setting a precedent with Poland, a country friendly toward them. It was in these circumstances that Romer met with the director of the Department of Europe and Asia in the Japanese MOFA, Tōgō Shigenori (1882-1950), and asked for the “*bon offices* of the Japanese government for the sake of finding /.../ a form of settling this matter that could gain the consent of the government of the RP”.¹¹

In early November 1937, Romer began secret talks with the Japanese MOFA on normalizing the consular status of Poles in Manchuria. He obtained assurances that Poland did not face the prospect of any changes stemming from Japan’s resignation from extraterritoriality. At the beginning of December, Romer ascertained that the Japanese government would consent to recognition of the Polish consulate in Harbin by the government of Manchukuo only if Manchukuo was granted the right to open an honorary consulate in Poland.¹²

The negotiations in Tokyo lasted over half a year.¹³ In the end, on October 19, 1938, diplomatic notes were exchanged in the embassy of Manchukuo in Tokyo between the ambassador of Poland, Tadeusz Romer, and the ambassador of Manchukuo, Yuan Zhenduo. Each of the party gave his counterpart three notes and signed a confidential protocol of the talks.¹⁴ The first note concerned the agreement of the two parties to open consulates. The second note concerned the appointment of Jerzy Litewski as a consul. The third note broached the subject of most-favored nation status and economic cooperation. They were announced on December 7, 1938, simultaneously in Warsaw and Hsinking. Afterwards, the Polish government calmed international opinion, concerned by the apparent rapprochement between Poland and Manchukuo, by claiming that it had

¹¹ Nr 8/P III; August 6, 1937, MSZ 6238, AAN.

¹² Romer to Beck, 79/M/1, December 2, 1937, MSZ 6238, AAN: 78-86 and appendices: 87-88.

¹³ See in particular: Pałasz-Rutkowska 2006: 10-15.

¹⁴ Text of the notes and confidential protocol: MSZ 6238, AAN: 270-280, and their translation: 281-290. The Japanese press published an article that Poland and Mandzukuo would sign “a friendship treaty concerning establishment of formal diplomatic relations”, in Tokyo, See: The Japan Times and Mail 1938.

not recognized Manchukuo *de jure* and had taken this diplomatic step out of the necessity to ensure the safety of Poles in Manchuria.

The Manchukuo question ceased to be a pressing issue for the Japanese and Polish governments the following year, due to the worsening situation in Europe and the outbreak of war. The final act in this diplomatic play was Ambassador Romer's audience with the emperor of Manchukuo, Pu Yi (1906-1968), in Tokyo on June 27, 1940. Worth citing are several passages from the document entitled *Audience with the Emperor of Manchukuo in Tokyo on Thursday, June 27, 1940.*, in which Romer described not only the audience itself, but also the decision-making process concerning acceptance of the invitation, which shows how difficult the diplomatic problem of Manchukuo was for Poland at the time.

Director of Japanese protocol Mr. T. Suzuki /.../ informed me confidentially that on the occasion of the several-day stay in Tokyo in late June of the emperor of Manchukuo, who was coming on an official visit to celebrate the 2600th anniversary of the founding of the Japanese dynasty¹⁵, I would be invited to hold an audience with him, like the representatives of other countries which had recognized Manchukuo. /.../ In my June 14 letter to consul Litewski in Harbin I noted that I had decided to accept the invitation with the understanding that doing so could ease our work in that sector, although the thought of standing out in this regard amongst our allies is essentially unpleasant to me.

June 18 I visited my English colleague [Robert L. Craigie, ambassador in Tokyo from 1937 to 1941; EPR] and /.../ informed him about the invitation/.../. I mentioned it was impossible for me to ask my government for instructions in this matter, and that I intended to take advantage of the invitation on my own in the interest of Polish citizens in Manchukuo, who are threatened by poor consular care as a result of German efforts /.../. We agreed that I would first ask the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for an explanation whether the audience with the emperor of Manchukuo will be held individually or as a group, because in the latter case I could not attend in the company of Germans.

June 19 I visited director of protocol Suzuki, who /.../ explained that the emperor of Manchukuo was expected to receive foreign

¹⁵ According to traditional historiography, the imperial Japanese dynasty traces its unbroken lineage back to 660 B.C., when Jimmu – great-great grandson of the sun god Amaterasu – became the first emperor.

diplomats in order and the previously planned group reception after the audience was to be foregone. The audiences would proceed by order of seniority on the diplomatic list, thus the ambassador of RP would be first, then the German, Spanish and Hungarian envoys, the Italian chargé d'affaires, next the Vatican delegate and the consul general of San Salvador. /.../

June 20 I visited the English ambassador again /.../. It was decided that Craigie would not telegraph [his government; EPR], limiting himself to giving English correspondents specific hints on the subject, while I would ask the American ambassador [Joseph Clark Grew, posted to Tokyo from 1932 to 1941; EPR] to do the same.

I thus visited the latter on the morning of June 26. /.../ we reached the conclusion that in the current conditions it was unlikely the Japanese or foreign press would attribute excessive political importance to my audience with the emperor of Manchukuo, and that commenting on this fact ahead of time in the presence of foreign journalists in Tokyo would only sharpen their interest unnecessarily. Ambassador Grew will thus limit himself in relation to his countrymen to correcting false versions /.../.

On June 27, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, dressed in a frock coat, I arrived as invited at the Akasaka Detached Palace, the Tokyo residence of the Manchurian guest. Upon reaching the second floor by a grand staircase I was greeted by Japanese chamberlains, who ushered me into the waiting salon, where I found the Vatican delegate /.../ and the consul general of San Salvador /.../. Other diplomats together with the Germans and Italians were waiting in a separate salon. /.../

I was invited first /.../. At the entrance to the reception salon stood the director of Japanese protocol; to the left of the entrance, along the wall, was the ambassador of Manchukuo in Tokyo together with his staff /.../. The emperor /.../ stood in the middle of the salon with his retinue of uniformed military and court dignitaries lined up behind him. He himself was dressed in a military uniform with two ribbonless star decorations. Average height, good posture, athletic appearance /.../. When I approached him, after the customary bows, announced in a

stentorian voice by one of his chamberlains, he slowly took off a white glove and shook my hand, and loudly said several words in Chinese. The translator /.../ rendered this declaration into English in a way I could barely understand as greetings by the emperor /.../. I replied slowly and forcefully in English, counting on the emperor understanding that language a little. /.../ The emperor listened to my words attentively /.../, thanked me and formulated several courteous words addressed to my country and my person. I bowed. The emperor gave me his hand in parting, after which I backed up while bowing three times as instructed. /.../ I noticed the figure of German ambassador gen. E.[ugen] Ott [1938-1943; EPR] in party uniform following me.¹⁶

Reaction to the Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the USSR

When Germany signed the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact with the USSR on August 23, 1939, Japan lost trust in her ally, believing that the Germans thereby violated an obligation as stipulated in the Anti-Comintern Pact – no signatory shall enter into a formal agreement with the Soviets against the Pact. The Polish government immediately issued a declaration to the Japanese embassy that the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact had no affect on Warsaw's stance toward Tokyo.¹⁷ Ambassador Romer also reacted to Germany's change in policy toward Japan. He paid an official visit to the cemetery at Sengakuji temple in Tokyo and laid a wreath on the tomb of the faithful samurai who committed suicide after killing their lord's murderer.¹⁸ Romer explained to journalists:

This is not an appropriate moment to comment upon recent international events. However, my heart bids that I express the feelings of my nation for the Japanese nation by laying this wreath on the tomb of the 47 ronin [samurai without a lord; EPR] as homage to the purest symbol of fidelity and trust.¹⁹

When recalling those days, Ambassador Romer told his cousin, Andrzej T. Romer, that:

¹⁶ TRDAJ vol. II.

¹⁷ Zarański 1972 vol. 4: 694.

¹⁸ They were the so-called 47 samurai of Akō feudal domain, who, in 1703, avenged the death of their lord, Asano Naganori, by killing Kira Yoshinaka. After being condemned to death, they chose to commit suicide with honour in a traditional way.

¹⁹ The Japan Times 1939.

the Soviet-German rapprochement /.../ was read as a change in German policy and the Germans were felt to have abandoned or betrayed Japan /.../. I took advantage of this /.../ and made a public demonstration, that is /.../ I set off in ceremonial garb, wearing a jacket and top hat, for the cemetery of the so-called ronin, who of course not only defended their lord and his property, but also – as members of the knightly caste – distinguished themselves by their fidelity to their lord. /.../ They hid for a long time /.../ and prepared to take revenge, which is one of the characteristics of Japanese allegiance. /.../ in the end they put their adversary to death. As a result, they themselves were condemned to death and committed hara-kiri. In a word, they were considered to be a symbol of fidelity to one's lord and master, also a symbol of fidelity to one's promises, pledges /.../, and conscientious performance of one's honor-bound duties. I went to the cemetery as an ambassador in the presence of a great many journalists and lay on their tomb a wreath with the inscription that I lay it on behalf of Poland to express recognition for the symbol of fidelity that those ronin stood for. Naturally, this act contained the sting that other allies had recently failed to remain faithful.²⁰

Relations with Japan After the Outbreak of War in Europe

The Japanese government announced its stance on the outbreak of war in Europe by handing an *aide-memoire* to the heads of foreign missions in Tokyo on September 5. The document stated that Japan does not intend to get involved in the war, concentrating its efforts instead upon resolving the Chinese problem. On September 28, the new minister of foreign affairs, Nomura Kichisaburō (1877-1964), assured Ambassador Romer that regardless of the Japanese government's principle of non-involvement in the European conflict, the sincere sympathy of the Japanese nation for Poland would remain unchanged (September 28, 1939²¹). On October 3, Romer wrote to minister August Zaleski (1883-1972):

The Japanese government, pressured against us by Germany, has not yet taken a position despite its sympathetic assurances. I expect that they will delay, observing other neutral countries and waiting for the international situation to become clearer. We are mainly using the argument here that maintaining the status quo

²⁰ See: Pałasz-Rutkowska, Romer 1996: 156-157.

²¹ TRDAJ vol. I.

with Poland does not require any decision, whereas a change on the part of Japan would be active proof of solidarity with the occupiers' claim. For the time being I see the necessity of maintaining great caution on our part and not causing the impression that we ourselves are cutting back our operations here, which remain possible especially on Soviet topics.²²

On October 6, after the Polish government moved to France and Władysław Raczkiewicz (1885-1947) assumed the presidency of the RP, Ambassador Romer met with the Japanese deputy minister of foreign affairs, Tani Masayuki (1889-1962). Romer sent the following message to the Polish MOFA that day:

The Japanese government stands on the position that in the current state of affairs /.../ there are no grounds for changing their relations with the Polish government and that I will continue to be recognized as the ambassador. /.../ Mr. Tani asked me whether I would be content with this oral declaration, to which I replied that the Polish government did not expect a written reply on notification.²³

In December, Romer submitted a more detailed report on relations with Japan, in which he provided his superior at the MOFA with an accurate assessment of those relations as well as with the ideas for maintaining them. The report is worth citing almost in its entirety:

... The Germans /.../ have spared no effort to persuade Japan to cut off diplomatic relations with us, and their victories in the war have added luster to their arguments, despite the disappointment felt on account of the German-Soviet rapprochement. As a result, the Japanese government has taken the path of least resistance, which I was counting on, and discreetly stated that “rebus sic stantibus” it does not see grounds for changing its relations with Poland and will continue to recognize me as the ambassador of the RP. /.../

... like the public here, the Japanese government has displayed its sympathy for us whenever and wherever such behaviour on its part does not engage it politically in relation to third parties. /.../

²² N. 48; TRDAJ vol. I.

²³ TRDAJ vol. I.

It should after all be kept in mind that the tradition of Polish-Japanese friendship, though sentimentally fairly lively, especially perhaps on our side, is neither long-standing nor based on deep, direct economic or cultural ties between the two countries. It is based essentially on a commonality of interests stemming from our relations with third countries, namely Russia. The moment Poland ceased temporarily to be an autonomous element of power, Polish-Japanese friendship thus conceived was deprived of its *raison d'être* for the Japanese and has become a subject of political speculation tied to the future of the war in Europe.

This state of affairs requires great caution on our part, since – on account of the USSR – the Japanese factor has not only not declined but rather increased in importance for Poland. /.../ our tactics toward Japan should consist in demonstrating to it, at every possible occasion, the significant and consequential anti-Soviet assets that Poland has not ceased to offer due to the stance of our people /.../, also thanks to our expert knowledge on Russia. In any case we must, I believe, beware of putting the Japanese government in a sensitive position in relation to others due to any demands we might make or our behaviour here. /.../

For my part, I am urgently warning our embassy personnel here, in their ceremonial and social appearances as well as propaganda actions affirming the continued existence and presence of the Polish state, not to impose themselves in ways that could cause any incidents thereby leading to problems for our Japanese hosts. I have found out for myself several times already that such reserve and discretion produce the desired results, as it not only eases maintenance of friendly contacts between our embassy and credible Japanese government and military factors, but also enables us to provide many a favour to those Japanese factors as well as our allies, who have not always found themselves in as favourable a position here as we.²⁴

Relations between the two countries did not change after Japan signed a neutrality treaty with the Soviet Union in April 1941 or after Poland signed a pact with the Soviet government in London against the Third Reich in July 1941. Romer wrote the following to the Polish authorities in London in September that year:

²⁴ N. 3/J/23/39, TRDAJ vol. I.

Japanese political circles, even those with a decidedly hostile stance toward Russia, as well as ruling factors seem to have understood fairly well the intentions guiding the Polish government in concluding its pact with Russia and are not upset with us about it /.../. The Japanese agree that we could not fight against two enemies and that the Russo-German war is an exceptional situation that we should exploit. They are inclined to regard our agreement with Russia as temporary and completely justified, since Germany is the main enemy of Poland.²⁵

Thus, the Japanese government, despite pressure applied by Germany, continued to allow not only the Polish embassy, but also the Polish Press Bureau in the Far East, to operate.

The Polish Press Bureau in the Far East

The Polish Press Bureau in the Far East²⁶ was established on the initiative of Ambassador Romer on September 2, 1939 and functioned until the final closing of the Polish embassy in Tokyo on October 23, 1941. Its purpose was to disseminate information and propaganda in connection with the increased interest in Poland due to the outbreak of war in Europe and the intense anti-Polish propaganda spread by Germany in the region. Moreover, in view of the supremacy of Japan in the Far East, it was decided that Tokyo should be home to a propaganda “headquarters” that would also send information to Manchukuo and China, where Polish citizens also lived. Thus, a weekly Polish-language *Biuletyn Informacyjny* [Information Bulletin] meant for Polish diplomatic posts and larger concentrations of Poles in the Far East was launched in January 1940, which was accompanied by monthly bulletins in English and Japanese starting in November 1940.

The Bureau was officially called the Press Department of the embassy, and it was headed by Aleksander Piskor (1910-1972), stationed in Japan as a correspondent of the Polish Telegraph Agency and a member of the Polish PEN Club. The Bureau’s work consisted mainly of providing appropriate materials for propaganda purposes to Japanese press, which used it to formulate its own information and articles, and sometimes printing texts thus supplied in their entirety. The Bureau also devised other forms of propaganda, monitored and took note of voices raised in the Japanese press in matters of direct interest to Poland. Moreover, thanks to the efforts of

²⁵ N. 317/J/17, TRDAJ vol. II.

²⁶ See also: E. Pałasz-Rutkowska 1996.

the Bureau, over a dozen Polish books were translated into Japanese and numerous brochures about Poland were translated into various languages. Ambassador Romer personally directed the propaganda operations of the Bureau and submitted detailed reports on them to the Polish MOFA every month. In these reports he wrote about the situation in Japan and its relations with other countries, about articles on Poland in the Japanese press and about other publications, also about events devoted to or connected with Poland. A photo exhibition entitled “Poland before the War” – organized under the patronage of one of the largest Japanese dailies, *Yomiuri Shimbun* – turned out to be a great success. Initially planned to be shown in the 57 largest cities of Japan from December 1939 to the end of February 1940²⁷, it ultimately reached 80 cities and lasted seven months, with over two million people viewing it.²⁸ The exhibition lasted six days in Tokyo in July 1940, where it was visited by about 20,000 people. The *Yomiuri Shimbun* printed programs of the exhibition in Japanese, which in addition to information about the photographs included a word of introduction by Ambassador Romer and a brief outline of Poland. The exhibition was held in the show rooms of the large department stores, which no doubt helped to increase public interest in it.

In his reports, Romer repeatedly emphasized that the Polish Press Bureau was working very hard, and its results were considerably better than those of English or French propaganda. On March 4, 1940, in report No. 317/J/24 for February, Romer wrote:

Our campaign to inform the Japanese press has been proceeding according to previous experiences. We have mainly tried to push positive news /.../. Thanks to this the [Japanese] press has run extensive accounts e.g. about the Polish army, its composition, training and patriotism, about the Polish navy and air force, about Polish operations in France, the hopes of refugees, sincere cooperation with allies etc. /.../ In the February issue of monthlies /.../ European affairs were almost entirely ignored, though several larger mentions were devoted to Poland in a few articles concerning the situation or policy of Soviet Russia.

The operations of the Polish Press Bureau in the Far East were suspended only in October 1941 due to the closure of the Polish embassy in Tokyo.

²⁷ Report N. 317/J/2 for November and December 1939 r.; No. 317/J/15 for January 1940 and N. 317/J/24 for February 1940, TRDAJ vol. I, II.

²⁸ Report N. 317/J/70 for June 1940, p. 8, TRDAJ vol. II.

Polish Deportees, Refugees and the Polish Committee to Aid War Victims

Tadeusz Romer also deserves much credit for his relief efforts for Poles deported to the far reaches of the Soviet Union from Polish territory occupied by the USSR since 1939. He initiated those efforts in Japan, where a booklet entitled *Zesłańcy polscy w ZSSR* [Polish Deportees in the USSR] was published by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, in Tokyo, in September 1941. The booklet contained a list of Poles deported to the far east of the USSR compiled by the Polish embassy in Tokyo up to August 31, 1941. Romer continued this work as ambassador in Moscow and Kuybishev. In his introduction to the booklet, he wrote:

The fifth or sixth generation of the nation /.../ is paying tribute in blood and suffering on the road east. /.../ This time deportations are being conducted in nightmarish conditions en masse, including a great number of the most vulnerable individuals /.../ of all classes and faiths, stripped literally of everything, in climatic, housing, food and clothing conditions often worse than in Siberia. Yet the hundreds of letters received in Tokyo, which cannot be read without tears of emotion and awe, attest to the deportees' unbreakable spirit /.../.

Deportations of the Polish populace deep inside the USSR reached their apogee in June 1940, that is, at the same time France collapsed in the war /.../. Japan /.../ was closer geographically to Siberia, thus it was here that the first calls for help began to arrive the summer of last year, first from the homeland, then from the places to which people had been deported. Efforts devoted to this matter undertaken by the Polish embassy in Tokyo date back to this time.

They consisted of compiling a registry of reported deportees as well as constantly repeated attempts to come to their aid, either individually or collectively. /.../ During the Christmas period in 1940 the embassy finally succeeded in developing direct correspondence links with deportees. /.../ the embassy immediately began /.../ to take advantage of this opportunity. Toward this end, special social care departments were established under the Polish embassy in Tokyo and the Polish legation in Shanghai, and in this manner the neediest /.../ (745 persons, to be precise) were sent aid over the course of the last five months,

either in cash or in packages containing food, clothing and medicine, at the cost of about 12,300 US dollars. The money for this came almost solely from Polish government sources and from military people whose families were deported, because revealing this campaign to a greater extent was, for various reasons, impossible at that time.

The most important and most reliable source of information that this report is based on was direct correspondence with the deportees themselves, also contact with their families. Among the latter, a particularly large amount of valuable material was provided personally by Polish refugees passing through Japan in transit. Another valuable source was correspondence directly from Polish POWs in Germany, also from Polish civilians interned in Switzerland, Hungary and Romania.²⁹

Ambassador Romer was also highly involved with refugees from Poland, mainly Polish Jews, who managed to escape the Holocaust and reach Japan. This was possible thanks to the humanitarian actions taken by the Japanese vice-consul in Kaunas, Sugihara Chiune (1900-1986) as well as the Dutch consul in that city, Jan Zwartendijk.³⁰ Both risked their lives – the first issued over 2,000 transit visas to Japan in August 1940 without the consent of the Japanese MOFA; the second wrote an endorsement in their passports and other documents that a Dutch entry visa is not required for entrance to Surinam, Curaçao or other Dutch colonies, which was not true, because the governors of these territories were in fact required to grant permission for entry and did so very rarely. Holding transit visas and destination visas which no one could use in practice, these refugees traveled across the entire length of the USSR via the Trans-Siberian Railway, reaching Vladivostok beginning in October 1940, from which they took ships to the Japanese port of Tsuruga and then traveled further through Japan.

In Japan, the refugees were attended to by Ambassador Romer, who established The Polish Committee to Aid War Victims under the aegis of the Polish embassy in Tokyo. The Committee was chaired by his wife, Zofia Romer; its secretary general was the merchant Klemens Zyngol; the treasurer was Mrs. Zikmannowa, wife of a Polish industrialist in Manchukuo; and the executive board members were Karol Staniszewski,

²⁹ Romer 1941: VI-VIII.

³⁰ See in particular: Pałasz-Rutkowska, Romer 1996: 180-191; com.: Pałasz-Rutkowska, Romer 1995.

secretary of the embassy, Aleksander Piskor, the wife of Bolesław Szczesniak, a contract employee, and Stefan Romanek, an intern.

In a report to minister Zaleski dated February 6, 1941, Romer wrote:

Over 95% of refugees with confirmed or presumed Polish citizenship /.../ are Jewish /.../. This phenomenon can be attributed not only to their greater enterprise, but especially the organized support they find among their own abroad. /.../ The low level of ethnic Polish refugees who have arrived so far can be attributed to their generally worse material circumstances, greater attachment to local conditions and life, and /.../ negative attitude, especially at first, toward undertaking a risky and costly journey East into the unknown. /.../ As a result, the following ethnic Poles have arrived here among the refugees so far: clandestinely, 4 officers of the Polish army, several families brought here with the help of relatives abroad /.../, all together about 15 persons, some of whom have settled in Japan for longer, and some of whom have already or will soon leave.³¹

The committee organized by Romer cooperated with Jewish organizations, mainly in Yokohama and Kobe, where the committee also opened an office. Its representative always went to the port of Tsuruga, where successive refugees arrived. Jews were directed mainly to Kobe, where the local Jewish community took care of them, supported financially by the East-European Jewish community through the Committees for Assistance to Jewish Immigrants from Eastern Europe (East-Jewcom), and by the Jewish American Joint Distribution Committee (Joint). The costs of further travel by refugees for whom Ambassador Romer obtained destination visas but who lacked their own funds were covered by the Jewish organization HICEM. The few non-Jewish Polish refugees made their way to Tokyo. The Polish embassy in Tokyo led and supervised the entire humanitarian effort, which also included passport matters, intervening with Japanese authorities in order to extend visas or obtain entrance and transit visas. The embassy also discreetly registered volunteers for the armed forces and directed them to Canada and the Middle East. According to Romer, from the autumn of 1940 to the summer of 1941, about 2,300 refugees from Poland came to Japan, 97% of whom were Jewish, originating mainly from

³¹ TRDAJ vol. II.

Wilno and Kowno [currently Vilnius and Kaunas in Lithuania], less often from the south-eastern frontiers of Poland.³²

In connection with the liquidation of the Polish Embassy in Tokyo in October 1941, the Japanese authorities sent all the remaining refugees from Poland in Japan to Shanghai – about 1,000 people, nearly all of whom were Jewish. Romer, now as “ambassador on special mission”, continued to take care of them. The suspension of shipping links due to the outbreak of war in the Pacific thwarted further efforts to place all the remaining refugees in such countries as Australia, New Zealand, Palestine and elsewhere. In the final report, Romer wrote from Teheran:

Upon liquidation of the Polish consulate in Shanghai in August 1942, soon before the evacuation of all Polish government personnel from the Far East, care of Polish citizens was unofficially handed over – with the consent of the Japanese occupation authorities – to an ad hoc committee entitled the Executive Board of the Union of Poles in China, which consisted of Polish residents as well as Jewish refugees with Polish citizenship.

/.../ when given the opportunity at the last moment to evacuate 54 civilian Polish citizens together with Polish diplomatic and consular personnel from Japan, China and Manchuria, I assigned 45 places to Jewish refugees, choosing them so that all political, social and professional groups had their most active members among them, capable of effectively coming to the aid of those remaining from the outside.³³

Closure of the Embassy

Ambassador Romer operated in Tokyo officially until October 4, 1941. As I mentioned earlier, despite pressure applied by Germany, Japan consented to the further existence of the Polish embassy in Tokyo, mainly for the sake of information on the USSR. Japan’s stance toward Poland began to change only in the latter half of 1941 due to two main reasons. First, Germany attacked the USSR in 1941 and, as it drove the Red Army east, soon came to occupy all of Poland. Germany, which became an ally of

³² Final report from Teheran, 6 X 1942, TRDAJ, II. Officially, the so-called Sugihara list (communiqué No. 28, 28 II 1941, files J.2.3.0 J/X2-6), Gaimushō Gaikō Shiryōkan (The Diplomatic Record Office of the MoFA; hereinafter GGS) in Tokyo consists of 2139 names. But because entire families exited on single visas, it is believed that about 6000 people could have been included. Com.: Sugihara 1990.

³³ TRDAJ, II.

Japan under a military pact in 1940 obliging signatories to provide mutual support in their efforts to create a “new order” in Europe and the Far East, now strove to wipe Poland off the map of the world. Second, Japan was preparing to launch a war against the United States – that is, to create a “new order” in the East – and could no longer ignore the demands of its German ally, as it was counting on its support.

As the rumors began to circulate as early as June that the Japanese government was considering the necessity of shutting down the Polish embassy in Tokyo, Romer strove to persuade the authorities to postpone the date.³⁴ This state of affairs lasted three months. On October 4, before Romer was officially notified, the Japanese press received a government announcement about the Polish embassy’s liquidation. At 6:15 p.m., Ambassador Romer met with the deputy minister of foreign affairs, Amō Eiji (1887-1968), who, unable to justify this violation of decorum, handed him a *note verbale* that read as follows:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with due respect, informs the Embassy of Poland in Tokyo that in connection with the situation that has arisen, the imperial government is liquidating the Imperial Embassy in Poland and simultaneously withdrawing, as of today, recognition of the ambassador and other employees of the Embassy of Poland in Tokyo as well as Polish honorary consuls in Osaka and Yokohama, deeming the mission of the Embassy to be finished.³⁵

The deputy minister also informed Romer that:

Although the Ambassador and Embassy employees today lose their status and privileges as head of mission and its members, and the Embassy is ending its mission, considering the friendly Polish-Japanese relations which existed in the past and the time necessary to liquidate the mission, the Japanese government has decided to recognize de facto nearly the same privileges as before of the Ambassador and employees of your Embassy until the end of October (excluding those pertaining to official ceremonies).³⁶

³⁴ See: Pałasz-Rutkowska 1998: 163-164.

³⁵ Note in Japanese: *Amō jikan Pōrando taishi kaidan no ken* (The matter of deputy minister Amō’s conversation with the ambassador of Poland), 6 X 1941, files M.1.5.0.3-30, GGS.; note in French: The Gaimusho, Tokyo, translation No.2/E1, 4 X 1941, TRDAJ vol. II.

³⁶ Ibid.

It's noteworthy that Amō conveyed the decision of the Japanese government with great pain and said the war was to blame for this unpleasant situation. He assured Romer that in the future, when the international situation changed, the Japanese government would undoubtedly consider changing its position, because the government, like the entire Japanese nation, sympathized greatly with the Polish nation, and intended to help them, at least through the Red Cross. Moreover, referring to cooperation during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), he emphasized the traditionally friendly ties between Japan and Poland several times, spoke about the two nations' mutual sympathy, about his own pleasant private contacts with Poles, for instance, with Stanisław Patek (1866-1945; as the envoy to Japan in 1921-1926) and Michał Mościcki (1894-1961; as the envoy to Japan in 1933-1936) and the Romer family. Since this was an official meeting, the deputy minister's comments on the government decision should not be regarded as private, which could attest to the fact that the decision was made as a result of external pressure in spite of the prevalent attitude in Japan toward Poland. Although these comments could have been a diplomatic ploy used to avoid explaining other reasons for the decision, this hypothesis seems unlikely considering the countries' friendly bi-lateral relations.

Several days later, Romer wrote the following to London:

We decided our position on the severance of Polish-Japanese diplomatic relations – in conversations with the Japanese – would be as follows: “We express surprise at Japan's step and the violation of 'traditional Polish-Japanese friendship', we regret that Japan must bow so much to German pressure without gaining any benefit from it”.³⁷

Aleksander Piskor, as head of the Polish Press Bureau in the Far East, also wrote about the severance of Polish-Japanese relations in the final issue of the *Information Bulletin* for Poles in the Far East, dated October 19, 1941:

On Saturday, October 4 at 6:15 p.m., Mr. Amō Eiji, the Japanese deputy minister of foreign affairs, handed Tadeusz Romer, ambassador of the RP in Japan, a note in which the Japanese government stated that it would terminate the Japanese embassy in Warsaw and, in view of this fact, considers the mission of the Polish embassy in Tokyo to be finished. The deputy minister

³⁷ R. 317/J/16, TRDAJ vol. II.

added that, considering the friendship that has existed between the Japanese and Polish nations, the Japanese government would grant the Polish ambassador diplomatic privileges until the end of October /.../. He emphasized that all Polish citizens may remain in Japan, where they will enjoy the protection of the Japanese government. /.../ Ambassador Romer and his wife cordially bid farewell to all Polish citizens in Japan, turning to them with words of encouragement and faith in the great and happy future of Poland.³⁸

Ambassador Romer together with his family and the majority of Polish embassy staff left Tokyo on October 26, 1941, sailing to Shanghai via Nagasaki. After reaching the destination, he wrote to the minister as follows about the Poles remaining in Japan (November 28, 1941):

[Judging] from the way /.../ the ministry responded to our many and varied liquidation postulates, I felt reassured that the attitude of the Japanese authorities to Polish affairs in Japan would be as favourable as possible, which put me at peace upon departure. /.../ on October 25 of this year I signed a secret agreement with Mr. Bolesław Szcześniak /.../. The first reports received from Mr. Szcześniak in Tokyo /.../ have convinced me that the situation of our citizens remaining in Japan appears to be, so far, favourable.³⁹

Just before the Polish embassy was closed, the Mutual Aid Society of Poles in Japan was established in Tokyo on October 10.⁴⁰ The organization was charged with the task of watching over the 100 or so Polish citizens remaining in Japan.

Official Polish-Japanese relations were severed on December 11, 1941, when Poland declared war on Japan, following its allies Great Britain and the United States, after Japan officially entered World War II on December 8 in the political camp hostile to that of Poland. Polish-Japanese relations were restored in 1957.

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³⁸ TRDAJ vol. II.

³⁹ R. 482/41, TRDAJ vol. II.

⁴⁰ Pałasz-Rutkowska, Romer 1996: 175. The executive board consisted of: Franciszek Haertlé, chairman, Bolesław Szcześniak, general secretary, and Karol Antoniewicz, treasurer.

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Caught In Between. Women of the Demimonde in Higuchi Ichiyō's Narratives

The world of the demimonde with the associations of secret pleasures, aesthetically joyful images and mysterious rituals has long been the object of interest for painters, sculptors and writers in Japan. The history of such an interest would be beyond the scope of my (and, perhaps, any) article; hence my attempt to close-read two of the literary texts set in the pleasure quarters in order to analyse the role and the representation of women there. In my paper I will focus on “Takekurabe” たけくらべ (Comparing of Heights, 1895-1896) and “Nigorie” にごりえ (Muddy Bay, 1895) by Higuchi Ichiyō 樋口一葉 (1872-1896), a prominent woman writer of the early Meiji era.¹

The choice of the texts is far from random, since they both use the *baishunfu no sekai* (the world of the prostitutes) as a setting for the stories. Moreover, they also explore the psychology of the protagonists and their social role in the context of the pleasure quarters. Interestingly, the stories which are said to have been rooted in Ichiyō's personal experience,² were written almost simultaneously and they juxtapose the licensed district of Yoshiwara (“Takekurabe”) and the unlicensed tea-house of Kikunoi 菊の井 („Nigorie”). Ichiyō, the writer witnessing the transition from the old to the new Japan, was – I believe – especially apt at depicting the heroines caught in between the everyday world and that of *baishun* (prostitution).

¹ Higuchi Ichiyō's works (Higuchi 1974, 1974a) will hereafter be referred to by their titles, "Nigorie" and "Takekurabe," respectively.

² The influence of Higuchi Ichiyō's living in Ryūsenji (in the immediate vicinity of Yoshiwara) on the themes and techniques used in her later stories is highlighted by many scholars. Among others, Ueshima Kintarō and Araki Yoshitane elaborate on the highly plausible influence. Cf. Ueshima 1969: 1-3; Araki 1960: 9-41. The fragments from Ichiyō's diaries related to the genesis of “Takekurabe” are quoted in *Takekurabe kenkyū*. Cf. Aoki 1972: 4-5. The scholars from the United States and Europe also write about the possible influence. Cf. Danly 1981: 75-130. Here is how Bettina Liebowitz Knapp summarizes the relationship between Ichiyō's stories and her experiences in Ryūsenji: “Also influential in her change of literary style was the fact that she and her family had opened a small store in the Yoshiwara (Floating World.). Exposed for the first time to the realities of the lives of courtesans, geishas, and actors, Ichiyō listened to their stories and their cant, closely, passionately, and empathetically. Hadn't she herself known the depths of despair? (...) Now, for the first time, Ichiyō, identifying with the downtrodden, would be writing from her own guts. No longer was it a question of setting down intellectual frames of reference or structuring artificial sequences of events. What she would now write would be real.” Knapp 1992: 162.

The Demimonde and Its Impact on the Literary Imagination in Early Modern Japan

Although the history of the ladies of pleasure in Japan cannot be easily delineated, nonetheless its origins may be traced back to ancient times, i.e. to *yūkō jofu* 遊行女婦 (itinerant women), *ukareme* 浮かれ女 (floating women), or *saburuko* 左夫流子 (“the one who serves”)³. The literary works created in the Heian period include passages which clearly illustrate that prostitution flourished at the time. *Yūjoki* 遊女記 (Prostitute’s Account) by Ōe Masafusa 大江匡房 includes depictions of gay quarters by the river Yodogawa and of professional entertainers, *shōjo* or *utame* 倡女.⁴ Gradually, various strata of courtesans were developed and, with a rapid increase in their number, the post of *keisei bettō* 傾城別当 (administrator to the courtesans) was created in the dawn of the Kamakura period.⁵ Furthermore, the establishment of a bureau of prostitution (*keisei kyoku* 傾城局) during Ashinaga Yoshiharu’s government became one of the landmarks in the process of institutionalisation of prostitution in Japan, another one being Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s consent to opening a walled-in pleasure area in Kyoto, which was later relocated and as such gave rise to the famous Shimabara quarter.⁶ Three decades later, and quite naturally, a vibrant red-light district was created in Edo, a city animated by samurai, merchants and travellers.⁷ From that moment on Yoshiwara – since this was the name of the district – was transformed into a symbol of the demimonde with its lures, pleasures, and rituals.

The wall and the moat which divided the pleasure quarter from the outside world with time also gained a symbolic meaning. They were not only physical objects but became a sign of division between the everyday life and the realm of sensuous gestures and arcane rituals. It is not surprising then that the place became a frequent theme in many stories written in the Edo period. The critique of the courtesans (*yūjo hyōbanki* 遊女評判記)

³ Cf. Segawa 1993: 3.

⁴ Masafusa 1979: 153-155. The world of professional prostitutes is also evoked in: Ōno Masafusa’s 大江匡房 *Karaishiki* 傀儡子記, Murasaki Shikibu’s *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語, *Sarashina nikki* 更級日記. The genre of *shirabyōshi* 白拍子 writings that developed from late Heian times into the Kamakura period and focused on female entertainers in male clothing. Cf. Segawa 1993: 4-5.

⁵ Cf. Fiévé, Waley 2003: 97.

⁶ In 1589 Hara Saburōzaemon asked Hideyoshi for permission to open a brothel. As a consequence, the first walled-in quarter was erected in the area of Nijō Yanagimachi (or Reizei Madenokōji) in Kyōto. The pleasure quarter of Kyōto was later moved to the western suburb of Suzakuno in 1640-1641; it came to be known as the Shimabara. Cf. Segawa 1993: 8.

⁷ Cf. Segawa 1993: ix.

was among the most popular literary genres of the time.⁸ It also might have inspired Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642 – 1693), who started his career as a fiction writer with the publication of *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* 好色一代男 (A Life of an Amorous Man) in 1682. In this book, Saikaku drew upon the image of the famous district with the abundance of its erotic and aesthetic associations. In fact, he did not visit Yoshiwara himself and knew it only from rumours and gossip; nonetheless, he was able to present a vivid picture of the hustle and bustle of the place.⁹ Interestingly, Saikaku was also successful in evoking Yoshiwara metonymically, by means of referring to its most famous and high-ranked (*tayū* 太夫) courtesans¹⁰. If Saikaku's works emphasise the vividness and sensuousness of Yoshiwara, the plays written by Chikamatsu Monzaemon 近松門左衛門 (1653-1725), on the other hand, focused on its social role. Yoshiwara, a place sought after as a shelter in the world governed by social obligations (*giri*) and arranged by hierarchy, became in Chikamatsu's works a domain of true passion (*ninjō*) and a centre of dramatic conflict.

Higuchi Ichiyō's Approach to the Literary Tradition

As has been mentioned, the literary tradition of pleasure quarters and of courtesans had already been established in early Meiji Japan when Higuchi Ichiyō started writing two of her stories centred on the idea of prostitution. She could not but find her own way to refer not only to Ihara Saikaku's and Chikamatsu Monzaemon's achievements but also to the canonical works of old Japanese literature of *Genji Monogatari* 源氏物語, *Izumi Shikibu Nikki* 和泉式部日記, *Ise Monogatari* 伊勢物語 which rendered the themes of budding love, admiration, longing and disillusionment, all of which are present in the works of Ichiyō.

Her use of literary motifs and allusions is, however, very innovative and multilayered¹¹. Whenever she applies Saikaku's narrative technique in

⁸ Cf. Lane 1957: 679-681.

⁹ Cf. Noma 1952.

¹⁰ The meeting of Yonosuke 世の助 with the courtesans of Yoshiwara is vividly depicted in Saikaku's *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* 好色一代男. The enumeration of the courtesans' names used to evoke the atmosphere of the pleasure quarters is also present in his *Kōshoku gonin onna* 好色五人女.

¹¹ References to popular songs, love songs are also abundant in Higuchi Ichiyō's stories. The quotations below come from Robert Danly's translation included in his famous study of Ichiyō. Cf. "Secret Love" sung by Shōta when he is waiting for Midori (Danly 1981: 270); "How sad it is for one to wait alone by the midnight hearth." (271); "Come to see the thriving quarter/The lights, the lanterns under every eave/The gaiety of all five streets" (271); Geisha's singing, "today we shall spend our night of love" (276-7); "Growing up,/She plays among the butterflies/And flowers./But

setting the scene of introducing the heroines – she is always eager to transcend it by examining the possible psychological motives of the protagonists.¹² Even if she uses the quotation from *Ise Monogatari* as a title for her story, she is still able to explore the complexities of the childhood intimacy motif (*osananajimi* 幼馴染) and to write in depth about the unavoidable disillusionment.¹³ She may refer to the ideals of courtship in *Genji Monogatari* but simultaneously she attempts to illustrate the incompatibility of the old ideals to the world of courtesans.¹⁴ Ichiyō’s approach to the traditional concept of *shusse* (social promotion), *shinjū* (love suicide) or *kaimami* (peeping from behind a fence), which were frequently interwoven in the *kuruwa mono* (stories about the red-light quarters) is also highly creative. The concept of *shusse* or social promotion is altered, i.e. modernized to suit the Meiji ideas of social advancement via education.¹⁵ The traditional theme of lovers’ suicide (or double suicide), of which „Nigorie” is reminiscent, is used in a more ambiguous manner to argue that the act which was commonly considered heroic is also harmful and egocentric.¹⁶ The scene in “Takekurabe” where Midori 美登利

she turns sixteen./And all she knows/ Is work and sorrow.” (283); “My love is like a bridge of logs across the Hosotani River (...) I’m afraid to cross to the other side; I’m afraid to stay where I am” (232).

¹² Timothy J. van Compernelle speaks of the “intense psychological focus” and juxtaposes it with the interest of *kibyōshi* 黄表紙, *ninjobon* 人情本 and didactic tales in Ichiyō’s story. Cf. van Compernelle 2006: 98. Aoki Kazuo claims that Ichiyō manages to grasp the complexities/intricacies of the children’s (and human, in general) psychology. He gives the example of Chōkichi who is not depicted stereotypically but rather as a complex character motivated by a sense of inferiority, admiration and oppression in the contact with Shōta who is endowed with learning skills. Cf. Aoki 1972: 16. The psychological dimension present in “Takekurabe” is also emphasized by Tanaka 1956 -1957: 187.

¹³ The neologism “takekurabe” which is inspired by the poems exchanged by young lovers in chapter 23 of *Ise monogatari*. The word also appears in Ichiyō’s “Wakarejimo” 別れ霜 (Frost at Parting, 1982). As a consequence, the title of “Takekurabe” is referring not only to the famous *monogatari* but also to Ichiyō’s previous work and its connotations are more complex. Cf.: Aoki 1972: 7.

¹⁴ “Yesterday she adopted a name of some Murasaki from *The Tale of Genji* at a shop by the river, and today she went away with some tramp.” (昨日河岸店に何紫の源氏名耳に残れど、けふは地廻りの吉と手馴れぬ。) “Takekurabe”: 403. If not mentioned otherwise, all the translations are made by Katarzyna Sonnenberg.

¹⁵ This concept is broadly discussed by van Compernelle in relation to another of Higuchi Ichiyō’s stories, i.e. “Jūsan’ya” 十三夜 (The Thirteenth Night, 1895). Cf. van Compernelle 2004: 353-381.

¹⁶ Cf. Danly: 141. Shinjū as presented in “Nigorie” is interpreted as an egoistic decision in van Compernelle 2006: 80. The character of Oriki and Genshishi’s relationship is unclear. Equally ambiguous is their death, rendered from the point of view of the passers-by. Some claim it was a lovers’ suicide, while others suggest that Oriki was forced to die: “She was cut across the back, through the shoulder. There were scrapes all over her cheek and a stab on her neck. And many more! Undoubtedly, she was trying to flee, and that’s when he killed her.” (切られたは後袷裳、

observes Shinnyo 信如 whose sandal has been broken, may be considered a *kaimami* scene and is frequently juxtaposed by the critics with the famous scene from “Waka murasaki” (Young Murasaki), the fifth chapter of *Genji monogatari* (The Tale of Genji), in which the male protagonist watches secretly from behind a fence his future lover, Murasaki¹⁷. In the case of “Takekurabe,” however, it is a woman not a man who catches the passionate glimpse. Moreover, the female protagonist is too young to understand the character of her overwhelming passion.

The Demimonde as Reflected in Higuchi Ichiyō’s Works

Before I focus on the protagonists of Ichiyō’s two famous short-stories, i.e. on Midori (“Takekurabe”) and Oriki お力 (“Nigorie”), I would like to define the distinctive features of the pleasure district and the tea-house as presented by Ichiyō. By comparing the depiction of Yoshiwara with that of Kikunoi I will also try to highlight the differences and similarities between them.

Although the name of Yoshiwara never appears in “Takekurabe,” the moat dividing the quarter and the Daionji-mae 大音寺前 area is mentioned in the opening passage and the reader is constantly aware of Yoshiwara’s looming presence¹⁸. The reflection in the moat is used figuratively (not

類先のかすり疵、頸筋の突疵など色々あれども、たしかに逃げる處を遣られたに相違ない。) “Nigorie”: 32.

¹⁷ *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The Tale of Genji), Chapter 5: *Wakamurasaki* 若紫 (Young Murasaki), 20, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1963: 197 nn. Comp. “When Midori saw who it was, her face reddened. Her heart began to thump as if there was something important awaiting her. She turned to see if anybody observed her. Then, fearfully, she approached the gate. Shinnyo looked around, too. He could not say a word, cold sweat running down his sides. He felt like running away barefoot.” (それと見るより美登利の顔は赤う成りて、何のやうの大事にでも逢ひしやうに、胸の動悸の早くうつを、人の見るかと背後の見られて、恐る／＼門の侍へ寄れば、信如もふつと振返りて、此れも無言に脇を流るゝ冷汗、跣足になりて逃げ出したき思ひなり。) “Takekurabe.” 435-436. Here is how Timothy Van Compernelle interprets it in the traditional context: “In this passage, the narrator fuses with Midori, and her discourse becomes inextricably intertwined with that of her speechless heroine as she puts Midori’s un verbalized anger into actual words. Nonetheless, there is a prominent gap here between Midori and the person who would speak for her, a rhetorical gap between a silent, brooding Midori and a narrator who fills that void with her own discourse, all the while shifting out of classical Japanese to mimic her heroine’s tone and idiom.” Cf. van Compernelle 2006: 176.

¹⁸ “It is a long way round to the front of the quarter, where the trailing branches of the willow tree bid farewell to the night-time revellers and the bawdyhouse lights flicker in the moat, dark as the dye that blackens the smiles of the Yoshiwara beauties. From the third-floor rooms of the lofty houses the all but palpable music and laughter spill down into the side street. Who knows how these great establishments prosper? The rickshaws pull up night and day.” (廻れば大門の見返り柳いと長けれど、お齒ぐる溝に燈火うつる三階の騒ぎも手に取る如く、明けくれないの車の行來にはかり知られぬ全盛をうらなひて...) “Takekurabe,” 402, transl. Robert L. Danly,

realistically) as a thread leading directly from the moat to Yoshiwara and then to the characters.¹⁹ Undoubtedly, Yoshiwara is a very peculiar place whose fashions and customs are bound to influence the surroundings. Segawa Seigle thus explains its influential role:

Isolated in a small walled-in world, assured of government protection and special privileges, the Yoshiwara developed a strong sense of pride in its identity. It nurtured its own unique customs, traditions, language, fashion -- exotic even to Edo, which was itself quite different from the rest of Japan. Edoites were aware of the insular character of the Yoshiwara quarter, calling it "*arinsu-koku*" (country of the *arinsu* language). *Arinsu* was a corruption of *arimasu* ("there is"), a distinctive sentence-ending in the special dialect of Yoshiwara courtesans.²⁰

Indeed, the uniqueness of Yoshiwara triggered the sense of pride in its inhabitants. It is not surprising then that the narrator of "Takekurabe" creates from the very beginning a synesthetic image of the district in order to emphasize its irresistible prestige. The fashionable Yoshiwara is juxtaposed with the countryside, this juxtaposition being embodied in Midori herself who originally came from the country and therefore was an object of fun and contempt in Daionji-mae:

At first, Midori had been mortified when girls from the town made fun of her, calling her a country goose for putting a mauve collar upon her lined kimono. She had cried for three days and nights. But now, she couldn't find a match when it came to mocking others and speaking ill of their boorish looks.²¹

The only way in which the approval may be gained in Yoshiwara is by adapting its peculiar patterns of behaviour. She has to learn how to dress, walks, nod and speak in a Yoshiwara fashion. Understandably, a tea house of Kikunoi could never be compared to the prestige of Yoshiwara. If Yoshiwara has the power to magnetize people

ibid.: 254.

¹⁹ Cf. Aoki 1972: 13.

²⁰ Cf. Segawa 1993: 9.

²¹ はじめ藤色絞りの半襟を袷にかけて着て歩くしに、田舎者いなか者と町内の娘どもに笑はれしを口惜しがりて、三日三夜泣きつゞけし事も有しが、今は我れより人々を嘲りて、野暮な姿と打つけの悪まれ口を、言ひ返すものも無く成りぬ。"Takekurabe," 409.

merely by the sound of its name, Kikunoi may be popular among men but it is mostly due to Oriki's charms and not to its cultural or aesthetic qualities. The place has a specific atmosphere imposed by Kikunoi uniforms and informal, flirtatious manners of the barmaids but it is not the symbol of fashion.²²

There is, however, a trait shared by the two places, i.e. the use of deception in appealing to the clients and in creating the illusion of a better world. The narrator is very careful, it is worth noticing, in deconstructing the deceptive appearances. The opening passage in "Takekurabe" depicts the area of Daionji-mae, adjacent to Yoshiwara, and it focuses on the misleading name of the place: "in front of Daion Temple."²³ Although the name could be easily associated with devotion and quiet prayers, the reality of the place could not prove more opposite. Indeed, hardly will a reader find a more lively and secular place.

The description of Kikunoi in „Nigorie” also focuses on the discrepancy between the appearance and the factual role of the place. It is worthwhile quoting the descriptive passage here:

The house (of Kikunoi) was a two-story building with a frontage twelve-foot wide. A sacred lantern hung beneath the eaves, and a bit of salt was to summon prosperity. Bottles of famous liquor, empty or not, were places on the shelves in the place resembling a reception corner. (...) The sign at the front door informed precisely that dinner was served but if anyone decided to order a decent meal, what would be the answer? They could not say that that day they had suddenly sold out of everything. Neither could they answer that they only served men. Fortunately, people in this world knew the meaning of their business and no one was coarse enough to come and order a side dish and a roast fish.²⁴

²² The fact of belonging to Kikunoya was marked by the garments and the way in which she was wearing them: "Her summer kimono was of an eye-catching pattern. She wore a black satin sash lined with material somewhat imitating satin and stitched with scarlet thread. The area around her neck was visible, which was, of course, the common manner of the girls from the neighbourhood." (大形の裕衣に引かけ帯は黒緋子と何やらのまがひ物、緋の平ぐけが背の處に見えて言はずと知れし此あたりの姉さま風なり.) „Nigorie,” 4.

²³ Cf. "Takekurabe," 402.

²⁴ 店は二間間口の二階作り、軒には御神燈さげて盛り鹽景氣よく、空壇か何か知らず、銘酒あまた棚の上にならべて帳場めきたる處も見ゆ、(...) 表にかゝげし看板を見れば子細らしく御料理とぞしたゝめける、さりとて仕出し頼みに行たらば何とかいふらん、俄に今日品切れもをかしかるべく、女ならぬお客様は手前店へお出かけを願ひまするとも言ふにかたからん、世は御方便や商賣がらを心得て口取り焼肴とあつらへに来る田舎ものもあらざりき. „Nigorie,” 5.

Not only is the deception consciously created by the owner of Kikunoi but it is also commonly and unconditionally accepted by the men attending the place. Timothy Van Compernelle even speaks of the combined, simultaneous act of hiding and advertising²⁵ Moreover, the illusory quality of Kikunoi is mirrored by the shrewdness of its barmaids in deceiving the clients. Oriki on more than one occasion states that her vows are untruthful and her interest spurious.²⁶ The awareness of being an actress is furthermore associated with the articulated need to be constantly watchful²⁷.

Another common feature of Yoshiwara (or Daionji-mae) and Kikunoi is the relationship between the red-light district and money. It is implicit in “Takekurabe” and rather explicit in “Nigorie”.

The narrator of “Takekurabe” interestingly observes that there is a strong bond between Daionji-mae and Yoshiwara which is based on economic dependency. Most of the people in Daionji-mae have some connection with the quarter, as it is stated early in the story. The narrator even provides a list of possible services that the inhabitants of Daionji-mae pay to the pleasure quarter: girls become maids, servants or escorts and men, too, perform various menial jobs.²⁸ Obviously, Daionji-mae could not exist without Yoshiwara, but the dependency although not altogether equal is, nonetheless, mutual.

The sketch of the economic relationship between Daionji-mae and Yoshiwara is followed by a number of implicit references to the money gained by Midori’s sister who is a courtesan and the main provider for the whole family. Being a sister of a Ōmaki, whose popularity brings to her many a prominent client, Midori can afford toys and candies not only for herself but also for other children. She encourages them to articulate their wishes. “Let’s choose what most of us like. I’ll pay for everything,” she declares a day before the Senzoku Temple festival.²⁹ Of course, it should

²⁵ Cf. van Compernelle 2006: 81.

²⁶ “Yes, I do have various patrons. Exchanging letters with them is not too different from exchanging waste paper. Be it your wish, I will write a love pledge or a vow accordingly.” (馴染はざら一面、手紙のやりとりは復古の取かへツこ、書けと仰しやれば起證でも誓紙でもお好み次第さし上ませう。) „Nigorie,” 8. The motif of empty promises and deceptive appearances is repeated later in the story. Cf. *ibid.*: 11-12.

²⁷ “Be careful, please! Talking like that in front of the house may give people wrong ideas.” (氣をつけてお呉れ店先で言はれると人聞きが悪いではないか。) Cf. *ibid.*: 4.

²⁸ Cf. “Takekurabe,” 402-403.

²⁹ 大勢の好い事が好いでは無いか、幾金でもいゝ私が出すから。 *Ibidem.*: 409.

not be easily overlooked that Midori's generosity was only possible due to her sister's work as a courtesan.

Finally, the narrator suggests that Midori herself is also regarded as a commodity, in terms of the profit she will bring for the family when she follows in her sister's footsteps. The scene, in which Midori's mother dresses the girl up, may illustrate this attitude: "Midori's mother took to arranging her hair. Being my own child, still, she is a beauty, the woman thought looking at her daughter persistently."³⁰ Whether consciously or not, the mother inspects her daughter's beauty from every angle as a marketable good.

Oriki, the protagonist of „Nigorie,” also embodies the inevitable connection of barmaid's work with money. First of all, she only becomes a barmaid (and a prostitute) because of dire poverty. She was very early orphaned and even with her parents by her side she was frequently hungry³¹. As a barmaid she is able not only to earn her own living but also to help her less popular friends in the Kikunoi quarter. Her generosity results in her friends' gratitude: The girls express “deep gratitude to Oriki,” and the narrator bestows her with a title of “their most miraculous goddess of wealth.”³² Of course, Oriki could not be generous were it not for her wealthy clients. Interestingly, the term *najimi kyaku* (or intimate client) used in the story serves to blur the difference between a patron and a lover.³³

At one point, Oriki overtly explains to one of her clients why she decided to pursue the path of a prostitute:

I am a human being, too, and some things pierce me to the heart,
you know. My parents died when I was a little girl and I have to

³⁰ 母親が手づからそゝけ髪つくろひて、我が子ながら美しくしきを立ちて見、居て見、
Ibid.: 412-413.

³¹ The poverty of her family is illustrated by the famous passage depicting Oriki dropping the grains of rice into a „nigorie,” a muddy bay or muddy waters: “I rushed happily to the door of the rice seller's house, with a bean sieve and some copper coins clenched in my hand. On my way back, however, my hands and feet became numb from cold that permeated my body. And I slipped on an icy sewerage cover, only five or six houses away from the rice seller's. (味噌こし下げて端たのお錢を手に握つて米屋の門までは嬉しく駆けつけたれど、歸りには寒さの身にしみて手も足も悴かみたれば五六軒隔てし溝板の上の氷にすべり...) „Nigorie,” 26.

³² 後には力ちやん大明神様これにも有がたうの御禮山々。Ibid.: 10.

³³ Timothy van Compernelle thus explains the process of blurring the patron-lover distinction: “the competing bond of *koi* 恋, which was an emotion whose ideal expression was produced by literary representation of the transcendental bond between a prostitute and her lover(...) the material conditions of the prostitution district blur the boundary between love and money.” Cf. van Compernelle 2004: 88.

go on by myself. Oh, there were some men who, regardless of my lowly position, asked me to marry them but I haven't married yet. I was raised in such coarse conditions that I'll probably spend here the rest of my life.³⁴

Throughout the narrative Oriki believes that her present situation is determined by her family's poor condition.³⁵ Furthermore, she tries hard to reconcile herself to the role of a barmaid. Although the client's response is optimistic in suggesting that she could still find happiness in marriage, the dreadful end of Oriki's life proves her pessimism to be well justified and her words to be truly prophetic³⁶. Moreover, the dialogue between Oriki and her client is also used to depict the ambiguity of the protagonist's character.³⁷

Interestingly, the tone of determinism or the inevitability of fate is also present in "Takekurabe." There are many references to Midori's fate, ironically mirrored by the practices of her sister Ōmaki. Midori's manner of speaking and clothing which imitates her sisters' also foreshadows her destiny.³⁸ As Van Compernelle claims, "Midori self-consciously copies the

³⁴ 私だとて人間でござんすほどに少しは心にしみる事もあります、親は早くになくなって今は眞實の手と足ばかり、此様な者なれど女房に持たうといふて下さるも無いではなけれど未だ良人をば持ませぬ、何うで下品に育ちました身なれば此様な事して終るのでござんしよ。„Nigorie,” 8.

³⁵ “I have no other choice! I will likewise have to cross the log bridge by myself. My father stumbled over it and fell. They say, it was the same with my grandfather. By all means, I was born into this world with the burden of resentment of many a generation. There are so many things I have to do that I probably wouldn't be able to day before all has been completed.” (仕方がない矢張り私も丸木橋をば渡らずばなるまい、父さんも踏かへして落てお仕舞なされ、祖父さんも同じ事であつたといふ、何うで幾代もの恨みを背負て出た私なれば爲る丈の事はしなければ死んでも死なれぬのであらう。) „Nigorie,” 21.

³⁶ “Simply because you were raised in coarse circumstances, it doesn't mean you can't get a husband. Such a beauty as yourself can marry into a distinguished family.” (何も下品に育つたからとて良人の持てぬ事はあるまい、殊にお前のやうな別品さむではあり一足とびに玉の輿にも乗れさうなもの。) „Nigorie,” 8.

³⁷ Cf. Danly 1981: 145.

³⁸ “In Midori's eyes men were hardy fearsome creatures and she thought there was nothing despicable in her sister's profession. She couldn't bear it when Ōmaki was about to leave for the quarter and being able to accompany her was like a dream (...) She had mastered the language of the quarter, and she wasn't at all ashamed to use it.” (美登利の眼の中に男といふ者さつても怕からず恐ろしからず、女郎といふ者さのみ賤しき勤めとも思はねば、過ぎし故郷を出立の當時ないて姉をば送りしこと夢のやうに思はれて、(...) 廓ことばを町にいふまで去りとは恥かしからず思へるも哀なり。) “Takekurabe,” 423. The introduction of the *kurwa* language to the narrative may indicate a tendency toward reducing the old-Japanese stylization in Higuchi's style. By some critics it is considered a token of modernization. Cf. Vernon 1988: 31.

women of the quarter without understanding the social significance of the modes of fashion and speech she adopts.”³⁹

Moreover, Chōkichi 長吉 from the backstreet gang insults her not only verbally – by calling her a *gorōme* 女郎め (whore) – but also physically – by throwing a dirty clog at her.⁴⁰ The fact that the allusions in the text referring to the girl’s future profession are understood by many other characters as well as by the readers but are unintelligible for Midori until almost the end additionally dramatizes her situation.

The Heroines of the Demimonde

The choice of the pleasure quarters as a setting for the stories is not merely made in order to enrich the plot or to attract the readers’ attention (as was frequently the case with Saikaku’s *kōshoku mono*) but before all it serves to highlight the problematic position of the female protagonists. Let us consider the passages where Midori and Oriki appear first.

The emphasis of Midori’s first description is placed on her physicality: on her hair, her complexion and her mouth.⁴¹ It is worthwhile realising that the elements of the description are all strongly imbued with eroticism. Therefore, the moment the girl appears on stage, she instantly becomes an object of men’s evaluation⁴²:

When she looked at people her eyes expressed love and respect. She was wearing her orange kimono with flower and bird patterns dyed on it. Her black sash was fashionable and tied high at the waist. On her feet she had clogs soled most thickly. She was coming from the morning bath and on seeing her lovely figure with snow-white neck tucked under a towel, young men going back home from the quarter would exclaim: “I’d like to see her three years from now!”⁴³

³⁹ van Compernelle 2006: 165.

⁴⁰ “You’re just a whore, a beggar like your sister,” (...) Chōkichi came from behind the others, seized his muddy sandal and threw it at Midori. “This is all you’re worth.” (何を女郎め頼拵たゝく、姉の跡つぎの乞食め、 (...) 多人數のうしろより長吉、泥草鞋「草鞋はママ」つかんで投つければ。) “Takekurabe,” 414. This scene is considered by critics a foreshadowing of Midori’s fate. Cf. van Compernelle 2006: 139-140.

⁴¹ 解かば足にもとゞくべき毛髪を、根あがりに堅くつめて前髪大きく鬢おもたげの、赭熊といふ名は恐ろしけれど、此鬢を此頃の流行とて良家の令嬢も遊ばさるゝぞかし、色白に鼻筋とほりて、口もとは小さからねど締めれば醜くからず。 “Takekurabe,” 408.

⁴² The men’s opinions are one example of the characteristic ‘interspersed’ (*tentei* 点綴) of townfolk gossip. Cf. Seki 1970: 10.

⁴³ 人を見る目の愛敬あふれて、 (...) 柿色に蝶鳥を染めたる大形の裕衣きて、黒襦子と

The men's perspective (and their evaluative look may also be interpreted as an elaboration on the famous *kaimami* motif) resembles the young men's evaluation of the beauty of the women returning from the flower-viewing festival.⁴⁴ The emphasis on the physical detail and the symbolic use of garment and hairdo also echoes Saikaku's technique in *Kōshoku gonin onna* 好色五人女. As does the focus on the locale in the story.⁴⁵ However, if in Saikaku's stories the protagonist's beauty is idealized and shown as impeccable, Midori in Ichiyō's work is not ideally beautiful.⁴⁶

Moreover, the external detail of Midori's kimono and hairstyle is introduced not only for aesthetic pleasure but also in order to illustrate the process of the girl's growing up.⁴⁷ Although the first description of Midori may already suggest her future life as a courtesan, nonetheless, the girl is entirely unaware of the signals she might be sending to others. She does not seem to understand why she should be insulted by others due to the fact that she is to follow Ōmaki's example. On the contrary, she is proud of her sister.

Only towards the end of the narrative, when she is dressed like her sister Ōmaki and her hair is fastened in a *shimada* 島田 style⁴⁸, does she realise the inevitable implications of this outfit⁴⁹. From that day on Midori became a different person.⁵⁰ This rude awakening is the reason why she despises her new hairstyle: "had it done this morning at my sister's. I hate it" – she says to Shōta.⁵¹ She is, however, met with a lack of understanding on his part. Shōta is still a child unaware of the reality hidden behind the glittering concepts of *kuruwa*. If the external signs are crucial for Midori's

染分絞りの晝夜帯胸だかに、足にはぬり木履こゝらあたりにも多くは見かけぬ高きをはきて、朝湯の歸りに首筋白々と手拭さげたる立姿を、今三年の後に見たしと廓がへりの若者は申き。"Takekurabe," 408.

⁴⁴ Cf. Saikaku 1984: 205-211.

⁴⁵ Robert Danly claims that Ichiyō's sense of locale developed as a result of Saikaku's influence. Cf. Danly 1981: 128.

⁴⁶ 一つ一つに取たてゝは美人の鑑に遠けれど、物いふ聲の細くしき。"Takekurabe," 408.

⁴⁷ The focus on the process of maturing is in accordance with what Karatani Kōjin refers to as the modern notion of childhood. Cf. Karatani 1993: 124.

⁴⁸ *Shimada mage* 島田髻 – hair tied up and ornamented with a comb on top; this hairstyle was initially worn by courtesans in Japan. Later it gained popularity among housewives, too. Comp.: Choi 2006.

⁴⁹ "Well, this is Midori of the Daikokuya, indeed. With her hair arranged in such a splendid manner, in Shimada style. Yet, she behaves differently. How beautiful!" (本當に正さん大變だぜ、今日はね、髪を斯ういふ風にこんな嶋田に結つてと、變てこな手つきして、奇麗だね。) "Takekurabe," 440.

⁵⁰ 美登利はかの目を始めにして生れかほりし様の身の振舞。Ibid.: 445.

⁵¹ 姉さんの部屋で今朝結つて貰つたの、私は厭やでしょうが無い。Ibid.: 441.

identity so are her relationships with other children (especially with Shinryo and Shōta). They enable her to discover her position in life and her destiny.

Oriki, the protagonist of „Nigorie,” is introduced as a barmaid (*shakufu* 酌婦) in the opening paragraph of the story, which – interestingly enough – is not descriptive but which quotes another barmaid’s words addressed to the clients who pass in front of Kikunoi.⁵² If the words are left without a response, the positive reaction to Oriki’s invitation (“Hello! Mr. Ishikawa! Mr. Maruoka! You have not forgotten where Oriki lives, have you?”)⁵³ is instantaneous: “Immediately, the flapping of footsteps was heard in the corridor. The guests came asking for liquor and the barmaids were offering snacks. The music of samisen spread around and soon the boisterous dances began.”⁵⁴

As a consequence, Oriki’s first appearance is devised in a form of juxtaposition between her and the rest of the Kikunoi barmaids. This technique illustrates the competitive character of Kikunoi on the one hand, and emphasizes Oriki’s superiority on the other⁵⁵. The comparison is further developed to draw attention to Oriki’s fine looks. If other barmaids use a thick layer of powder and crimson rouge for their lips,⁵⁶ Oriki’s beauty is natural and alluring:

Her hair was washed and tied up in a *shimada* style with fresh rice-straw. Her complexion was naturally white so that even the powder on her neck was unnoticeable. She loosened her kimono almost to her breast as if to manifest their beauty. She was

⁵² “Hey! Mr. Kimura! Mister Shin! Step in for a moment! Why can’t you come over, when I call for you? I’m sure you’re heading to Futaba without even dropping in. You’d better know that I will come for you and drag you out of the place! Now, if you really go to the bath-house, do stop by on your way back. Oh, you liars! I never know if what you’re saying is true.”おい木村さん、信さん寄ってお出よ、お寄りといつたら寄つても宜いではないか、又素通りで双葉やへ行く気だらう、押かけて行つて引ずつて来るからさう思ひな、ほんとにお湯なら歸りに屹度よつてお呉れよ、嘘つ吐きだから何を言ふか知れやしない.) „Nigorie,” 3.

⁵³ これ石川さん村岡さんお力の店をお忘れなされたか. Ibid.: 6.

⁵⁴ 忽ち廊下にはた／＼といふ足おと、姉さんお銚子と聲をかければ、お肴は何をと答ふ、三味の音景氣よく聞えて亂舞の足音これよりぞ聞え初ぬ. Ibid.: 6.

⁵⁵ It is not without a reason that Otaka complains: “I am nothing like Oriki. I have no special skills. It is unfortunate if I let any one of the clients away...” (力ちやんと違つて私しには技倆が無いからね、一人でも逃しては残念さ.) „Nigorie,” 3.

⁵⁶ 白粉べつたりとつけて唇は人喰ふ犬の如く、かくては紅も厭やらしき物なり. „Nigorie,” 4.

crouching inelegantly with one knee up and puffed at her long pipe. Fortunately, there was no one to reproach her.⁵⁷

Oriki's natural beauty combined with her personal charm and unusual aptness at conversing with clients contribute to her popularity as a barmaid. Additionally, Timothy Van Compernelle argues, the focus on the physical attributes of the heroine encourages one to interpret her body as a "meeting point of Eros and commerce."⁵⁸ The physical beauty of Oriki is later juxtaposed with her suffering and depressive moods:

It's no use dwelling on it. In front of people, I try to play cheerful. And what happens? No wonder there are people who think I am carefree and reckless! There are even clients who think I've never worried about a thing.⁵⁹ Maybe it is my fate. I think there is no one as wretched as I am.

The heroine is aware of the discrepancy between how she is perceived by the visitors and other barmaids and how she feels.

Not only is Oriki juxtaposed with other barmaids but most importantly she is placed and she should be interpreted in relation to her previous patron, Genshichi's family, i.e. his wife and son. Needless to say, Oriki surpasses Ohatsu, Genshichi's wife, in beauty and manners.⁶⁰ More importantly, however, it is Ohatsu and her son who make Oriki realise that the consequences of barmaids' undertakings may be deplorable and harmful.⁶¹

⁵⁷ 洗ひ髪の大嶋田に新わらのさわやかさ、頸もと計の白粉も榮えなく見ゆる天然の色白をこれみよがしに乳のあたりまで胸くつろげて、烟草すば／＼長烟管に立膝の無作法さも咎める人のなきこそよけれ. „Nigorie,” 4.

⁵⁸ Cf. Compernelle 2006: 82. It is nonetheless worth remembering that Oriki's character is psychologically complex: she seems cheerful and carefree but is very depressive and melancholic in her "true" moments.

⁵⁹ 考へたとて仕方がない故人前ばかりの大陽氣、菊の井のお力は行ぬけの締りなしだ、苦勞といふ事はしるまいと言ふお客様もござります、ほんに因果とでもいふものか私が身位かなしい者はあるまいと思ひます. „Nigorie,” 14.

⁶⁰ "Genshichi's wife, Ohatsu was twenty eight or nine years old. She was worn out by poverty, which made her look seven years or so older than her age. The dye on her teeth was covered with spots, and her unshaven eyebrows looked dreary. She repaired her Narumi *yukata*, faded already from laundering, by reversing back and front and patching about the knees with almost invisible stitches. She wore a narrow sash put tightly around her waist. She worked at home making sandal covers." (女房はお初といひて二十八か九にもなるべし、貧にやつれたれば七つも年の多く見えて、お齒黒はまだらに生へ次第の眉毛みるかげもなく、洗ひざらしの鳴海の浴衣を前と後を切りかへて膝のあたりは目立ぬやうに小針のつき當、狹帯きりゝと締めて蟬表の内職.) Ibid.: 15-16.

⁶¹ "Genshichi, who was a *futon* merchant and a man of certain influence in the town, was a patron

The negative role of the quarter is further strengthened by the dual setting of the story – in Kikunoi quarter and in Genshichi’s house. This also emphasises the inevitable tension between the world of barmaids and courtesans and the family life. The former may (and in the case of Genshichi does) lead to the disintegration of the latter.

If juxtaposition may be considered one important technique in presenting the heroines, the symbolic use of images in rendering their psychological states should be regarded as another one. The very title of “Takekurabe” refers to the image of *izutsu* 井筒 (a well casing) which is a metaphor of a boy and a girl – playmates who fall in love with one another. It is said to have been inspired by the poems exchanged in *Ise monogatari*.⁶² In Ichiyō’s story, however, the image of *izutsu* and the traditional motif of *osanajimi* becomes a metaphor for a modern romantic love.⁶³ Midori and Shinnyo are meant for two different worlds. Though being children they instinctively sense a barrier between them. Shinnyo, destined to enter a monastery, feels embarrassed in the presence of Midori, who like her sister will become a courtesan. Midori, on her part, wishes to communicate with Shinnyo but her gestures are imbued with meanings of which she is unaware. When she gives him a handkerchief or a scarlet piece of Yūzen silk, she does not know that symbolically represent a courtesan’s lot. This symbolism is partly noticeable for other children who, while ridiculing Shinnyo, deter him from responding to Midori’s gestures⁶⁴. The only answer he is capable of giving also takes a symbolic form – of a paper narcissus which Midori finds at her doorstep the day before Shinnyo leaves for the seminary.

of mine for some time. But now he’s down-and-out, living like a snail in a hut behind the vegetable shop. He has a wife and a child, too. Really, he is not of an age to be visiting someone like me (...) It’s better to send him away without letting us see and maybe hurt each other. I am ready even to live with his hatred. He may even think of me as a devil or a snake.” (町内で少しは巾もあつた蒲團やの源七といふ人、久しい馴染でござんしたけれど今は見るかげもなく貧乏して八百屋の裏の小さな家にまい／＼つぶろの様になつて居ます、女房もあり子供もあり、私がやうな者に逢ひに来る歳ではなけれど (...) 寄らず障らず歸した方が好いのでござんす、恨まれるは覺悟の前、鬼だとも蛇だとも思ふがようござります。) Ibid.: 13. Junko Saeki claims that Oriki realizes the pain her feelings toward Genshichi might cause his wife and son. Cf. Saeki: 1998: 303-306.

⁶² Cf. Aoki 1972: 6-7.

⁶³ The notion of modern, platonic love might have been inspired by *Bungakukai* 文学界. Cf.: Mulhern, Motoko 1991: 216.

⁶⁴ “For a monk’s son, he surely knows how to talk to girls. Isn’t it sweet how he thanks her with a smile on his face. Is Miss Midori of Daikoku-ya going to become Mr. Fujimoto’s wife? The mistress in the temple is also called daikoku!” (藤本は坊主のくせに女と話をして、嬉しうに禮を言つたは可笑しいでは無いか、大方美登利さんは藤本の女房になるのであらう、お寺の女房なら大黒さまと言ふのだなど。) „Takekurabe,” 419.

The symbolic images in „Nigorie” refer to the protagonist’s destiny, too. One of the earliest images is that of young Oriki carrying rice back home where her parents are waiting for supper. Tired and frozen, the girl stumbles “on ice on a „Nigorie” cover and falls, dropping the rice she had been holding in her hand.” “The rice instantly spilled and went down the gutter through the opening in the sewer. – she explains – The water beneath was filthy. Look as I might I couldn’t possibly pick up the rice.”⁶⁵ She was desperate at that moment but the recurrent image with time gains new meanings. It is used as a symbol of Oriki’s lowly condition on the one hand, and as a prophecy of her inevitable failure, on the other. The fragile character of Oriki’s existence is further emphasized by the image of the log bridge, an important element in the Japanese tradition of *michiyuki* or “travel sequences.”⁶⁶ As Van Compernelle aptly realises, the bridge may be both a metaphor of love and a metaphor of success or *shusse* which remains a central problem in the story.⁶⁷

The last symbolic image may be detected in the final scene of the story. The bystanders are watching “two coffins which were carried out of the town: one in a palanquin, the other on men’s shoulders”⁶⁸ Moreover, the coffins are being carried “after the Festival of Souls had ended.”⁶⁹ The perspective of the bystanders is used to make the ending of the story more ambiguous. The people are speculating on whether or not the former lovers committed a double suicide. The wounds on Oriki’s body might suggest that she did not die voluntarily. The coffin symbolises the transitory character of her life.

Conclusion

“Takekurabe” and “Nigorie,” the most widely recognised of Ichiyō’s stories, are rarely interpreted from a comparative perspective. If their protagonists are juxtaposed at all, it is on the basis of their differences rather than similarities. Midori is usually placed in the context of child’s awakening to the problems of adulthood. Oriki, on the other hand, is much more frequently associated with the problems of marriage and human fate. I believe, however, that by comparing the two protagonists and their position in the world of “pleasure” (the quotation mark resulting from the

⁶⁵ 溝板の上の氷にすべり、足溜りなく轉ける機會に手の物を取落して、一枚はづれし溝板のひまよりざら／＼と灑れ入れば、下は行水きたなき溝泥なり、幾度も覗いては見たれど是れをば何として拾はれませう。 „Nigorie,” 26.

⁶⁶ Cf. Nakanishi 1985:120-124.

⁶⁷ van Compernelle 2006: 90-91.

⁶⁸ 新開の町を出し棺二つあり、一つは駕にて一つはさし擔ぎにて。 „Nigorie,” 32.

⁶⁹ 魂祭り過ぎて幾日。Ibid.: 32.

ambiguous tone of the narratives), it is possible to highlight the complexity of the demimonde as depicted by Higuchi Ichiyō.

“Nigorie,” while being rooted in the *shinjūmono* tradition, also questions the moral aspects of the double suicide highlighting its consequences for the family. By showing the impossibility for the heroine to succeed in life, it also incorporates elements of a modern “success story” or rather of an “anti-success story” (*hanshūsemono*) so well developed later on by Tayama Katai’s *Inaka kyōshi* (田山花袋「田舎教師」), Mori Ōgai’s *Maihime* (森鷗外「舞姫」) or Natsume Sōseki’s *Mon* (夏目漱石「門」).⁷⁰ “Takekurabe,” on the other hand, departs from the Saikakuesque tradition of indulging in the pleasures of demimonde. It rather focuses on the psychological development of a young girl doomed to become a courtesan. My comparative approach proves that Victoria Vernon was right in stating that Higuchi Ichiyō both “challenges the Genroku view of the pleasure quarters and testifies to the survival of some of the societal norms of the Tokugawa past.”⁷¹ Since the two texts simultaneously draw upon and transcend the literary tradition of stories set in pleasure quarters, they may be located in-between the world of classical imagery and the dynamic world of modern fiction.

The ambiguous status of the pleasure quarters is further emphasized by the situation of the protagonists. Both Midori and Oriki are in a transitory stage of life. The former is to become a young woman, prematurely deprived of childhood and suddenly aware of dangers that adult life poses. The latter is determined to face the social and moral consequences of her affair and to “cross the bridge” of fate, not only for herself but also for her father and grandfather. In the end, both of them fail. Nonetheless, their desperate striving for love and success later becomes an inspiration for many readers and writers, starting with Izumi Kyōka 泉鏡花 (1873–1939) and Kōda Aya 幸田文 (1904–1990).

Moreover, Ichiyō’s stories also place the demimonde in the context of Meiji society where pre-modern models of family and criteria of social status gradually became subject to changes. The questions of individual freedom, of marriage and divorce are present in the background of the narratives. Ichiyō also exposes economic dependency within the gay quarters and in a family. As a consequence, she continuously questions and broadens the traditional meaning of *kuruwa* and its inhabitants.

⁷⁰ Cf. van Compernelle 2006: 90.

⁷¹ Vernon 1988: 30.

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Iwona Kordzińska-Nawrocka, Agnieszka Kozyra

1000-year Anniversary of *Genji Monogatari*
Polish Association for Japanese Studies Conference
The University of Warsaw
20-23 October 2008

A gala celebration of the 1000-year anniversary of *Genji monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*, 1008) – a masterpiece of Japanese and world literature – was held at the University of Warsaw library from 20-23 October 2008. The celebration, organized by the Department of Japanese Studies of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, was part of the annual *Japan Days at the University of Warsaw*. The event was under the honorary patronage of the Embassy of Japan, and sponsored by the Toshiba International Foundation and the Takashima Foundation. The organizers also wish to thank the UW Faculty of Oriental Studies and the UW Library.

The Tale of Genji written by Lady Murasaki Shikibu is the quintessence of court culture. Many scholars consider it to be the first psychological love novel in Japanese literature. The work consists of 54 episodes presenting the history of the fictitious Prince Genji and his progeny. The novel's rich world of events concentrates on showing the prince's varied and highly numerous love affairs, his internal experiences and spiritual quandaries. The main part of the unusually rich celebratory program was a conference devoted to Japanese culture and court literature, featuring *The Tale of Genji*. The celebration was inaugurated by words of greeting from the Ambassador of Japan in Poland, JE Ryūichi Tanabe, as well as UW representatives Prof. Włodzimierz Lengauer, vice-rector of Research and International Relations, Dr hab. Piotr Taracha, deputy dean of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Dr hab. Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska, head of the Japanese and Korean Studies Department, and Dr hab. Agnieszka Kozyra, president of the Polish Association of Japanese Studies (PSBJ), who assisted the event. The conference was attended by scholars from every Japanese studies program in Poland and renowned specialists from Japan. Prof. Hideo Watanabe of Shinshū University gave a lecture entitled "The four seasons in court poetry and descriptions of nature in *The Tale of Genji*"; prof. Mitamura Masako of Ferris University presented the symbolism of costume in this famous novel ("Clothes as the key to interpreting *The Tale of Genji*"); and Senri Sonoyama of Rikkyō University discussed the cult of the bodhisattva Kannon in the literature of the Heian period.

The Polish participants in the conference presented a wide range of topics in their lectures. The problem of dating the novel and determining the circumstances in which it was written was addressed by UW Prof. Mikołaj Melanowicz. Dr hab. Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska, prof. of UW and PJWSTK (Polish Japanese Institute of Information Technology), discussed the role of the emperor's wives and concubines. Dr hab. Agnieszka Kozyra, prof. of UW and UJ (Jagiellonian University), discussed religious rites during the Heian period. Dr hab. Romuald Huszcza, prof of UW and UJ, presented the honorific theatre of speech in the narration of *The Tale of Genji*; Dr hab. Krzysztof Stefański, prof. of UMK (Nicolaus Copernicus University), discussed samurai as the „gravediggers of court culture”; and Dr Iwona Kordzińska-Nawrocka of UW lectured on the ties between *The Tale of Genji* and the culture of fragrance. Dr Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda of UW broached the problem of *kotobagaki* (prose introductions) in Heian period literature; Dr Iwona Merklejn of UMK talked about the emperor's family and their media image; and Dr Tomasz Majtczak of UJ analyzed *nomen verbale* forms in old Japanese and discussed how they faded from use. Dr Stanisław Meyer of UJ shared his thoughts about the myth of Japanese cultural exceptionality (geisha and samurai); Dr Koji Morita of UJ spoke about the symbolism of *sakura* (cherry blossom) in Japanese culture; and Małgorzata Martini, curator of the Manggha museum of Japanese Art and Technology in Kraków, discussed the types of Japanese woodblock prints (*ukiyoe*) engraving themes inspired by *The Tale of Genji*. Mgr Iga Rutkowska of UW spoke about the comic-book versions of *The Tale of Genji*; mgr Urszula Mach of UW, about incense in the way of tea; mgr Anna Zalewska of UW, about the influence of *The Tale of Genji* on the way of tea; and mgr Jakub Karpoluk of the National Academy of Science and PJWSTK, about the problems of reinterpreting literary work in film, particularly in the case of Yoshimura Kōzaburō's *Genji monogatari*.

The celebration was accompanied by additional attractions, including an exhibit entitled “Japanese Court Culture in the VIII-XII Centuries”, which remained open to the public at the UW Library until 6 November 2008 (it remained on display at the Culture and Information Center of the Embassy of Japan until December 2008). Horikawa Tonkō's film *The Tale of Genji – A Thousand-year Love* was shown for the first time in Poland. And a presentation was held of “*jūnihitoe*, multi-layer court costumes”, borrowed specially for the occasion from Nishinomiya temple in Japan. The presentation was conducted by Uehara Takeno, president of the Association for Research into Traditional Japanese Costume, with UW Japanese studies students serving as models.

The students also put on the play *Autumn Maples*, based on motifs from *The Tale of Genji*. The conference was preceded by a students' session during which UW Japanese studies students presented the findings of their research into Heian-period court culture.

The commemoration was capped off by a tea ceremony held at the *Kaian* pavilion in the UW library. The host, Kazuko Takashima, Honorary Consul-general of the Republic of Poland in Osaka, treated conference participants to traditional Japanese cookies whose names refer to *The Tale of Genji*. Ms Takashima also gave a lecture about the anniversary celebrations of *The Tale of Genji* in Japan.

Japan Days at the University of Warsaw also included a concert at which *Six Children's Songs* (by the composer Nakada Yoshinao, 1923-2000) were sung by Waleria Przelaskowska-Rokita (mezzo-soprano), accompanied by Witold Wołoszyński on piano.

The Polish Association for Japanese Studies

The Polish Association for Japanese Studies (PSBJ) was established in 2006 – a session inaugurating activity of PSBJ was held on 19th May during the conference “Beyond Borders: Japanese Studies in the 21st Century. In Memoriam Wiesław Kotański”. The Polish Association for Japanese Studies is an organizational member of the European Association for Japanese Studies (EAJS), which was formed in 1973. Bearing in mind European unification and increasing globalization, the Polish Association for Japanese Studies wishes to strengthen cooperation with EAJS and other national associations for Japanese studies.

The general aims of the Polish Association for Japanese Studies are to stimulate interest and encourage research in Japanese Studies in Poland. It also encourages the flow of information and communication in this field of studies through its conferences, which are organized in cooperation with academic centres of Japanese studies in Poland. The PSBJ Council decided that from 2010 the PSBJ conference will be held every three years.

So far, the Polish Association for Japanese Studies has collaborated in organizing the following conferences:

“Beyond Borders: Japanese Studies in the 21st Century. In Memoriam Wiesław Kotański”, 2006, the University of Warsaw

“Civilization of Evolution. Civilization of Revolution. Metamorphoses in Japan 1900-2000“, 2007, Jagiellonian University in Kraków

“Millennium of *Genji monogatari* in Japanese Culture”, 2008, the University of Warsaw.

Every year the PSBJ organizes a Ph.D. Workshop in a different member academic centre. Ph.D. students present their reports and take part in interdisciplinary seminars.

The Polish Association for Japanese Studies has also launched an on-line data-base (in Polish and English) of publications on Japanese Studies in Poland.

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Assistant professors: 3 (political science and Okinawan studies, history,
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PhD candidates: 2.
Lecturers: 4.
Native lecturers: 5.

Course Data

Daily studies (initiated 1987)
BA course (3 years) – *Japanese Philology*: 50-60 students; 20 students
admitted every year.
MA course (2 years) – *Japanese Philology*: 20-25 students; 20 students
admitted every year.

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Assistant professors: 6 (linguistics, classical and modern literature, history, Okinawan Studies).

PhD candidates: 2.

Native lecturers: 3.

Course Data

Daily studies (initiated 1987)

BA course (3 years) – *Japanese Philology*: 50-60 students; 20 students admitted every year.

MA course (2 years) – *Japanese Philology*: 20-25 students; 20 students admitted every year.

Extra-mural studies (initiated 2003)

BA course – *Civilisations of the Far East*: 50-60 students; 30 students admitted every year.

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Professors: 2 (including 1 visiting professor) (history, Japanese linguistics and Okinawan studies).

Assistant professors: 1 (Japanese media, modern history of Japan).

Assistants, visiting lecturers and volunteers: 5.

Native lecturers and volunteers: 4.

Course Data

Daily studies (initiated 2008)

BA course (3 years) – *Japanese Philology*: 12 students; 15 students admitted every year.

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Staff

Professors: 4 (including 1 co-operating professor) (Japanese history, literature, Japanese religion and philosophy, linguistics).

Assistant professors: 6 (Japanese literature and gender studies, Japanese literature, theatre and aesthetics, history, literature and poetry, linguistics, literature and Japanese language teaching).

PhD candidates: 11.

Course Data

Daily studies (initiated 1957)

BA course (3 years) – *Japanese Philology*: 55 students; 20 students admitted every year.

MA course (2 years) – *Japanese Philology*: 21 students; 20 students admitted every year.

Extra-mural studies (initiated 1997)

BA course – *Japanese Philology*: 23 students.

Shinobu Kaiho-Przybylska

**Deviation from Traditional I-novel Characteristics—
Mizumura Minae's *Shishōsetsu from Left to Right***

The I-novel (*Watakushi shōsetsu/Shishōsetsu*) has been a significant form in the literary circle of modern Japanese literature since the 1920s. Yet toward the end of the 20th century its light seemed to be waning. However, in 1995 a work whose title drew on the I-novel genre appeared: Mizumura Minae's *Shishōsetsu from left to right*. This work, in keeping with its playfully paradoxical title, has a structure and contents that overthrew the fixed idea of the I-novel and yet which breathed new life into the genre. This paper looks at how it deviates from the traditional I-novel in terms of such extrinsic markers as a scene, form, length, and the mood of narration.

Agnieszka Kozyra

**Nishida Kitarō's Logic of Absolutely Contradictory Identity and the
Problem of Ethics in Zen**

The paper aims to clarify the meaning of Zen ethics from the point of view of Nishida Kitarō's philosophy and his interpretation of Zen experience of Enlightenment. Analyzing the Buddhist notion of Emptiness (*śūnyatā*), he makes a clear distinction between the 'Emptiness' of formal logic (which complies with formal logic and as such means the negation of Being) and 'Paradox-logical Emptiness' (i.e. Nothingness, which complies with paradoxical logic and as such implies the contradictory identity of Being and Non-being). Such Paradox-logical Emptiness is called Absolute Nothingness (*zettaimu*) in Nishida's philosophy. Paradox in its philosophical meaning is defined here as "one-dimensional contradictory judgment. Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945) distinguished paradoxical logic which complies with the principle of contradiction from non-logical non-discrimination (*higōriteki mufunbetsu*), which is coincidental and chaotic, since it does not comply with any rule.

In the first part of this article the author presents Nishida's Zen practice and his final conclusions on Zen logic and philosophical reflection on the experience of Enlightenment, for instance, the relation of "Mind" and

“Buddha” as Absolute Contradictory Self-Identity (*zettaimujunteki jiko dōitsu*)

In the second part the author analyzes from the point of view of Nishida’s paradoxical logic (the logic of absolutely contradictory self-identity) such problems in Zen ethics as: the dualism of good and evil as an obstacle on the Way to Enlightenment, ‘Great compassion’ (*daihi*) as an ethical ideal, the strict rules in Zen monasteries versus absolute freedom in Zen.

Mikołaj Melanowicz

Yamada Taichi’s Work – In a Scope of Metamorphoses of the Popular Drama and Novel in the 1980s During the “Bubble Culture”

In spite of the fact that in the field of the economy the “bubble era“ is limited to the years 1986-1991, according to Hara Hiroyuki (*Baburu bunka ron – ‘Posuto sengo’ toshite no 1980nendai*, 2006), the whole decade of the 1980s can be referred to as the “bubble decade”. In Japanese cultural history, the “bubble” episode left a bitter aftertaste. In some cases the “bubble economy” created immense wealth, but in many other cases it left people without a chance to achieve a decent standard of living. Japanese society with a hitherto uniform middle class actually transformed into a society divided into rich and poor.

What happened in literature in this decade? We remember the great achievements of Abe Kōbō, Ōe Kenzaburō, Endō Shūsaku and of introverted writers such as Kuroi Senji and Furui Yoshikichi, as well as the emergence of Murakami Ryū and Murakami Haruki. We acknowledge the multiplicity of great women writers such as Enchi Fumiko, Ariyoshi Sawako, Ōba Minako and Kurahashi Yumiko, and later Tsushima Yūko and Masuda Mizuko and others. In the same decade of the so-called “Crystal People” (*kurisutaru zoku*), named after the title of Tanaka Yasuo’s novel *Nantonaku kurisutaru* (“Somewhat Crystal”, 1980), Yoshimoto Banana and Yamada Eimi established their literary positions.

At the same time, however, media culture became extremely popular, especially TV dramas written by Mukōda Kuniko (1929-1981), Kuramoto Sō (b. 1935), Yamada Taichi (b. 1934) and many others.

As the main topic of my paper, I am going to introduce Yamada Taichi, one of the most famous writers of dramas, scenarios and novels in Japan, awarded about twenty literary prizes. He wrote more than one hundred TV plays and more than twenty theatre plays, as well as novels such as *Owari*

ni mita machi (“The Last Place They Saw”, 1984), *Tobu yume o shibaraku minai* (“I Have not Dreamt of Flying for a While”, 1985) and *Ijintachi to no natsu* (“Strangers”, 1987). His most important works are his TV serial dramas such as *Sorezore no aki* (“Pieces of Autumn”, 1973), *Kishibe no arubamu* (“Album From the Shore”, 1977) and, in the 1980s, *Sōshun suketchibukku* (“Sketchbook of Early Spring”, 1983), *Nihon no omokage* (“Images of Japan”, 1984, English translation “Out of the East”) and *Fuzoroi no ringotachi* (“Assorted Apples”, 1983, 1985, 1990). All these works are picture stories that are symbolic of the 1980s.

Ewa Pałasz-Rutkowska

Ambassador Tadeusz Romer. His Role in Polish-Japanese Relations (1937-1941)

Tadeusz Romer (1894-1978) is one of the most important figures in the history of the Polish diplomatic service as well as the history of Polish-Japanese relations. As the first and only Polish Ambassador in Tokyo before World War II, he played a very important role in strengthening and upholding friendly relations between Poland and Japan until 1941, despite the war in Europe.

He deserves credit for finalizing the process of transforming the diplomatic legations into embassies and normalizing relations between Poland and Manchukuo. He established the Polish Press Bureau in the Far East for the purpose of conducting propaganda in connection with Poland’s increased interest in Japan stemming from the outbreak of war. He organized aid for Poles deported deep within the USSR, founded the Polish Committee to Aid War Victims and helped refugees from Poland, mainly Jews who fled Europe to escape the Holocaust.

Katarzyna Sonnenberg

Caught In Between. Women of the Demimonde in Higuchi Ichiyō’s Narratives

The article focuses on “Nigorie” (Muddy Bay, 1895) and “Takekurabe” (Comparing of Heights, 1895-1896), two stories for which Higuchi Ichiyō (1872-1896) used the demimonde as a setting. “Nigorie” is staged at

Kikunoi, an unlicensed house of pleasures, “Takekurabe” – at Daionji-mae, in the vicinity of the famous Yoshiwara district.

The author of the article starts with elucidating the cultural role of the red-light and its impact on Japanese literature. Then she proceeds to illustrate how Higuchi Ichiyō, while referring to the rich tradition of literary motifs and symbols, managed to use them creatively and adjust them to the circumstances of early-modern Japan. The author uses the examples of *kaimami* (erotic gazing), *shinjū* (double suicide) and *shusse* (social promotion) and juxtaposes their traditional meaning with their significance in the context of Ichiyō’s stories.

The debate regarding Ichiyō’s approach to her literary and cultural heritage is followed by the close-reading of the two texts. The first goal here is to reconstruct Kikunoi and Daionji-mae as presented in Ichiyō’s works. A comparative method enables the author to highlight the similarities (use of deception, commercialisation, reification) and differences (juxtaposition of prestige and coarseness). Finally, Oriki and Midori, the protagonists of the stories, are considered. The author distinguishes juxtaposition and symbolic use of images as two main methods of rendering the psychology of Ichiyō’s heroines. Their psychological complexities, aggravated by the special status of the pleasure quarters, may be interpreted in the framework of the “caught in between” metaphor.

シノブ・カイホウ＝プシビルスカ

伝統的私小説からの逸脱—水村美苗「私小説 from left to right」

私小説と呼ばれるジャンルは、1920年代以降の日本近代文学において文壇の中心的役割を果たしてきたとされる。が、20世紀の末にかけ、その私小説はかつての勢いを失ったかに見えた。ところが1995年、その私小説というジャンル名をそのまま小説のタイトルとした作品が現れた。水村美苗の「私小説 from left to right」である。この作品はそのいかにも正統的なタイトルとは裏腹に、従来の私小説の概念を覆すような作りになっており、私小説というジャンルに新風を吹き込んだ。本稿はこの水村の私小説がいかにかこれまでの私小説とはかけ離れたものであるのか、舞台の設定、形式、長さ、語りのムードという視点から論じたものである。

アグネシカ・コズィラ

西田幾多郎の絶対矛盾的自己同一の論理と禅の伝統における倫理の問題

本稿の目的は、西田幾多郎（1870－1945）による絶対矛盾的自己同一の論理の立場から、禅における倫理の問題を分析することである。本稿第一節では西田幾多郎の絶対無の哲学と絶対矛盾的自己同一の論理の要点をあげ、西田の哲学的概念と理論を、禅の教えを説明するための便利な「道具」として検証する。「矛盾的自己同一の根底に徹することを、見性と云ふのである。そこには深く背理の理と云ふものが把握せられなければならない」という西田の言葉にみられるように、西田の絶対無の哲学と禅の「見性」の経験における現実観には密接な関係がある。西田の絶対矛盾的自己同一の論理は禅の教えへの「鍵」とは言える。

第二節では、西田の禅の思想的伝統の解釈に言及することによって、禅の倫理における次のような問題を説明することができる。悟りの妨害するものとしての善悪の二元論や善悪の分別への批判と大悲という倫理的理想、禅の自由自在と禅寺院内の厳しい清規、という自己矛盾的関係などである。

ミコワイ・メラノヴィチ

山田太一の作品—「バブル・カルチャ」 1980年代の大衆ドラマ と小説の行方をめぐって

経済学の定義によれば、「バブル時代」は1986—1991年に限定されているが、原宏之「バブル文化論 <ポスト戦後>としての一九八〇年代」によると、1980年代の10年間を「バブル10年間」と呼ぶべきである。日本の文化史の観点からは、その「バブル・エピソード」が苦い後味を残したと考えられる。「バブル経済」が限りない富を生んだ一方で、ふさわしい生活条件を達する見込みのない人も現れた。日本社会はこれまで平等な中流社会から貧富に分裂した。

その時代の文学に特徴的なのは、安部公房、大江健三郎、遠藤周作のほか、黒井千次、古井由吉などのいわゆる「内向の世代」の作家の作品、さらには村上龍、村上春樹の登場である。また、円地文子、有吉佐和子、大庭みな子、倉橋由美子、そして津島祐子、増田みず子などの女性作家についても述べるべきである。同じ1980年代に田中康夫の『なんとなくクリスタル』から「クリスタル族」と名づけられたよしもとばなな、山田詠美が作家として認められてきた。同時にメディア・カルチャー、特に向田邦子（1928～1981）、倉本聰（1935～）、山田太一（1934～）のテレビ・ドラマが人気を獲得した。

小論では20ほどの文学賞を受賞した日本の劇作家・脚本化・作家として有名な山田太一を紹介したい。氏はテレビ・ドラマ脚本100個以上、劇20個以上を執筆し、『終わりに見た街』（1984）、『飛ぶ夢をしばらく見ない』（1985）、『異人たちとの夏』（1987）などの小説を出した。氏の最も重要な作品として、『それぞれの秋』（1973）、『岸辺のアルバム』（1977）、そして1980年代の代表的なものと思われる『早春スケッチブック』（1983）、『日本の面影 ラフカディオ・ハーンの世界』（1984）と『ふぞろいの林檎たち』（1983, 1985, 1990）というテレビ・ドラマを紹介したい。

エヴァ・パウシュ=ルトコフスカ

駐日ポーランド大使タデウシュ・ロメルとポーランド・日本関係 (1937-1941)

タデウシュ・ロメル (1894-1978) は、ポーランド外交史においても、ポーランド・日本関係史においても重要な人物である。戦前の初代駐日大使として、第二次世界大戦の開戦後も、1941年まで、友好関係を強化、維持することに大事な役割を果たした。例えば、彼の功績で1937年10月1日に両国の公使館が大使館に正式に昇格され、その後満州国承認問題が解決された。1939年9月に、ロメル大使のイニシアチブで極東ポーランド通信班が誕生した。彼はソ連にいるポーランド人抑留者の援助活動を組織し、また、ホロコーストを脱出した避難民、主にポーランド系ユダヤ人を援助するために東京でポーランド戦争被災者救済委員会を設けた。

カタジーナ・ソンネンベルグ

自分を失った女たち：樋口一葉の作品における花柳界のヒロイン

「にごりえ」及び「丈くらべ」は、様々なアンソロジーに編まれる樋口一葉の有名な作品でもあり、評論家の注目を促す作品でもある。その作品においては、歓楽街は舞台としてだけでなく文化的な概念として非常に重要な役割を果たしている。

即ち、長年の歴史を誇る概念であるからには、様々な連想を誘発させることによって、記述に脚色を加えることが多い。従って、「にごりえ」の菊の井にせよ、「たけくらべ」の吉原に隣接する大音寺前にせよ、文学的・文化的な含蓄があるに相違ない。

本稿は、樋口一葉はどのように歓楽街の概念を使用していたか、好色物や心中物等に使われていた主題をどのように翻案していたかを考察したものである。例えば、西鶴的な叙述方法を使っても、主人公の肉体的魅力に留まらず、若干の心理的描写を取り入れたことも、近松と異なり、心中の名誉の面だけでなく、破壊的な面まで把握していたことも、樋口一葉の日本の伝統に対する独創的なアプローチを表すといっても過言ではない。最後に、歓楽街に登場させたヒロ

インの位置を社会科学的・心理学的に捉えた樋口一葉は、ヒロインの儚い人生のみならず、明治時代の移り変わる様子まで表現していたといえるだろう。

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japońska. Poezja XX wieku. Teatr XX wieku [Japanese Literature. 20th Century Poetry and Drama] (1996), *Formy w literaturze japońskiej* [Forms in Japanese Literature] (2003), *Japońskie narracje. Studia o pisarzach współczesnych* [Japanese Narratives. On contemporary writers] (2004), and translation of novels by Natsume Sōseki, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, Kawabata Yasunari, Ibuse Masuji, Endō Shūsaku, Abe Kōbō, Ōe Kenzaburō.

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Reflection on Literature in Eastern and Western Cultures (1990)

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カタジーナ・ソンネンベルグ

ヤギェロン大学文献学部博士課程3年在籍。2006年に、井原西鶴の『好色五人女』における叙述方法に関する卒業論文をヤギェオ大学日本学・中国学科に提出。2007年に、井原西鶴の『好色一代女』とダニエル・デフォーの『モル・フランダーズ』の告白叙述に関する卒業論文をヤギェロン大学英語学科に提出。現在、草稿・エクリチュールの概念を使い、マニユスクリプトによる樋口一葉のヒロイン構造の変遷を研究し、またヤギェロン大学日本学・中国学部及び「マンガ」博物館の日本語学校で日本語・日本文化を教えている。主要な研究課題は、江戸時代の戯作文学・明治時代の短編小説。

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