



**SELECTED STORIES
OF
DOPPO KUNIKIDA**

**TRANSLATED BY
MONO MITOBE M.A.**

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.



Editor's Foreword

Doppo Kunikida

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 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.

Mono Mitobe

The translator, Mono Mitobe (水戸部茂野), graduated from Japan Women’s College in about 1907, presumably in English literature for which there were only ten students at start up in 1901. She went to America for seven years and obtained her M. A. at the University of Michigan. She returned to Japan in 1914 to live in Tokyo. She wrote about her return in a magazine in October of that year under the name Mitobe Monoko (水戸部茂野子). Besides the current volume, she wrote a play about Kusunoki Masashige (1294-1336), *The Royal Kusunoki: A Historical Play in Three Acts* (1919). This was primarily intended for Japanese students studying English. Nothing else is known of her.

Her objectives in publishing this book were twofold. First, as a venue for Japanese students to study English. Therefore there were notes at the end of the volume. Secondly, to acquaint English-speaking readers with the work of Doppo Kunisida. Her collection includes works from throughout Doppo’s brief career. Six of her choices have yet to be translated again, including the novella length “Going Home Again.”

She wanted to “give a glimpse of Doppo’s works to English-speaking people.” Unfortunately this did not happen and her book went into oblivion. No major studies in English on Doppo

appeared until more than fifty years later and subsequent authors seem to have been unaware of her work. Hopefully, this reissue will redress the situation. We give a reading list below but it should be mentioned that Chibbett's *River Mist and Other Stories*, (1982), is highly recommended and contains some of the best known Doppo works. For those seeking an in-depth study of Doppo, Rubin's 1970 thesis has a wealth of information as well as nine stories translated. In all, about thirty-four of Doppo's stories have been translated into English in about sixty-four translations over the years.

We are presenting Mitobe's work as was published but are adding, in an appendix, the Japanese of two of the stories, "A Phantom" and "Poetical Ideas" for those who want to pursue further study. Both of are of interest but are brief, to facilitate study of an entire piece. Spelling mistakes have been silently corrected and a few editorial footnotes added in square brackets. We have not included Mitobe's notes for Japanese students, as some of the traditional Japanese characters used are indecipherable in our copy, and electronic resources are now a convenient method of checking English phrases. We have had added the year of first publication for each piece in the *Contents* except for "Father and Daughter" for which we could not find a date.

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INTRODUCTION

Doppo Kunikida was born at Chōshi, Japan, in 1871. He was a student of the Waseda University, but was expelled when he was nineteen years old. All through his life he struggled with poverty, although he engaged in various professions such as teaching and journalism.

He was a Christian, and was steeped in English and Russian literatures. At the age of twenty-five he wrote his first short story, "Uncle Gen." He died when he was only thirty-seven. The number of his short stories amounts to about sixty-eight, and some of them are ranked among the first rate productions of the Meiji literature. I have selected eleven of Doppo's stories and translated them into English. I have tried to be faithful to the original, but in some parts I could do no more than to convey his general ideas. My labor will be sufficiently rewarded, if my translation arouses interest in the minds of our students of English and gives a glimpse of Doppo's works to English-speaking people.

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June, 1917.

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June 27, 1917.

To Whom it may Concern:

I have much pleasure in recommending for publication the translations submitted to me by Miss Mono Mitobe. The stories have interested me greatly and seem to be of a somewhat different type from those that have been translated hitherto.

F. N. SCOTT¹.

1 [Fred Newton Scott (1860 – 1931), a well-known professor at the University of Michigan and I presume her teacher. She sent him both of her books and he assisted on the second work. - Ed.]

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THE SUNRISE

In honour of a certain LL.B. who was going abroad, a farewell banquet was held at the Maple Club in Sannai, Shiba. The people dispersed at about eight o'clock in the evening. A group of seven or eight gentlemen on their way home stopped at the Dōkō Club at Yazaimon street, Kyōbashi ward.

Except the one who accompanied Kosukegawa B.A., they were all members of the club. They were energetic, promising young men with degrees from first-rate universities such as Oxford and Harvard. They sat round a table expressing their opinions about politics, economics, prominent persons, and even theology. The smoke of their cigars was curling up. When the discussion became heated, high voices were heard mingling with the low ones. Once in a while they pounded the table and stamped on the floor. A blast from the north whirled down the cold street, and struck at the window panes. Waiters were coming in and out of the room, serving refreshments and strong drink. A fire was blazing in the stove.

“From what school were you graduated?” asked a gentleman abruptly of the stranger. The gentleman was a graduate of the Higher Commercial School, and was now working for a certain company, and it was said he was a favorite of the board of directors of the company. Tired of listening to the selfish discussion, he wanted to change the topic of conversation. The gentlemen stopped talking as if they agreed with the young clerk. There were only three who did not pay any attention to his question: one of these was lying on a sofa, looking up at the ceiling vacantly with his sleepy eyes; one was smoking a cigar idly; one arose to open a window for ventilation. But the rest of the gentlemen turned their eyes toward the stranger.

“I.....” stammered the man, who appeared to be about twenty-seven years of age. He was dark complexioned, had an oval

shaped face, ornamented by a mustache. He wore a hakama and haori while the rest of the gentlemen were dressed in foreign style. He was the head editor of the economical department of a certain newspaper, and was a candidate for member of Parliament for the coming general election. He had already been introduced to the gentlemen through Kosukegawa B.A. by the name of Shingo Kodama.

Kodama had not talked much since he had come into the club, but was smilingly listening to the discussion. He stammered when he was asked his school abruptly.

“Do you want to know the school from which I graduated?” asked Kodama to renew the conversation. NY.”

“Yes, your school. Is it the Mita or the Waseda?” asked the graduate of the Higher Commercial School, taking for granted that he had graduated from either the one or the other.

“No, you are mistaken,” smiled Kodama.

“Am I? Then what school?”

“The Ōshima school.”

“What! The Ōshima school! I have never heard of it before. Is that the school in your native province?”

“Yes elementary school in my native village, a private school.” said Kodama quite gravely, but the rest burst out laughing.

“I don't want you newspaper-man to tease me, as I am asking the question quite seriously,” said the gentleman from the Higher Commercial School, and he threw toward the stove his burnt-out cigar stub.

“I answer you seriously. It is a fact that I graduated from the Ōshima school, but I did not intend to surprise you with my strange answer. Whenever any one asks me the school I graduated from, either, I don't answer at all or I give the answer I gave you.”

“Excuse me, but is that all the education you have – did you not enter any other school besides the primary school?” asked an Oxford graduate sneeringly as he raises himself up on the sofa.

“No, I did not enter Oxford, Harvard, the Imperial University, the Waseda, the Mita or the Higher Commercial School. I only graduated from the Ōshima school in my native village. You may consider it strange, if I simply tell you in this way. But I am proud to say that I attended the Ōshima school. Unfortunately I could neither afford to study abroad nor enter a university. My education

is incomplete, so to speak. However, I am not ashamed to say that I graduated at the Ōshima school even to those who have degrees after their names: It is quite natural that those who graduated at the Waseda, love their alma mater; and those who graduated from the Imperial University, love theirs. I love and am proud of the Ōshima school just as you feel proud of your schools.”

“Oh, yes. I also love the primary school in my native province,” said a Harvard graduate.

“And do you feel grateful that you graduated from that school?” retorted Kodama somewhat sharply.

“Yes.”

“Why so?” asked Kodama with gleaming eyes.

“I embarrassed by your serious question. I simply mean that I recall pleasantly the school where I spend my happy childhood,” apologised the Harvard graduate, with an innocent smile.

“I understand you, if you don't mean anything more than that. You may think that I am deceiving myself or, playing with words in saying that I am proud of the school where I was educated. I am not speaking with a frivolous mind by any, means. Had any one of you attended the Ōshima school you would have agreed with me. In Tokyo three are living who have attended Ōshima school.

One has been working at the Japan Steamship Company since he graduated from the Mita University, one is a judge of the Local Court of Tokyo since he has received his degree of LL.B. These two just like myself feel thankful that they attended the Ōshima school. We three meet once a month, and spend a most pleasant evening.” Kodama's every word expressed his sincere, earnest feelings; and the others began to listen attentively. The gentleman who graduated from Oxford University was the oldest of them all. He seemed to be impressed with Kodama's words and said:

“I suppose there must be some unusual characteristics in the Ōshima school to have made such an impression on you. Won't you tell us about it? Gentlemen, let us listen!”

“Yes, Mr. Kodama, I hope you don't mind what I said a few minutes ago. Please tell us about the Ōshima school.” The gentleman who graduated from Harvard agreed with him for the sake of peace.

“I will tell you if you want to listen to it. But I do not wish to force you attention to something which I realize cannot hold for

you the interest that it does for me. Truth is different from popular fiction, as you know.” Here Kodama smiled and continued: “Fiction is interesting, but true stories are still more interesting.”

“I am anxious to hear your true story,” said the Harvard graduate eagerly.

“All right! I will tell you about it.”

When I was a child, I lived for a few years in a province with my parents. But when my father resigned his office, I returned to my native town, and entered the Ōshima school. The school was situated at the foot of a hill three or four blocks from the sea-shore. It was a plain, one-storied house which contained only four or five rooms. At first I was disappointed with the dingy appearance, for I was used to seeing fine school buildings in the other provinces.

My native town was the estate of a feudal lord of 9,000 koku² It would be more proper to call it a small village than a town; it lacked the means of communication and intercourse. One could not see here even the shadow of civilization which entered into every port and fishing village in the empire. But as I had no place to learn except the Ōshima school, I entered there, even though reluctantly.

The principal of the school was Shinichi Ōshima who was about twenty-seven years old. He was not very tall and was thick-set. His head was large compared to his height. He had a round face, smiling eyes, a high nose, and firm lips. There was a touch of tenderness beneath his dignified expression. Children liked him well as he was kind and friendly toward them. I studied in this school under his instruction for two years and a half until I was fifteen years of age. This is the time when boys are most mischievous, but, during these years, I imbibed the true spirit of education which laid the foundation for my future life.

Five days after my entrance I saw the principal on the recreation ground talking with a middle aged man. Together with the other children I watched them, and I could not understand why the principal treated the man so politely. He acted as if his guest were a county chief, although he looked like a poor farmer, every inch of him. I could not help wondering at the manner of the principal, for I was used to seeing the worldly ways of people.

2 Koku is a dry measure of 5 bushels for measuring grain.

However, I inquired neither of my father nor my schoolmates about it; but, by and by I understood that the farmer was Gonzō Ikegami who was the founder, patron, and benefactor of the Ōshima school. His residence was in the pine woods about ten blocks from the school. He was a well-to-do farmer, having three granaries. You may wonder why the school was named after the principal instead of after the founder. The Ōshima school had been established four years before I entered it, and the story goes back ten years before the foundation of the school, The morning sun of a New Year's Day threw its first ray over the horizon, the clouds which spread, out in horizontal layers were tinged to a golden color. The mountain peaks on the island off the coast were surrounded by purple clouds. Everything in the Universe seemed fresh and pure. A profound silence reigned along the seashore. One could not see even the shadow of a living thing except that of a group of plovers playing on the waves and flying from rock to rock. Yet, however inspiring the scene might be, one whose mind was sinking into the depth of disappointment, and was wandering in the shadow of darkness, would pay little heed to its fresh, delightful beauty. A pale-faced young man sighing dejectedly was crouching on a rock. He acted as if he might have made up his mind to something, but still hesitated. He was surprised by footsteps, and turning, he saw an old man approaching.

“Look at the sunrise! What an awe-inspiring scene!” The young man gazed at the kind-faced old man until he finished the sentence. “Look quick! The sun is just rising!” and the old man looked out over the wide sea. Following him, the young man cast his eyes over the coast. The sun which looked like a big ball of reddish gold, though ready to burst out from the horizon, appeared to hesitate.

“Is it not a most awe-inspiring scene?” We will get along all right in this world, if we don't forget the sunrise on a New Year's Day,” said, the old man as if he was greatly impressed, and he clasped his hands and bowed his head. The young man followed his example unconsciously. Immediately the sun left the horizon and the glorious light was shed over the sky and ocean. The two stood looking at the scene in ecstasy.

“I am sixty years old, but I have never seen such a beautiful sunrise. I hope I shall be able to see a still more beautiful sunrise

next year. It makes me feel so good!” and turning toward the young man, he said:

“Where do you live?”

“I live in this village,” replied the young curtly.

“Do you come here every year to see the sunrise?” A smile crossed the old man's face.

“No.”

“Then it is the first time you have seen the sunrise, isn't it! You know the maxim that the plan of the whole year is in the New Year's morning. Don't forget the sunrise of this morning! Alas! You don't look very well. I fear this depression will get the better of you. I am glad I had the opportunity of seeing the sunrise with you. Come home with me, and have New Year's breakfast!”

The old man went ahead, and the younger followed him silently. After going through sand hill and dark bamboo woods, they came to the Shizoku³ residence. The old man's house was in its enclosure. If I tell you that the old man was Jinzō Ōshima, and the young man, Gonzō Ikegami; you may guess the rest of the story.

The old man had guessed at first sight the young man's decision to destroy himself, but he did not mention it. While the old man entertained the youth with Toso, he carefully gave him this advice. One should ever keep his vernal vigour like the morning sun rising from the horizon. He must get up at dawn, and see the sunrise; he must work until the sunset with heart and soul whatever his work may be. The sun rises every morning, so he must work every day. In doing so he will earn sweet sleep, and can see another sunrise next day. One day with work well done makes a life-time. We might say that man is born when the sun rises, and that he dies when it goes to rest.

The old man's instruction was nothing new; any man who knows the common truth of life would admit that. However Gonzō was greatly impressed with what the old man had said before he left his house; and from that day Gonzō Ikegami began to live a new life.

Gonzō was healthy and energetic, but he had become profligate, and lost the farm and house which were bequeathed to him by his father. His despair and ignominy made him think that he had

3 Shizoku is a caste in Japan.

nothing to do but to die. But now he became an entirely different man through the old man's instruction. He worked harder every day: not only did he work on the farm but he also burnt charcoal, cut timber, attended to silk worms, and wove cotton. He worked with all his might at anything which a farmer may find to do. In five years he had his old farm back, he increased his fields, and made a mulberry garden out of a deserted dale. He became one of the wealthy farmers in his village, but he worked just as hard as when he was poor.

When old Ōshima was dying, Gonzō went to him for his last word.

“Do you remember my advice about the sunrise?” asked the old man.

“Yes, I see the sunrise every morning.”

“I am glad you have worked energetically, inspired by my instruction. Hereafter watch the beauty of the sun, and do a beautiful deed.”

“Will you kindly tell me what is best for me to do?” asked Gonzō after thinking a while.

“You must think it out by yourself. Do any deed which you think to be as beautiful as you feel when looking at the sunrise. Do you admire the beauty of the morning sun?” asked the old man with his eyes still closed.”

“Yes.”

“Then, do some good deed for which you will be admired by people.”

“That is beyond my power,” said Gonzō with bowed head.

“Have you lost the courage which you gained by looking at the sunrise?”

“Thank you, I see what you mean.” Gonzō was so impressed that he could not raise his head for sobbing.

After Jinzō Ōshima's death Gonzō shut himself in his room, and looked very sad, as if he had lost his guiding star. But soon he recovered himself, and began to work harder than before.

Gonzō could not forget the old man's instruction even for a single minute. He had confined himself to his room to think out what he ought to do. He buried himself in prayer before the morning sun; suddenly he was struck with an idea which so delighted him that he impulsively started to his feet.

“I admired Mr. Ōshima with all my heart. Yes, the best thing for me is to do a beautiful deed such as he did.”

Gonzō then decided to build up a school. You may laugh at his simple decision, but you must remember that he was an uneducated farmer. I admire his simplicity and his integrity. No sooner had he made up his mind than he plunged into his task, working harder than ever for five years, at the end of which time he gave an elementary school to the son of Jinzō Ōshima. He called it the Ōshima school in memory of the late Ōshima and left its cares to the young Ōshima.

This is the history of the Ōshima school. But do not think that Gonzō Ikegami's plan had been completed with the establishment of the school. Had he not got Shinichi Ōshima at the head of it, the school would not have been different from other schools. The young Ōshima had inherited his father's beautiful nature, and he was a more cultured man than his father had been. He conducted the school, and endeavored to make a second Gonzō out of each pupil. In this way Gonzō's plan, you see, was accomplished.

I still remember that at the time when I was away from school because of sickness, Mr. Ōshima called on me and encouraged me by saying:

“You must overcome sickness, not be overcome by it, for you have a bright hope in your future.”

Mr. Ōshima was not a teacher of the old type. The essence of his instruction was “Try to be a useful man.” It was his conviction that a man ought not to spend his life idly, but do something useful with all his might. One could die in peace, if he were called a hero or a great man. A man cannot be more, than a man, but it is his duty to do his best. Having done his duty, he might be called a hero. This was well illustrated when the late Ōshima gave the advice to Gonzō. He made Gonzō a living specimen of his object lesson.

“Look at the sunrise!” is the sacred motto of the Ōshima school. The glory and magnificence of the morning sun explains the meaning of the motto. One who works harder every day, is practising the idea of the motto. Mr. Shinichi Ōshima being a man of principle, with a kindly nature, was well qualified to assist the children to imbibe these ideas. He taught the children very earnestly, and seemed very happy. I could not tell you in detail of

my life at the Ōshima school. Last summer when I returned home, I found Mr. Ōshima a little older, but not changed in character and his way of living. He was only about forty-three, just in the prime of life. It was not surprising that he had not lost in vigor and activity. I really admired him when I saw him enjoying his teaching and noticed his simple way of living. The old fence had crumbled here and there and the tiles of the roof were cracked. At first, sight it looked like a decayed temple with the mud wall covered with creeping vines. Old mulberries grew inside the mud wall. In the corner of wall was standing an oak a hundred years old, and its shading leaves prevented the sunshine coming through.

I entered the old fashioned gate, walked up a little path in the mulberry garden, and stopped at the porch. The house having been rebuilt from old timber, looked very poor, and it contained only four rooms. Mr. Ōshima used one of the rooms for his study, and here he had a few copies of recent publications besides the text books of the school. An old basket full of beans had been put out on the veranda to dry in the sun, and queer looking plants in two pots were set beside the basket.

“How are you getting along with your work? Thank you for sending me, newspapers. I noticed your essays in the papers.” said Mr. Ōshima as soon as he saw me.

“My, essays are hardly worth while, but they are my best.”

“That's enough. You, should be pleased if you have done your best, whether your paper was good or not. The days I feel more and more that a happy man is one who does his work gladly; splendid work is never done, if one does his duty reluctantly; he is most happy who does work with his whole soul.”

There was nothing, striking in what he said. But when I came into personal contact with him, and saw his way of living, I felt the pure, fresh power which he had instilled into old words.

He was supporting six members of his family (mother, wife and children) with his salary of eighteen yen. He depended upon his scant means, his house and lot. His possessions were not worth even one hundredth part of those of Gonzō. He made a kitchen garden out of the vacant ground at the back of the house, and had a few chickens to furnish him eggs enough for his own use. In front of his study was a small garden which he kept very clean. In this place the chickens were not allowed to run.

A PHANTOM

DISAPPOINTMENT

Bunzō did not call on her that night, he waited until the noon of the next day according to his promise. As he was well acquainted with her family, he entered the parlor directly without waiting for any one's coming to the door. He found there her two little sisters, Ayako and Haruka. He patted them on the head, and asked them if their sick sister was feeling better, and if he could see her.

“Sister is gone out with mamma.” replied Ayako.

“What! She's gone!” He felt disturbed, and remarked: “I thought your sister was always home at this time, as she has to give you a lesson.”

“Sister will not give me lessons any more.” answered Ayako.

“Sister won't give me lessons any more.” repeated Haruko.

“Is your father home?” asked Bunzō.

“No, he isn't. My sister doesn't feel well. She wept through the night.”

“Well, well!”

“Yes. Miné (a maid) told me so – sister's eyes looked red, and were swollen.”

Bunzō pondered a while, and shivered as though he felt a chill pass over him. Suddenly he took leave, and returned home quite lost in thought. He felt as if he were looking down a deep valley from a cliff, and the idea made him dizzy. He recalled a number of things; he heard the sound of a gun at a distance, then he lost his way in a pathless wood. Now he became very thirsty, he felt tears springing to his eyes but they did not drop. A bitter smile crossed his face and a bitter moan escaped from his lips. “Ume will not see me any more;” he kept telling himself; “Ume will not see me any more.”

“I cannot understand her sudden change. Why would she not see me? Why did she not tell me, if she had some trouble!” he

asked himself.

“Sir, pardon me!” Bunzō was startled by the voice, and turned round. It was a servant bringing him a letter from Ume. He understood what this meant before unsealing the letter. Bending his head, he sat perfectly still expecting the last stroke. Finally he plucked up courage, and broke the seal. On a small piece of paper was written the following:

“I beg your forgiveness. The attachment between you and me has now vanished like the bubbles on a wave. I must go to Tokyo. It is so painful to me that my heart is broken. But I cannot help matters. I resign myself to Fate. What I anticipated before is now realized as a fact. I will not try to explain myself. I simply beg your forgiveness. Please do not think of me, for I am not worthy of you. Be generous. Don't try to see me again.”

As he finished the reading, he collapsed. He dropped the letter from his hand, as if an unknown pressure forced him. He took up the letter again, and read it over. “To Tokyo!” he said faintly, and dropped the letter again. Disappointment as heavy as lead pressed upon his breast like a weight. But pulling himself together he said to himself: “One who receives a fatal wound must be calm as I must be.”

“She appeared and disappeared like a phantom..... I am not surprised, for I expected it before.” Bunzō was deceiving himself. To tell the truth he never had expected it at all.

“She did not love me. I can tell it by her nature. What a coquette she is in saying, “I am not worthy of you!”” A faintly scornful smile moved his lips.

“She has known what I am since that time. Ah, I see thoroughly why she gave me up. It is because I am a poor student.”

However, as he recalled her tender words, her smile, her pretty eyes which expressed love and happiness whenever they looked into each other's eyes, he felt a pain in his heart that was almost unbearable. He pushed his head hard against the wall, his frame shaking with the agony of his grief. Then he sank to the floor, his face buried in a cushion, and moaned in a choking voice for a long time.

HE

Several years passed. It was late in the autumn. I waited on a friend at Surugadai. In the evening I was on my way home to Akasaka. The city was shrouded in a dense fog. Beautiful dim lights encircled the street lamps, reflecting the frozen vapor. People and wagons passing by appeared like phantoms, and then disappeared in the thick mist. I enjoyed taking a walk on such a misty night. When I saw the people walking in the fog, they all seemed to be absorbed in thought – joy or sorrow I could not tell – I walked, too, as if in a dream.

Just as I came at the foot of Kudan slope, I heard abruptly some one speaking in an angry tone:

“What! You call me tipsy? Do you think only a half gallon of wine can make me tipsy?” In a moment I saw a man passing by, reeling. “I am not wearing swords for appearance. If you speak to me in such an audacious manner, I will cut your head off” and he laughed. I was surprised at his loud voice, and, on turning back, I saw a big man’s shadow thrown on the ground by an electric light which shone dimly on account of the mist. In a few seconds the shadow disappeared. All of a sudden an idea flashed into my head – may be it was *he*. It seemed improbable but I said to myself:

“The city is like a large swamp where various kinds of people stream in. For all I know he may have come into the city accidentally.” Thinking of him I went up to the slope, and from its height I glanced down to the business part of the city extending like an endless marsh where lights are flickering like phosphorus. The night was dark and the fog was thick.

Who was *he*?” I do not like to tell his name, so I simply call him *he*. He was a puzzling character, and his life was a tragedy. There is a saying: “The age makes men, and men make the age.” He contributed something to the making of the Meiji age, but he did not touch the spirit of the age. He thought of things of yore, and looked down upon the heroes of the age as mere children. Seven years ago I had seen him teaching Chinese classics to a few young men in my native village. Whenever I saw him passing by, I could not help pitying him. He was a phantom of the past, and a fossil of the feudal age, or, I might compare him to a stream which has not run into the ocean with other rivulets but made a swamp of

its own: its muddy water boiling in the hot sun, and becoming stagnant, and again being frozen over till it had nothing to do but to dry up. However, when I sat close to him, and noted the expression of his eyes and his way of speaking, I found out that my description of his character was still deficient – it seemed as though some sad, wretched, mysterious Fate were lurking around him. Discontent, jealousy and pride gave a strange light to his eyes. In his contemptuous smile I could see the struggle between his pride and his despair. I felt like crying when I saw him laugh with such a pitiful expression. “What do you say about the House of Commons? Nonsense! Don't you know that it is a mere assembly of farmers who know nothing but how to raise potatoes?” He was wont to say: “What is Tokyo? What is a counsellor? Tokyo is a dirt-heap of men. Tell Shinsuké not to keep himself so aloof!” This was the manner in which he revealed his discontent.

“Why had he come to Tokyo?” I began to doubt my own senses. But presently I knew that my perception was true. After a few days I told a friend of mine that I had seen him in the city. The friend inclined his head, and answered not a word. Two weeks elapsed. One day I had a talk for three hours with a man concerning business. After he left, I lay down to rest a while. Watching the autumn sun going down over a pine tree in the garden, I was about to fall asleep. Suddenly I heard a loud voice shouting for admittance. I recognized him by his voice. It was *he* as I thought.

“How have you been getting along lately?” He asked as soon as he entered. “I don't want you to be so polite!” He stopped my cordial greeting. He seemed to be intoxicated. “Here is a present for you. I have nothing else to give you.” and he drew out a short sword. I was much surprised by his abruptness. He had not behaved like this seven years ago. I noticed the change in him. “You must wear this at your right side,” and he showed me how by wearing it himself “Hold down your enemy with your left hand, draw the sword with the right hand.” He looked like a valiant soldier by his gesture. “You must thrust your enemy down like this.” and he laughed. His action bespoke his unsettled mind. I tried to hold a conversation with him, but he fidgeted. He shunned my glance and laughed. He did not laugh however as he had seven years ago.

I ordered my servant to bring in wine.

“No, thanks. I’ve had enough,” he said, but he was only trying to convince himself. I offered him a cup. “Thank you.” He could not conceal his inward joy. I did not wait for him to return the cup, but gave him another cup. I watched him drinking covetously. He looked at me as he emptied the cup, with exultant appreciation, but he soon evaded my glance again as though he was much ashamed of himself. I could not bear to see him in such an attitude.

“You are getting old,” unconsciously the sympathetic word came out from my lips with a different meaning.

“Oh, no. I am still stronger than you are. This wine tastes delicious!”

“It must be different from Doburoku²⁰, you know, ha! ha! ha!” the words slipped my tongue. What cruel expressions I used! I still regret what I said. But at that time I, in spite of myself, looked down upon him, who was reduced to poverty.

“Ha! ha! ha!” He also laughed. His eyes were wont to shine with discontent, jealousy, and pride. Now the pride was partly shaken off, the discontent was lost in drinking, the jealousy without discontent was tinged with meanness, and the eyes were somewhat bloodshot. The shadow of poverty was seen on his face. I intended to ask him why and when he had come to Tokyo, and how he was getting along; but I dropped the idea fearing that I might have discovered that I knew his secrets better than he himself.

As he was intoxicated, he began to boast of himself as in the days of yore. This was his ruse to make others believe that he had not become a dotard. He revealed the truth when he said to himself unconsciously: “I am no good!”

I pitied him. It seemed as though he had begun to fear his doom. Is there any worse wretchedness in life than to wait for one’s doom with trembling heart? I could not help but sympathize with him who was still suffering from resentment as from an old wound. Some of his friends had become councillors, some were enshrined on account of their services at the time of the Meiji Restoration, and eulogies were composed for them. He, on the contrary, had fallen into a miserable condition merely because he did not meet with the spirit of the age.

²⁰ Doburoku is the cheapest wine in Japan.

“Let me offer you a cup, for I ever want to be your friend.”

In silence he accepted the cup, and drank it at a gulp. Sadly he bent his head, and put his cup down.

“I feel tipsy, good-bye!” He said, as he rose quickly to his feet.

I was surprised at his abruptness, and tried to make him stay longer, but he declined.

“Please call on me again.” said I. I did not know whether he heard me or not. His stumbling figure disappeared into the evening darkness as if he were a phantom.

A PHANTOM

まぼろし

絶望

文造(ぶんぞう)は約束どおり、その晩は訪問しないで、次の日の昼時分まで待った。そして彼女を訪(たず)ねた。

懇親の間柄とて案内もなく客間に通って見ると綾子(あやこ)と春子とがいるばかりであった。文造はこの二人(ふたり)の頭(つむり)をさすって、姉(ねえ)さんの病気は少しは快(よ)くなったかと問い、いま会うことができようかと聞いて見た。

『姉さんはおっかさんとどこかへ出ましたよ』と綾子は答えた。

『なんて！ 出ましたって！』と言った文造の心は何となく穏やかでなかった。『姉さんは今時分いつでも家(うち)にいるはずでしょう、あなたのおけいこの時刻だから。』

『姉さんはもうこれからはあたしたちにおけいこしてくださらないのよ、』と綾子が答えた。

『姉さんはもうおけいこしてくれないの、』春子が繰り返した。

『お父さんはお宅(うち)?』文造は尋ねた。

『お父さんはお留守、姉さんはお病気なのよ、ゆうべ夜通し泣いてよ。』

『姉さんが泣いたって?。』

『ハあ、お峰(みね)がそう言ってよ、そしてね姉さんのお目が大変赤くなって腫(は)れていましたよ。』文造はしばらく物思いに沈んでいたが、寒気(さむけ)でもするようにふるえた。突然暇(いとま)を告げて、そしてぼんやり自宅(いえ)に帰

った。かれは眩暈(めまい)のするような高いところに立っていて、深い谷底を見下(お)ろすような心地(こころ)を感じた。目がぐるぐるして来て、種々雑多な思いが頭の中を環(わ)のようにめぐりだした。遠方で打つ大砲の響きを聞くような、路(みち)のない森に迷い込んだような心地がして、喉(のど)が渴(かわ)いて来て、それで涙が出そうで出ない。

痛ましげな微笑は頬(ほお)の辺(あたり)にただよい、何とも知れない苦しげな叫び声は唇(くちびる)からもれた。

『梅子(むめこ)はもうおれに会わないだろう』かれは繰り返し繰り返し言った。『しかしなぜだろう、こんなに急に変わるたア何のことだろう。なぜおれに会えないだろう、なぜそんなに困った事条(じじょう)があるなら自分(おれ)に打ちあけないだろう。』

『若旦那(わかだんな)。』

文造は驚いて振り向いた。僕が手に一通の手紙を持って後背(うしろ)に来ていた。手紙を見ると、梅子からののである。封を切らないうちにもうそれと知って、首を垂(た)れてジッとすわって、ちょうど打撃を待っているようである。ついに気を引きたてて封を切った。小さな半きれに認(したた)めてある文字は次のごとくである。

『御(おん)ゆるしのほど願ひ参らせ候(そろ)今は二人(ふたり)が間のこと何事も水の泡(あわ)と相成り候(そうろう)妾(わらわ)は東京に参るべく候悲しさに胸はりさくばかりに候えど妾が力に及び難く候これぞ妾が運命とあきらめ申し候.....されど妾決して自ら弁解いたすまじく候妾がかねて想(おも)いし事今はまことと相成り候妾を恕(ゆる)したまえ妾をお忘れ下されたし君には値(あた)いなき妾に御心ひろくもたれよ再び妾を見んことを求めたまいそ

梅子』

文造は読みおわって、やおら後ろに倒れた、ちょうどなにかに目に見えない者が来て押しつけたように。持っていた手紙を指の間からすべり落とした、再び拾って、も一度読んだ。

『東京へ』と微(かす)かに言ってまたその手紙を落とした。

鉛のような絶望が今やかれの胸を圧して来た。かれは静かにその手をあげて、丁寧に襟(えり)をあわした。『死ぬるほどの傷を受けた人はちょうどこんなふうに穏やかなものさ』とかれは思った。『幻影(まぼろし)のように彼女(あれ)は現われて来てまた幻影(まぼろし)のように消えてしまった……しごくもつとものである。自分(おれ)はかねて待ちうけていた。』文造はその実自ら欺いたので、決してこの結果を待ち受けてはいなかった。

『彼女(あれ)は自分(おれ)を恋したのではない。彼女(あれ)の性質で何もかもよくわかる。君には値なき妾に候とはうまく言ったものだ！』かれは痛ましげな微笑をもらした。『彼女(あれ)は今まで自己(おのれ)の価値(ねうち)を知らなかったのである、しかしあ的一条からどうして自分(おれ)のような一介の書生(しよせい)を思わないようになったらう……自分(おれ)には何もかもよくわかっている。』

しかし文造は梅子の優しい言葉、その微笑、その愛らしい目元、見かわすごとに愛と幸いとで輝いた目元を想い起こすと、堪(た)ゆべからざる悲痛が胸を衝(つ)いて来た。あらあらしく頭を壁に押しつけてもがいた。座(き)ぶとんに顔を埋(うず)めてしばらく声をのんで哭(こ)くした。

かれ

秋の末のことであつた。自分は駿河台(するがだい)の友人を訪(たず)ねて、夜よに入ってその家を辞して赤坂の自宅を指(さ)して途(みち)を急いだ。

この夜(よ)霧が深く立てこめていて、街頭のガス燈や電気燈の周囲(まわり)に凝っている水蒸気が美しく光っておぼろな輪をかけていた。往来(ゆきぎ)の人や車が幻影(まぼろし)のように現われては幻影(まぼろし)のように霧のうちに消えてゆく。自分はこんな晩に大路(おおし)を歩くことが好きで。霧につつまれて歩く人を見るとみんな、何か楽しい思いにふけて

いるか、悲しい思いに沈んでいるかしているようで、自分もまた何とはなしに夢心地になって歩いた。

九段坂の下まで来ると、だしぬけに『なんだと、酔っている、ばか！五合や一升の酒に酔うようなおれ様か！』という声が自分のすぐ前でしたと思うと自分とすれ違って、一人の男がよろめきながら『腰の大小伊達(だて)にやあささぬ、生意気(なまいき)なことをぬかすと首がないぞ！』と言って『あははははッ』と笑った。自分は驚いて、振り向いて見ると、霧をこめておぼろな電気燈の光が斜めに射(さ)して大男の影を幻のように映していた。たちまち霧のうちに消えてしまった。この時もしや今のは彼人(あれ)ではないかという考えが電(いな)ずまのように自分の胸に浮かんだ。

『まさか』と自分(おれ)は打消(け)して見たが『しかし都は各種の人が流れ流れて集まって来る底のない大沼である。彼人(あれ)だつてどんな具合でここへ漂つて来(き)まいものでもない、』など思いつづけて坂の上まで来て下町の方を見下ろすと、夜(よ)は暗く霧は重く、ちょうどはてのない沼のようるところどころに光る燈火が燐(りん)の燃えるように怪しい光を放ちて明滅していた。

『彼人(あれ)とはだれのことか、』自分(おれ)はここにその姓名を明かしたくない、単に『かれ』と呼ぼう。

かれは一個の謎(なぞ)である。またかれは一個(ひとつ)の『悲惨』である。時代が人物を生み、人物が時代を作るという言葉があるが、かれは明治の時代を作るために幾分の力を奮った男であつて、それでついにこの時代の精神に触れず、この時代の空気を呼吸していながら今をののしり昔を誇り、当代の豪傑を小供(こども)呼ばわりにしてひそかに快しとしている。自分はかれを七年以前、故郷のある村の村塾(そんじゅく)で初めて見た。かれは当時(そのとき)、村の青年四、五名をあつめて漢籍を教えていた。

自分は当時(そのころ)、かれを見るごとに言うべからざる痛ましさを感じた。かれは『過去』の亡魂である、それでもいい足りない。『封建時代』の化石である、それでもいい足りない。

い。谷川の水、流れとともに大海(だいかい)に注がないで、横にそれて別に一小沢を造り、ここに淀(よど)み、ここに腐り、炎天にはその泥沸き、寒天にはその水氷(こおり)、そしてついには涸(かれ)れゆくをまつがごときである。しかしかれと対座してその眼(まなこ)を見、その言葉をきくと、この例でもなお言い足りないで、さらに悲しい痛ましい命運の秘密が、その形骸(けいがい)のうちに潜んでいるように思われた。不平と猜忌(さいぎ)と高慢とがその眼(まなこ)に怪しい光を与えて、我慢と失意とが、その口辺に漂う冷笑(あざわらい)の底に戦っていた。自分がかれが投げだしたように笑うのを見るたびに泣きたく思った。

『国会がどうした？ ばかをいえ。百姓どもが集まって来たって何事をしでかすものか。』これがかれの句調であった。

『東京がなんだ、参議がどうだ、東京は人間のはきだめよ。俊助に高慢な顔をするなって、おれがそう言ったって伝言(ことづけ)ろ！』これがかれのせめてもの愉快であった。『彼人(あれ)がどうしてまた東京に来たろう、』自分は自分の直覚を疑ってはまた確かめてその後、ある友人にもかれのことを話して見たが、友は小首を傾けたばかりであった。その後二週間ほどたって、自分は用談の客と三時間ばかり相談をつづけ、客が帰ったあとで、やや疲れを覚え、横になったまま庭をながめて秋の日影がだんだんと松の梢(こずえ)をのぼって次第に消えてゆくを見ながら、うつらうつらしていた。すると玄関で『頼もう！』と怒鳴る声が出た。自分はすぐ、『来たな！』と思った。

果たしてかれであった。

『どうだその後(のち)は？』これがかれの開口第一のあいさつであった。自分が慇懃(いんぎん)にあいさつする言葉を打ち消して、『いやそうあらたまれては困る。』かれは酒気(しゅぎ)を帯びていた。

『これが土産(みやげ)だ。ほかに何にもない、そら！ これを君にくれる、』と投げだしたのは短刀であった。自分はその唐突(とうとつ)に驚いた。かかる挙動(ふるまい)は決して以前の

かれにはなかったのである。自分はもう今日のかれ、七年前のかれでないことを悟った。『これは右手指(めてざし)といって、こういう具合にさすので、』かれは短刀を拾って後ろざまに帯にさした。『敵を組み伏せた時、左でこう敵を押えて右でこうぬいて、』かれの身振りはさすがに勇ましかった、『こう突くのだ。』そしてかれは『あはははは』と笑った。すべてその拳動(ふるまい)がいかにもそわそわしていた。

自分はかれこれと話して見たが、何一つ身にしみて話すことができなかつた。かれはただそわそわして少しも落ちつかないで、その視線を絶えず自分の目から避けて、時々『あはははは』と大声に笑った、しかし七年前の哄笑(こうしょう)とはまるで違っていた。

命じて置いた酒が出ると、『いや僕はもう飲んで来た、沢山沢山。』かれは自ら欺いた。

『まあ一つ、』自分は杯(さかずき)をさした。

『ありがとう、』かれは心中のよろこびを隠し得なかつた。自分はかれの返杯を受けないで、さらに一杯を重ねさした。さもうまそうに飲むかれを自分はじっと視(み)ていた。かれは飲み干して自分の顔を見たが、野卑な喜びの色がその満面に動いたと思うとたちまち羞恥(はし)の影がさっと射(さ)して、視線を転じてまた自分を見て、また転じた。自分はもうその様子を視(み)ていられなくなった。

『大ぶんお歳(とし)がゆきましたね、』思わず同情の言葉が意味を違えて放たれた。

『なに、これでまだまだ君なんかより丈夫だろう。この酒は上等だわい。』

『白馬(どぶろく)とは違いますよ、ハハハハハハ』と、自分はふと口をすべらした。何たる殘刻(ざんこく)無情の一語ぞ、自分は今もってこの一語を悔いている。しかしその時は自分もかれの変化があまり情けないので知らず知らずこれを卑しむ念が心のいずこかに動いていたに違いない。

『あハハハハハハ』かれも笑った。

不平と猜忌(さいぎ)と高慢とですごく光った目が、高慢は半ばくじけ不平は酒にのみれ、不平なき猜忌は『野卑』に染まり、今や怪しく濁って、多少血走っていて、どこともなく零落の影が容貌(かお)の上に漂っている。

自分はなぜ東京に上(のぼ)ったか、またいつ来たか、今どうして暮らしているか、これらのところを尋ねて見ようとしてよした。問わないでもわかる。そして自分は思った、その秘密はかれ自身よりもかえって自分の方がよく知っているだろうと。

かれは酒を飲むにつれて、しきりに例の大言を昔のままに吐いたが、これはその実、昔のかれに自分で自分が申し訳をして、いささか快しとしているばかりである。むしろ時々小声で、『しかしおれももうだめだよ、』とわれ知らずもらす言葉が真実(ほんと)であった。

自分のかれの運命を思つて何とも言えずあわれになって来た。もうかれとても自家(おのれ)の運命の末がそろそろ恐(こわ)くなくなって来たに違いない。およそ自分の運命の末を恐がるその恐れほど惨痛(さんつう)のものがあろうか。しかもかれには言うに言われぬ無念がまだ折り折り古い打傷(うちみ)のようにかれの髓を悩ますかと思うとたまらなくなってくる。かれの友のある者は参議になった、ある者は神に祭られた。今の時代の人々は彼らを謳歌(おうか)している。そしてかれは今の時代の精神に触れないばかりに、今の時代をののしるばかりにこのありさまに落ちてしまった。

『あらためて一つ差し上げましょう、この後永(なが)くお交際(つきあい)のできますように、』と自分は杯(さかずき)をさした。かれは黙して杯を受けて、ぐいと飲み干したが、愁然として頭を垂(た)れた。そして杯を下に置いた。突然起(た)つて、『いや大変酔った、さようなら。』

自分は驚いて止めたが、止まらなかった。

『どうかまた来てください、』と自分のいう言葉も聞いたか聞かないか。かれの姿は夕闇(ゆやみ)のうちに消えてしまった、まぼろしのように。 (三十一年五月作)