





# **DOPPO KUNIKIDA: FIVE STORIES**

**TRANSLATED BY  
ARTHUR LLOYD**

Edited by Earl Trotter

**Peach Blossom Press**



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Frontispiece: Photograph of Doppo Kunikada from the 1890s.  
Kamakura Museum of Literature archives.

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1. Doppo Kunikada (1871-1908). 2. Japanese Fiction.





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## Introduction

### Doppo Kunikida<sup>1</sup>

Kunikida Kamekichi (国木田 亀吉) was born August 30, 1871 in Chōshi, Chiba. He later assumed the name Tetsuo (貞臣) and shortly after that, the pen name Doppo (獨歩) by which he is commonly referred to, and which we will use forthwith. There are some doubts regarding his biological father as his mother was married previously. In any case, Doppo was raised in a normal family setting by his mother and her samurai class husband. The family moved to Tokyo in 1874 and then went on to Iwakuni in Yamaguchi prefecture where Doppo grew up. In 1887, Doppo went to Tokyo to study law and with political ambitions. However, in 1888, he entered the English Department at Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō (now Waseda University). He was baptized as a Christian in 1891. After a threatened student strike, he left school that same year.

Kunikida founded a literary magazine *Seinen bungaku* in 1892 and began a private diary (*Azamukazaru no ki*) in 1893. Over time he gradually shifted from liberal political pursuits to a desire to be a writer that was founded on Christian and Wordsworthian principles, although political concerns resurfaced later. These years were quite unstable for him. He began teaching English and other subjects in Saiki, Kyushu, and the events there and natural scenery surfaced in some of his tales. Then, in 1894, he became a war correspondent for the *Kokumin Shimbun* newspaper, covering the First Sino-Japanese War from the front. These articles proved quite popular.

In 1895, while living with his parents in Tokyo, he became editor of the magazine *Kunikida*. He then met Nobuko Sasaki, who was to become his wife despite fierce opposition from her parents. They married in November but Doppo's financial situation caused

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from my foreword to Kunikida (2022).

her to divorce him a few months later despite her being pregnant. This event made a deep impact on Doppo.

Kunikida began to write romantic poetry and in 1897 was a contributor to an anthology, *Lyric Poems*. He was an admirer of William Wordsworth and this impacted his earlier development. He also was writing short stories at this time. He married again in 1898 to Haruko Enomoto and the same year his first book of short stories, *Musashino*, was published. His work was lyrical with a Wordsworthian sensitivity to nature, but over time naturalism played a greater part in his writing.

In 1905 he endeavoured to get into publishing, but his business failed in 1907. The same year he became ill with tuberculosis and the next year was in a sanatorium at Chigasaki. He died June 23, 1908 at the age of 36. Although in later life he was not part of a literary clique, he was a prominent figure and his writing had an impact on the development of Japanese literature in the late Meiji. In addition to his poetry, he wrote at least sixty-eight short stories. As Futabatei Shimei was ‘father’ of the modern Japanese novel, so was Doppo, of the modern Japanese short story.

## **Arthur Lloyd<sup>2</sup>**

The prime translator of this volume, Arthur Lloyd, was born on April 10, 1852 in Shimla, India, his father being an army major. He was educated in England then took orders in the Anglican church. He studied in Germany and then married and had a family. He went to Japan in 1884 as a missionary. In addition to his church work, he was an academic and lectured at various universities. Due to his wife’s health he went to Canada in 1890 to teach classics at the University of Toronto’s Trinity College and later became headmaster of Trinity College School in Port Hope. His wife died and he returned to Japan in 1893 for good. From 1903 – 1905, he was president of the Asiatic Society of Japan. He remarried, to Mary von Fallot, who helped translate many of the literary works (but is curiously omitted in U. S. editions). She left Japan in 1910 due to poor health and died shortly thereafter.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from my foreword to Tokutomi (2022).



Lloyd published several works on Buddhism in Japan and wrote *Every-day Japan* (1908), a description of the country and its people. He saw Jodo Shinshu as mirroring Christianity. He translated a book of Japanese poetry by Tetsujiro Inoue based on a German translation from the *kanbun* (form of Chinese used by Japanese literati) and also a couple of novels. Four of the stories in this book were first published in Lloyd (1913) and the last, “Men I Shall Never Forget” in *The Japan Magazine* (1910), making them the earliest translations of Doppo into English. Original illustrations are included for the last story and the original Japanese text is provided in the Appendix. Lloyd was going to be a major contributor to the *The Japan Magazine* but he died after its first year on October 27, 1911. Footnotes (all editorial) have been provided to identify places and allusions. See Powles (1968) for the fullest coverage on Lloyd, and Ion (2010) for a recent biography in English.

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## Letter from Yugawara

Uchiyama, Esq.,

You ask me why I took myself off so suddenly. Your question is quite reasonable. Unfortunately, I have been brought to the necessity of making clean breast of it to you. It may happen that the matter may really turn out a blessing for me, but in my present state of mind I certainly feel that it is a misfortune. If it should ever turn out a blessing it will be left for me to discover in the future. But even though I should find out in the future that it is a blessing, at present I certainly feel that it is a misfortune. I don't mind not knowing, but I wish I had no blessings.

“Let me introduce you to a young lady.” Novels begin always in this way. The critic will tell me that everybody is sick to death of love stories; but when two young people come together it is always in this way that the story begins. I cannot, therefore, begin otherwise. I am devoutly thankful that God did not make me and all mankind just in order that we might follow the dictates of the critic.

On the evening of the 13th, I was sitting alone leaning over my desk and thinking about nothing in particular.

It was past 10, everyone in the house had gone to bed and the rain was drizzling outside. A man like myself, with neither parents nor brothers, finds little to admire in a night like this, more especially in a boarding house. The well-known lives of poets come to my mind at such a time with irresistible force. So please begin by imagining that you see me sitting on the brink of tears, looking earnestly at the lamp shade.

Suddenly there came before me the image of Okinu. Okinu! Okinu! I suppose that you have never yet been introduced to this name. And you are not the only one of my friends in this boat. Not a single one of them has ever yet had even an inkling of the sound of this name, so peaceful, sweet to me in the depth of my heart. In

spite of all that the gentlemen who criticize novels may say, I am going to commence my story with an emphatic statement: "There was once a young lady whose name was Okinu."

As soon as the image of this young lady presented itself to my mind, there at once came crowding in a host of other thoughts of Okinu. The dear creature I wish I could see her. I should like to see her. You may say what you like, but the facts remain, and I cannot tell you my story otherwise. A feeling came over me that, in the whole world, there was no one else that loved me and whom I loved except this young lady. You will tell me that the heart is fickle. Why should the heart that loves nature, the heart that is pure and lofty and that loves its fellow-men – why should such a heart be called fickle, contemptible or morbid?

Whenever I have a thought like that, my impulse is to banish from our planet all the moralists, the would be saints and critics of the world. Ye blazing volcanoes of the West Indies, why is it that you have never let your fires fall on the heads of these beasts?

When I thought of how Okinu had brought into the bathroom in which I was alone, the pears which she had peeled for me; when I thought of the walks we two had taken together along the banks of the river; when I remembered her kind words, her innocent spirits and her smiling face. I mechanically struck the table and shouted. – "I will go and see her tomorrow."

"And pray, who is Kinu?" you will ask. Don't be alarmed. She is neither a geisha nor a prostitute, neither a blue-stocking nor a young lady of fashion; she is not a beauty, and is not plain. She is just a woman. She is a servant-girl at the Nakanishi Hotel in Yugawara<sup>45</sup>. She is a servant in the house, where I am now writing. She is a daughter of a country farmer. A country girl, who looks upon Odawara<sup>46</sup> as a great city. I have known her ever since last summer, since the time when after my illness, you remember, the doctor at the Red-Cross Hospital advised me to go and take a two months' holiday at Yugawara.

On the morning of the 14th, I hastily made my preparations and left my lodgings. On the Ginza I made a few purchases of articles likely to please a woman, such as a half-collar and some hair pins,

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45 A town in Kanagawa Prefecture.

46 A city in Kanagawa Prefecture of not great size.

and then took my train. Never before that day had I bought a half-collar to give pleasure to a lady, and when I pictured to myself the pleasure with which she would receive these presents, I could scarcely keep my seat for joy. A vain world! There many vain persons in the world, some of whom give presents to ladies and some who do not. I am going to offer these poor gifts, with my whole heart, to this country girl whom I love.

It has been raining ever since last night. It has stopped now, but the air is still moist and there are a few clouds floating about in the sky. A journey in early summer! There is nothing I like so much, and I had often before today taken such a trip. But think of the happy feelings I had now. I cherished happy and pleasurable imaginations in my heart. Tonight I was going to meet my best girl. Tonight, I was going to take a bath in that clear pure hot spring. These the summer thoughts I had by the way. When I had alighted at Kozu<sup>47</sup> the sun was shining through the gaps in the in the clouds and mountains, fields and forests in their robes of green were dazzling the eye. Hurrah! The tram-car starts at full speed, the Hakone mountains loom grandly and majestically before me, and come so near that I feel I can almost touch them with my nose. Light, fleecy clouds float over the sea in the offing. There are seagulls flying, and waves breaking, and clouds in the sky which hide the scene. A light shadow creeps over sea and land. Another moment, and lo! all is bright again. I can assure you that at this moment I thought myself to be anything but an unhappy man. And assuredly my views of life were far from pessimistic.

Whenever I arrive at Odawara I always have the feeling that, if I could choose the locality of my home, I would certainly desire to live at Odawara. There is the old castle on the high hills, the Pacific Ocean touching the sky, and the great trees in full leaf. I think it can be nothing extraordinary if a man like myself, whose taste leads him to become a painter of the foreign school, should wish to fix his permanent abode in this place.

Beyond Odawara I travelled by the notorious *jinsha-tetsudo*<sup>48</sup>. I was anxious to reach Yugawara as quickly as possible. For this purpose I denied myself the pleasure of spending half a day in my

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47 Now part of Odawara.

48 A man-powered narrow gauge railway.

beloved Odawara, and took the jinsha straight from the electric car giving myself just time for a hasty lunch.

As I got into the *jinsha* I began to feel that I had already half reached Yugawara.

The *raison d'être* of this jinsha-railway is to reach Atami, Izusan<sup>49</sup>, Yugawara and such like watering-places. Everybody that visits one of these places feels on getting into the car that now it is certainly all right.

The train left Odawara in a leisurely manner. I put my head out of the window and looked round me. Without warning the driver's bugle sounded a loud note and the vehicle began to slide down on an inclined plain. The sky was absolutely clear, and the sea breeze blew through the windows across the car. I looked behind, and the flags of the hotels in the town were fluttering white on the poles.

I turned my face and looked ahead; three persons were standing in the road by the side of the track. They looked like country people going to town, that is, to Odawara. One showed some red, – that was the girl; another showed some white, – that was an old woman; the one who had his skirts tucked up round his hard hips was an old man. There they were standing out of the way of the passing tramcar and looking in our direction.

“Why! That's Okinu!” And before I had the time fully to take it in, there they were, all three of them right under the right window.

“Okinu-san!” I shouted and raised my hand. Okinu gave a pleasant smile and bowed to me with a sudden flush on her face. The distance between us grew momentarily longer. If it had not been for my fellow-passengers, I should have stamped with rage, I should have thrown my hat on the floor. But sitting right in front of me was there not an official-looking gentleman with a forbidding countenance? I contented myself with folding my arms in resignation.

My heart told me that Okinu had left the Nakanishiya<sup>50</sup>; she was returning to her home to make preparations for her bridals. I remembered that, during the summer of the year before, the other girls chaffed her about a young man at Odawara, and I concluded it must be so. The thought filled me with disgust. What did I care (to

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49 The Izusan shrine overlooks Atami on the Izu peninsula, Shizuoka Prefecture.

50 Nakanishi Hotel.



put it briefly) about sea or mountains or Oshima<sup>51</sup> on the horizon or about the expanse of waves, big and little! The Nature, which, up to this very moment, had given me so much pleasure suddenly lost all its charm. It had become some thing outside of myself.

The spa of Yugawara is a place with which I am thoroughly acquainted, and there was, therefore, no reason why I should not enjoy myself, even though Okinu had not been there. But since I had made Okinu's acquaintance, the very fact of her not being there was sufficient to make it a most uncomfortable place. I had had all the inconveniences of being tumbled about in the uncomfortable tram-car on my road to this lonely little spot at the bottom of a ravine: I could not go home at once and so I went on to the hotel, which I reached by 5 o'clock in the afternoon. My arrival was unexpected, and I took the landlord quite by surprise. The landlord is a worthy man, and received me with warm welcome. I went into the bath-room. One of the servant-maids came in.

"I am very sorry for you, Mr. Koyama," she said.

"Why so?"

"Why, you know, Okinu isn't here any longer." With this parting shot she pattered off. Alas, Alas! This was the climax of my disappointed love. Disappointed love? I'm sick of disappointed love. I was deeply in love with her, but I had never dreamed of what to do with her. And Okinu on her part, – I am sure she did not dislike me, – at the same time I am certain that she had no thought about future.

Well, that evening the maid-servants came gathering to my room, and with them the daughter of the house. The talk turned on Okinu. Imagine my feelings when I was told that Okinu had gone to Odawara and that presently she would be married! It seemed as though my fate had been fixed, and my distress was greater than I could describe. Then I had lost her! I had come, in the course of time, to consider that Okinu was my own property and that I was the only person, of whom she had any right to be fond. I had brought her some presents. These I divided amongst the maid-servants and the daughter of the house. They, of course, were highly delighted, but I had no pleasure at all. The next day it rained, a steady downpour from morning till evening with a dark

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51 A volcanic island of Izu.

gloomy sky. The water in the stream rose higher and rushed on with a tremendous roar.

At the midday meal the landlord's daughter came in to wait. She looked into my face and laughed, and I could not help laughing back.

“Are you wanting to see Okinu, sir?”

What an absurd question! I think it the person who showed me such great kindness last year.

“Shall I arrange for you to see her?”

“How kind of you! Please do so.”

“Okinu is coming here tomorrow for certain.”

“When she comes, please give her my very kindest regards.”

The girl just laughed as though I did not believe it. Okinu was her cousin.

In the afternoon the rain had stopped, but the weather did not look like clearing. The clouds flew as though they were traversing the earth; the narrow valley grew narrower, and I had the feeling of sitting in a prison. I was sitting in my chamber with nothing to do and looking out idly, when something suddenly flashed before my eyes and vanished again behind the eaves of the house next door. That looked like Okinu, and I was out in a moment. Not a soul was to be seen up or down the stony street. There were about ten bathing establishments; beside those, a few farm-houses not worth counting and a few houses which did a little trade. Truly a remote valley! Imagine this valley filled with rain clouds and everything having lost its light. I went walking purposelessly along this lonely road by the side of this river. The road runs along the river for two or three cho in a downward direction and one cho up, and about the middle of this stretch is a painted bridge. What do you suppose were my feelings as I walked between those limits? All the people who were leaning against the balustrades of the bathing houses and looking out, wore sad faces as though they were going to cry. The girls who stood with babes on their backs looked like sick folk and the babes themselves were crying and puling. It was a scene of gloom, of ennui, of lonesomeness, and in my eyes, at least, of wretchedness. And I did not meet Okinu. That was quite natural. The next day, in spite of the threatening aspect of the sky, I started

alone from the hotel in the direction of the “Ten Province Pass<sup>52</sup>.” Everybody belonging to the hotel tried to stop me, but I would not listen. They urged me to take some one with me but I was obstinate. The mountain was hidden in the clouds and I insisted on climbing the mountain at all hazards, because I wanted to climb into the clouds.

Never before today have I come across such a solitary scene. The grey clouds beneath my feet gave me peeps of country, below which they vanished as quickly as they came. Whenever the clouds broke they showed me mountains upon mountains. I was the only man between heaven and earth, and not a bird chirped. I sat down for a while on a stone at the summit. As I sat there, I had no feeling either of love or of a broken heart. Only I could not resist a certain weird feeling that came over me, and I wept as I thought of my loneliness.

On my way home, as I was passing through the forest black with its foliage, I had such thoughts as these in my mind. Suppose I should slip here and fall into this ravine and die. The Nakanishiya people would raise a hue and cry, if I failed to return. They would hire woodcutters to search for me and would at last find my dead body lying on its side at the bottom of the ravine there. Then a telegram would be sent to Tokyo. You or Awaji would come in haste and I should be cremated. Koyama so and so, a student of art, would have disappeared from the face of the earth. As I was engaged in this thought, I unconsciously stopped walking. Drops of water were trickling and falling from the branch of a thick-leaved tree. Down in the chasm below me I could hear the disagreeable sound of water tumbling and rushing. I could feel the goose-skin standing up all over my body.

How surprised the hotel people were when they saw me coming back with a face like that of a dead man. My surprise was even greater than theirs, when I learned that Okinu had been there today and had returned to her own home. I was taken with fever that night; it is three days since I was taken ill and I am not well yet. I suppose I must have caught cold when I went up into the mountains.

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52 A mountain in Shizuoka Prefecture.

You are not a critic in these days, so I think you will allow me to tell you what were my thoughts during those three days, as I lay tossing on the bed.

Love is power, a power which man cannot resist. Those who do not acknowledge that power, and who think they can repress it, must be those who have never been touched by it. As a proof of this, people who have once been afflicted by love, when, after a while, they recover their senses, will remain in great doubt themselves as to why they took such pains of love.

The reason is that they are now no longer in touch with love. This is what happens in the case of one and the same man. How much less likely is it then that a man who has never come in contact with love should understand the circumstances, the pleasures, and the pains of love in others!

As for the people that laugh at love madness, it is well for them not to be deceived by any poor tradition or theory. Love is the greatest passion of man. The people who rail at this passion may live for millions and tens of millions of years. But I am sorry to say the earth is waiting to open and swallow them up. Gentlemen of the bubble, when I see you putting on faces as though you could control this marvellous universe, I simply assume a cold smile. I ask you, gentlemen, seriously, humbly and modestly, to examine the question of our human life and our universe. Gentlemen, when you laugh at love, you laugh at humanity. Man is a divine creature far more truly than you think. If the love, which dwells in a human heart, is something to be laughed at and something not deserving of confidence, then what is the value of human life? Or, isn't it true that there is nothing so false as the heart of man?

If you, gentlemen, when on a moonlit night you hear that flute, you can conceive in your hearts only the faintest idea of eternity, then believe in love! If, gentlemen, you claim to belong to the school of Nakae Chōmin<sup>53</sup> and are contented to float around the earth at a distance of 18 *ri*, then by what authority do you interfere with the liberty of the men who say, "Spring is short, where is the life that has no death?"

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53 (1847 – 1901). The pen name of Nakae Tokusuke, a journalist, political theorist and statesman with liberal views. "Chomin" means "the whole nation" or "all the people."

How can you interfere with the liberty of the young men and women who say, "There will be no second spring; let us live according to the dictates of the flesh."?

Well, my dear Uchiyama, I will stop here. I have, as you will see, felt the pleasure of love. It may be a vain gift. The day after tomorrow I shall come back to town. What do you think will be my feelings when I pass through Odawara?

Koyama.

(THE END)