HASEGAWA NYOZEKAN:
THE PEDAGOGICAL VALUE OF FICTION FOR A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHER

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the degree Master of Arts in the
Graduate School of the Ohio State University

By Stephen Filler, B.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1997

Master's Examination Committee: Approved by
Dr. Richard Torrance, Adviser
Dr. William J. Tyler

Adviser
Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures
ABSTRACT

Hasegawa Nyozekan (1875-1969) was a liberal journalist and social critic who worked to popularize democracy, women's suffrage, worker's rights, and other liberal causes while maintaining a highly critical stance against Japanese imperialism and ultranationalism. Nyozekan's Critique of the Modern State and other collections of social criticism are well-known to Japanese historians, but the relationship of his fiction to his social thought has not been seriously explored, despite Nyozekan's wide readership and favorable response to his fiction from such figures as Natsume Soseki.

Nyozekan was heavily influenced by the group of journalists known as the Seikyosha, who advocated Japan's adaptation of Western ideas and institutions, but insisted that this adaptation should be selective, based on the needs and particular character of the Japanese people. Nyozekan derived many elements of his theory of social evolution from Herbert Spencer, and his literary theory shows a strong Marxist influence. The importance of Nyozekan's upbringing in close proximity to the urban merchant class of Tokyo is also apparent in his literature. Nyozekan saw in this class of people democratic traits such as tolerance and a cooperative spirit which rendered them receptive to liberal ideas. Many of his stories feature members of this class, and the successful use of dialect is one of the outstanding qualities of his fiction.

Nyozekan used fiction to promote his liberal agenda, and made use of many of the stylistic techniques of popular to appeal to a mass audience. At the same time his stories deal with abstract social issues in a philosophical
way. Perhaps the best way to view his literature is as a form of political essay, which deals with social problems in a vivid and appealing way.
To My Mother and Father
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest thanks to Dr. Richard Torrance and Dr. William J. Tyler for their constant guidance and encouragement in the writing of this thesis. Dr. Torrance suggested Hasegawa Nyozekan as the subject of this thesis and provided numerous sources relating Nyozekan’s work to popular literature and to Proletarian literature. Dr. Tyler provided me with information on liberalism in Japan and carefully corrected the text and translation.

I have asked all of the native Japanese speakers at DEALL for advice on translation at one time or another, sometimes taking up much of their time. I thank all of them.
VITA

May 13, 1966  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .  Born - Holyoke, Massachusetts

1989  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . B.A., Brown University
                      Providence, Rhode Island

1989 - 1993  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . English Instructor, Kitakyushu
                      YMCA, Kitakyushu, Japan

1993 - 1995  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Coordinator of International
                      Relations
                      Kitakyushu City Office
                      Kitakyushu, Japan

1995 - 1997  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Graduate Teaching Associate
                      Department of East Asian
                      Languages and Literatures
                      The Ohio State University
                      Columbus, Ohio

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: East Asian Languages and Literatures

Modern Japanese Literature
INTRODUCTION

THE IMPORTANCE OF HASEGAWA NYOZEKAN’S FICTION

Hasegawa Nyozekan (1875 - 1969) is known primarily as a leading “liberal” figure (jiyû shugisha) who, in his role as hyôronka (social and cultural commentator) and political philosopher, consistently and passionately promoted democracy, freedom of speech, women’s and laborers’ rights, and pacifism. He aimed to do this in the realm of public discourse, mainly through the printed word. His multifarious career as a journalist, social critic, publisher, and lecturer was extraordinarily long, spanning most of Japan’s modern era.

Nyozekan’s most prolific and intellectually active period corresponded to the period of so-called “Taishô democracy” in the 1920s. Even as Japan expanded its empire abroad and militarism and ultranationalism came to dominate the political scene, an enormous growth in the publishing industry, combined with as-yet relatively lax censorship, resulted in a profusion of publications which criticized and commented on contemporary Japanese society. Nyozekan rode this publishing boom, writing a tremendous volume
of social and political criticism, travel essays, bibliographical profiles, and fiction which were published in Japan’s leading magazines and newspapers. Yet the scale of his influence cannot be judged by the volume of his written work alone. Nyozekan was also heavily involved in the publishing business, occupying various high-level editorial posts on newspapers and later editing his own journal. He was also a well-known and popular lecturer. Nyozekan’s colleagues included some of the most influential writers and publishers in Japan. Believing that the free exchange of ideas was essential for Japan’s development as a democratic society, Nyozekan was heavily involved in the organization of seminars, speeches, and political demonstrations in favor of freedom of the press, and student movements rallied around him.

This study will explore the nature of Nyozekan’s fictional writing, which included novels and novellas, numerous short stories, and several plays. While a number of studies exist in English and Japanese on his journalism and social criticism, his literary work has received little attention. In particular this study will explore the relation between his literature and his political and social criticism, and the significance of his fiction as a special variety of Japanese literature which attempted to present and promote democratic ideology. To this end, Nyozekan combined social realism with techniques of popular fiction in a distinctive way. I will argue that Nyozekan wrote his fiction for pedagogical purposes; in particular, he aimed to influence the consciousness of the urban class of merchants and artisans.
Nyozekan identified himself with this class of people and believed that their traditional way of life, characterized by values such as industriousness and tolerance, represented the best of the Japanese spirit. Nyozekan was convinced that in the face of massive changes brought on by industrialization and militarization, Japan’s urban classes needed to become aware of their own political power and to participate actively in the democratic process; otherwise, their way of life would be destroyed.

Nyozekan, like other dissident thinkers, eventually succumbed to government intimidation: his output dwindled after the early 1930s, his journal Hihan was forced out of business, and he turned from criticism of the government to writing studies of the Japanese national character which were, at least superficially, in accordance with official state ideology. Scholars of Nyozekan vary in their assessment of his wartime activity, some believing that he essentially committed tenkō or betrayal of his liberal principles, others insisting that he continued his liberal critique of society in a more subtle, less direct way. In any case, after 1945, his wartime record appeared clean enough for him to enjoy a second career as an elder statesman who had anticipated the postwar democratization of Japanese society. He served a term in the House of Peers, published an autobiography, served on numerous educational and cultural committees, and participated in discussions with leading Japanese and foreign intellectual figures, while continuing to write, albeit at a lower volume of production.
While liberals and other dissidents were ultimately unable to steer Japan away from its disastrous course toward imperialism and militarism which led to its defeat in 1945, Nyozekan's earlier career may be considered a great success in terms of the quantity of his writings (enough to fill 50 volumes), his intellectual prestige, and his ability to reach a mass readership. It was during the period between 1898 and 1929 that Nyozekan wrote most of his fiction, and he was particularly productive in the first few years of the 1920s.

Nyozekan himself said that his fiction was secondary to his critical writing, and his literature contains strong didactic elements which may be said to detract from its status as "pure" literature (junbungaku). A further exploration of Nyozekan's literature, however, reveals it to be an important component of his work. For why did Nyozekan choose to write fiction at all? The answer is suggested by Nyozekan's remark that "my methods are many, my purpose only one." Fiction, for Nyozekan, is one format for social criticism, and his more successful works of fiction bring his ideas to life, revealing their historical and social context. Indeed, a present-day reader will find his fiction far more accessible than much of his non-fiction.

Despite Nyozekan's statement that his fiction was secondary to his other work, it is evident that he attached great importance to it. Indeed, collections of Nyozekan's work published before 1946 gave his artistic writing priority over his journalism and commentary. Fukuoka Seiichi, a disciple of
Nyozekan’s, declared that while Nyozekan’s opinion pieces for the journal *Warera* were often produced by dictation to a secretary, his fiction was produced in solitude in his study at home in feverish all-night sessions. In his fiction Nyozekan worked out his ideas in a less analytical, more emotional way, and expressed his belief that social change essentially takes place in the realm of “real life,” in a concrete and material world. Nyozekan saw this “life” as the primary object for consideration in social criticism, and he distrusted excessively abstract systems of thought.

Nyozekan’s choice to write fiction also reflects, I believe, the rising prestige of fiction writing in Japan during that era, and its function as an medium for social discourse which aimed, among other things, at social change. In its ideological aspects, Nyozekan’s fiction is strongly akin to the fiction of the Proletarian literary movement of the 1920s, for Nyozekan, like the leaders of the Proletarian movement, believed that fiction can and should strive to raise the political consciousness of ordinary people. What sets it apart from Proletarian literature politically is Nyozekan’s rejection of violent Marxist revolution in favor of more gradual, “organic” changes. What makes it distinct aesthetically is its portrayal of various social classes of people, in particular the urban merchant class of Tokyo. In these people, Nyozekan saw the industriousness, the wisdom, and the natural inclination for democratic and tolerant ways of thinking which he believed were at the heart of the Japanese national character.
CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND EARLY INFLUENCES

Family Background and Education

Hasegawa Nyozekan was born in 1875. His family moved numerous times while he was growing up in Tokyo, following the rises and falls in the career of his father, who originally operated a lumberyard in Kanda, and later owned and operated the famous Hanayashiki amusement park and zoo in Asakusa. While remaining committed to participation in Japanese society as a whole as symbolized by the middle-class Yamanote districts, his heart, he declared, was in shitamachi, home of the urban merchant and craftsman classes. The circumstances of Nyozekan’s upbringing and self-declared shitamachi identity would exert a major influence on his literary work.

The environment of the Hanayashiki amusement park owned by his father was to be one of the main influences on Nyozekan’s work. Located in Asakusa, it had been the site for restaurants, drinking establishments, and sideshows since the mid-Edo period. It was opened in 1886 and was popular
with all classes of people, even serving as a site for banquets for foreigners. At
the Hanayashiki, Nyozekan was exposed to the urban merchant and
entertainer classes of people who would later figure strongly in his fiction.
Nyozekan’s ancestors had been carpenters at Edo Castle and his father,
Yamamoto Tokujirō, had accumulated a considerable fortune by the time of
Nyozekan’s birth. Though he took great pleasure in building houses,
Tokujirō evidently felt a certain dissatisfaction with the conservative world
of the Edo construction industry, and under the influence of a business
partner who was familiar with notions of English liberal thinking, he
determined to educate his children in liberal ideas.\(^5\)

Nyozekan’s early education was eclectic. He later declared it had been
his good fortune to be educated at a time when the rigid educational system
designed to produce servants of the Meiji state had not yet been set firmly in
place.\(^6\) His study of the Chinese classics began at age eight, and he first learned
English at age eleven; he read the Japanese classics like *Genji monogatari*
later, at age fourteen. While much attention is paid to the influence of
European thought on Nyozekan, his early training in the Confucian classics
should not be overlooked. Nyozekan was very fond of Chinese culture, and
his interest was renewed when he traveled to China in 1921 and several times
afterward. His book *Lao Tsu*, which included discussions of Chinese political
theory, was published in 1935, and Nyozekan emphasized the importance of
Confucianism and Buddhism to Japanese culture in *The Japanese Character:*
A Cultural Profile, even though the main aim of the book was to show the originality of Japanese culture.

A key figure in his education was the writer Tsubouchi Shōyō (1859-1935), whose private school (juku) in Koishikawa he attended from 1885 to 1887. What Nyozekan learned from Shōyō, as he later interpreted it in his autobiography Aru kokoro no jijoden (The Autobiography of One Heart, 1950), was an awareness of the gap, or zure, between modernization and Westernization on the one hand and the traditional worldview of Japan on the other. Shōyō had been trained in the gesaku genre of writing, yet he took the realistic Western novel as his ideal. Nyozekan believed that Shōyō abandoned his writing career and turned to translating Shakespeare into Japanese in order to escape the insoluble difficulties which this tension produced.

At about the same time, Nyozekan was attending Nakamura Keiu’s (1832-91) Dōjinsha school in Hongô. Keiu was the translator of J. S. Mill’s On Liberty and other works by British liberal philosophers. It was essentially with this current of philosophy - as opposed, in particular, to German Idealism - that Nyozekan was to identify himself for the rest of his life.

In 1887, Nyozekan’s father moved the family back to Asakusa, where they now resided within the grounds of the Hanayashiki amusement park. Nyozekan was enrolled in the Kyōritsu Gakuin, a school operated by Sugiura Jūgō, a member of the group of journalists known as the Seikyōsha who
categorized themselves as jiyū shugisha.

The Seikyōsha were to be one of Nyozekan’s main intellectual influences. John Barshay writes of this school that “almost to a man, Nyozekan’s teachers at his schools in Kanda subscribed to the ‘healthy,’ ‘open,’ ‘wholesome’ Japanism of the ‘new generation’ of the Meiji 1920s.” That is, they were concerned with building a powerful Japan which could stand as an equal to the industrialized Western nations, but they believed that this nation-building could be achieved through the adaptation of Western democratic ideology. At the Kyōitsu Gakuin, Nyozekan was exposed to “liberalism” both in the content of his studies and the methodology of his teachers. He was particularly attracted to the work of the journalist Kuga Katsunan (1857-1907), who would later be his employer. By the age of 14 Nyozekan included Katsunan’s newspaper Nihon among the items he read voraciously at the Ueno Library.

The Seikyōsha became Nyozekan’s greatest intellectual influence and were the source of his interest in British liberalism. The group was formed in opposition to Tokutomi Sohō’s Minyūsha, but the ideas of the two groups overlapped a great deal. The Minyūsha advocated wholesale Westernization based on the Spencerian idea that social evolution progressed according to universal laws and that the European industrialized nations were superior to Japan on the evolutionary scheme. These nations should be emulated not only in the development of technology, but also culturally. Tokutomi Sohō’s writings show little regard for any aspect of traditional Japanese civilization.
By contrast, the Seikyōsha, represented by thinkers such as Shiga Shigetaka, accepted the need to adapt Western ideas and technology, but believed that this must be done by adapting foreign ideas and institutions to the needs of the Japanese national character. There was thus a strongly nationalistic character to Seikyōsha thought. This concept of “adaptation” is an appealing aspect of Japanese liberalism, since it seems to reconcile the contradictions between tradition and innovation inherent in modernization. On the other hand, the nationalism of the Seikyōsha should not be overlooked, with its potential to be put in the service of militarization. At the very least, the Seikyōsha believed that Japan needed to achieve military parity with Western nations. Kuga Katsunan became a supporter of the Russo-Japanese war later on, a view that was not supported by Nyozekan. And even Nyozekan is open to the accusation of having betrayed his liberal ideals in the national character studies which he published during the final years of the Pacific war, which included a chapter entitled “On the Racial (minzokuteki) Superiority of the Japanese.”\textsuperscript{11} It is impossible to rigidly categorize the ideas of the Seikyōsha, who were a highly diverse group of intellectuals who had difficulty in agreeing on what constituted the Japanese national character and which Western ideas Japan should adapt.

The return of his family to Kanda also awakened Nyozekan’s consciousness of the shitamachi side of his heart: collecting tickets for his father at the Hanayashiki, he came into contact with animal trainers, noodle-
makers, geisha, and other artists and tradesmen. A large portion of Nyozekan’s fiction would feature members of this class, who represented, on the one hand, very typical traditional Japanese values and customs, and on the other, belonged to a marginal part of the greater society and led risky, unstable lives, with their livelihoods dependent on economic forces often beyond their control.

Nyozekan had begun his study of English at age eleven at the Dōjinsha Yoka (preparatory school), and he first read the work of Herbert Spencer at circa age 14. Spencer and the other British liberal philosophers were Nyozekan’s greatest foreign intellectual influence, and he was to identify himself with “English” philosophy for the rest of his life. To Nyozekan, British philosophy was marked by its rationality and pragmatism, but not by excessive rationalism, and it stood in contrast to German Idealism, which sought metaphysical foundations for ethics and saw the individual as subordinate to the State.

Spencer’s theory of social evolution, known as “organicism,” heavily influenced Nyozekan’s thought. Spencer posited that human society evolves according to natural laws into progressively more complex and superior forms. More specifically, he claimed that all societies evolve into a “militant” form and then successively into an “industrial” one. In the militant stage, the society is mobilized for war in order to defend itself from neighboring societies, and to this end is organized along firm heirarchal lines, with little
room for individual freedom. In the industrial stage, the society becomes prosperous and relatively secure from outside threats, and in this environment the individual enjoys greater freedom. The industrialized European nations are examples of industrial societies.\textsuperscript{12} Japanese Spencerians such as Tokutomi Sohô believed that Japan was in the process of transforming from a miliant to an industrial society, and would inevitably come to resemble the industrialized European nations more and more.

In domestic politics, Spencer advocated limiting the power of the state to police and military functions designed to protect individual freedom; he opposed government regulation of private enterprise and public welfare. In international politics, he expressed disdain for imperialism as not only brutal to the subjugated peoples but also as brutalizing and limiting the freedom of citizens of the imperialist country. Imperialism ultimately was not even economically beneficial, he said.\textsuperscript{13} However, Spencer regarded colonization as beneficial to the indigenous population in certain cases.\textsuperscript{14}

Certainly Nyozekan’s concepts of society and social evolution were strongly influenced by Spencer, a fact which helps to account for the sometimes overly sanguine views of social progress which Nyozekan held early in his career. His Spencerian views also prevented him from embracing Marxism wholeheartedly, but this was a result more of his own Spencerian sense than of his having specific philosophical objections to Marxism. In fact, his difference with Marxism appears to come mostly from his personal dislike
of violence and illegality (and his mistrust of the Soviet Union) and from his desire for gradual, peaceful social change. Furthermore, Nyozekan did not inherit Spencer’s laissez-faire capitalist politics and contempt for the welfare state. Economically, he advocated worker control of the means of production, and he accepted the necessity of the continued existence of the Japanese state even as he criticized its corrupt relationship with industry as well as at its suppression of intellectual discourse.

In 1889, Nyozekan entered the preparatory program in the Meiji School of Law, which was later to become Chūō University. He entered the Tokyo School of Law in 1893 to study English law, but dropped out after a period of illness, and in 1895 reentered the school, this time to study Japanese law. Nyozekan later said that he had studied law to please his father, and though he avoided taking the bar examination or practicing law, his legal education is evident in his thought and work. Nyozekan believed that social change should and must be legal, a position which separated him from Marxist thinkers and enabled him to avoid much of the persecution they suffered. At the same time, his thought is by no means rigidly legalistic, and his literature often deals with the inability of institutions and laws to account for the complex realities of human existence.

*Development as Journalist and Social Critic*
In 1888 the thirteen-year-old Nyozekan published his first piece, an article on walking in Dōkanyama written in pseudo-classical Japanese, in Shônen-en magazine, and by the age of 14 he had decided that he wanted to be a journalist. However, his career as a journalist really does not start until 1901, following his decision not to become a lawyer, when he began submitting articles to Kuge Katsunan’s newspaper Nihon on a regular basis. By 1903 he was a regular staff member, working as a “roving reporter (yûgun kisha).” In 1908, Nyozekan joined the Osaka Asahi Shinbun, where he was to remain for the next 10 years. Nyozekan’s work was eclectic, and included the editorship of the editorial and literary column Tensei Jingo (“Vox Populi, Vox Dei”), which exists to this day, as well as numerous travel articles.

Nyozekan’s journalistic work throughout this period was informed by the Seikyôsha concept of the role of journalism in promoting a democratic society. To him, responsible journalism was a form of social criticism. And conversely, his social criticism, including the critical treatises Gendai kokka hihan and Gendai shakai hihan (1921-2) are written in a journalistic vein - “a knotted string of hundreds of mini-essays given unity through a shared method and the clearly interrelated problems which they address.” He viewed socially critical journalism as a vital ingredient in the process of the evolution of society to more democratic forms. Literature, too, could contribute to this process, and thus his view of the role of social criticism influenced the content and form of his fiction.
What, in Nyozekan’s view, was the role of the social critic? This is an important issue because Nyozekan made a point of distancing himself from society as a critical observer, a stance that was quite unlike that of his colleague Ōyama Ikuo17 and others. His ironic motto was danjite okonawazu—“I refuse to take action.” To Nyozekan, however, adopting this stance did not mean evading social responsibility or assuming an elitist position.

Journalism, and by extension social criticism and literature, was Nyozekan’s instrument for grappling with the social problems of his time. The early Taishō period was widely seen to be a time of crisis. “Modernization” in the Meiji era had brought new wealth and power to the nation, but it had apparently also brought a new, unhealthy alliance between industry and government, the suffering and unrest of workers who had been displaced from traditional economies by industrialization, and widespread malaise and a sense of powerlessness among intellectuals. How could intellectuals be of use to their nation? Nyozekan’s approach to the problem was to define himself as an “outsider” to the political world and assume the role of a critic.

This perspective is described in Aru kokoro, with the considerable advantage of hindsight, since it was not written until 1948 when Nyozekan was 73 years old (although he had written several pieces with the same title in 1921). Indeed, John Barshay claims that the entire book can be read as a rationalization for Nyozekan’s decision to stay out of politics.18 In Aru
kokoro, Nyozekan describes himself as having had since childhood a sense of a “gap” (zure) between himself and society. In particular he perceived a gap between his traditional upbringing and the goals and ideology of the Meiji state, and his roots in Edo urban culture and his eclectic, liberal education left him with a distrust of the government bureaucracy. However, his sense of not fitting in with the elite classes of Japan did not lead him to adopt a cynical or escapist attitude; instead, he chose to embrace his outsider status and to put it in service of the nation by means of social criticism.

Journalism as an avenue to criticize the establishment was particularly important in Taishô Japan because suffrage was still limited to a wealthy, male elite. With political parties lacking social programs, social improvement could only come from an enlightened bureaucracy or outside the state. The vital function of the printed word was to “mediate” between the state and society - society being understood as the organic collective human entity which Nyozekan takes to be prior to structures like the government. This is the source of Nyozekan’s fierce defense of freedom of the press. He backed this belief with action through his activity in such groups as the Gakugei jiyû dômei (League for Academic and Artistic Freedom), formed in 1933 to protest Nazi book-burning and to resist government suppression of writers and artists.

In Nyozekan’s Spencerian view, social evolution is inevitable (just as in Marxism revolution is inevitable), but human consciousness of social
realities can hasten progress and help people avoid mistaken avenues of change, such as violent revolution. To better grasp his views, it is worth examining his view of society and the state presented in his two Critiques - Gendai kokka hihan and Gendai shakai hihan.

Society, to Nyozekan, is an organic entity which grows and evolves just as individual living organisms do. A key theme in Nyozekan’s analysis of society is the nature of institutions.\textsuperscript{20} Institutions, including the state, evolve to meet certain needs of society, but they also invariably outlive their usefulness and fall into decline. In such cases, the institution, which is really a miniature version of society, may act against the interests of society as a whole in order to preserve itself. Such is the nature of the bureaucracy of the Japanese state in the 1920s, and particularly of the Japanese political parties, which act to preserve the interests of an elite class of voters, politicians and industrialists, and fail to meet the needs of ordinary people.

Nyozekan believes that the capitalist system described above is in decline, and that with the rising power of the producing classes, major political change is inevitable. There are four basic political systems which can potentially arise: anarchism, national socialism, syndicalism, and guild socialism.\textsuperscript{21} The last of these, in which the producers control the means of production, is the preferred alternative for Nyozekan. His view of class conflict and his desire that workers come to control the means of production is akin, of course, to the views of Marxism, but Nyozekan did not accept
Marxist dialectic materialism. Nor did he entirely understand it, he claimed. Finally, he did not approve of violent revolution as a means for social change.

The “producing” class of workers is extremely important in Nyozekan’s picture of society. Again, as in Marxism, Nyozekan’s concept of social reform centered on empowering this class of people through political education, suffrage, and the allotment of a fair share of economic power. Indeed, when Nyozekan speaks of “society” as a positive entity in his social criticism, he essentially identifies it with the producing class.

The Social Function of Literature

Nyozekan’s analysis of society and the state leads us to his analysis of the social function of literature. His views on this subject were shaped by his Seikyōsha liberalism and show the influence of various streams of liberal and socialist thought which developed from the 1890s. Seikyōsha members such as Kuba Katsunori and Miyake Setsurei belonged to intellectual societies devoted to the study of social issues which contributed in theory to the development of socialist literature.\(^{22}\) It was widely argued that literature should have a social or educational function. Ishikawa Takuboku, for instance, wrote in 1910 that he did not seek goodness or beauty in literature: “What I seek in literature is criticism.”\(^{23}\)
Nyozekan too argued for this educational function of literature. The language which he employs in his analysis of literature is often virtually identical to that used by Marxist writers, and the influence of Marxism on Nyozekan, who studied the works of Marx seriously starting in 1901, is undeniable. At the most radical point in his career Nyozekan associated with writers of the Proletarian school and was even the chairman of the Materialism Research Association (Yuibutsuron kenkyûkai), founded in 1932 and dissolved in 1939, which was clearly Marxist in origin and purpose, although it did not aim at political action. However, Nyozekan never fully embraced Marxism (in fact, he left the Yuibutsuron kenkyûkai before long, due to police pressure and his disagreement with the group’s extreme political associations), and it is only fair to note that many of the concepts which influence his thought, such as materialism, evolution, and the Hegelian dialectic, are found in many 19th-century European philosophers and are not uniquely Marxist. Nor is it the purpose of this study to confirm or refute Nyozekan’s own claim that he was not a Marxist. Still, a brief overview of certain Marxist concepts of the function of literature should prove helpful to understanding Nyozekan’s views on the social function of literature.

In The German Ideology, Marx and Engels present the materialist view that “Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life.” Human consciousness and ideology are products of the material life processes of human beings, and
in particular are determined by the relations between production and capital which exist at a given point in history. Furthermore, every class of people has a collective consciousness with identifiable features, which is determined by historical material conditions. Because ideologies are, by nature, syntheses of ideas divorced from actual material reality, they cannot reflect reality objectively. This is what Marx and Engels call “false consciousness,” and Georg Lukacs discourses on the role of this “false consciousness” in class revolution in History and Class Consciousness. In order for a subjugated class to take power, it must be aware of its position within the totality of existing society: “For a class to be ripe for hegemony means that its interests and consciousness enable it to organize the whole of society in accordance with these interests.” The success of a particular class in taking power depends on how far “the class performs the actions history has imposed on it ‘consciously’ or ‘unconsciously’... And is that consciousness ‘true’ or ‘false’.”

In this view, art and literature play a role in promoting revolution by acting to influence the consciousness of the proletariat, and making it aware of its power and of its right to seize power. While Nyozekan would have been uncomfortable with the dialectic account of consciousness, in which ideology
is inherently “false” and yet can be “true” insofar as it promotes a class’s pursuit of its real interests, and while he himself did not promote revolution, his account of the nature of art and its relation to “the masses” has much in common with the Marxist analysis. Indeed, a major aim of this study will be to show that Nyozekan viewed literature as (among other things) a pedagogical tool for the enlightenment of the masses, and to demonstrate how he applied this view in his own fiction. Since his view bears a clear resemblance to Marxist theories of literature, and since his most productive fiction writing period was during the Proletarian movement, I have emphasized his similarities with Marxist writers in this study. However, his views can also be traced to other systems of thought, including Confucianism.

Let us now consider Nyozekan’s own account of the relation between literature and the consciousness of the masses. This is highly important to his theory of literature, for he insists that good literature must appeal to the masses. The masses (taishû) are not necessarily identical with the producers or laborers in society, but there is clearly an overlap. Considered as the potential audience for journalism, criticism, or art (especially literature), Nyozekan defines “the masses” as the class of people who have yet to achieve historical consciousness.

To Nyozekan, the masses are distinguished, therefore, by their lack of historical consciousness.28 Although he does not say so explicitly, the unconsciousness of the masses evidently stands in opposition to the
consciousness of intellectuals, for Nyozekan goes on to say that a successful author will appeal to the masses by writing works which tap into the historical circumstances of his time. Nyozekan then goes on to heavily qualify this statement: the masses may lack consciousness, but they do have a sense (kankaku) of history. At the lowest level, literature may appeal to the animal-like, primitive instincts of people by, for example, exciting them sexually. But even the most uneducated people possess values derived from their society at a particular time and place, and this influences their taste in literature. As an example, Nyozekan cites "sword dramas" (kengeki), which he views, disapprovingly, as reflecting feudal values, and comments that they were not popular during the early Meiji period, when bourgeois liberalism dominated, but they are popular in the 1920s, when the bourgeoisie is experiencing a resurge in medieval values.²⁹

Great literature apprehends correctly the historical trends of the era and the accompanying kankaku of the masses; consequently, there is no such thing as a purely aesthetic literature divorced from the historical circumstances in which it arises. But literature does not merely identify and portray consciousness in concrete form; it also acts to influence it. Herein lies the social function of literature and of art in general. Literature which merely appeals to primitive instincts without expressing historical realities is nothing more than a commodity on the capitalist market.³⁰
Although Nyozekan’s literary theory was similar to that of the Proletarian writers, most of his own works would not have been accepted by them as Proletarian literature. The most obvious reason is that the subjects of Nyozekan’s fiction are not members of the true proletariat, which was made up of propertyless workers lacking special skills, many of whom migrated from the provinces to work in Japan’s industrial centers. Nyozekan’s characters often own some property and retain some of their roots in urban culture, although economic conditions drive some of them to destitution. Second, Nyozekan does not specifically advocate the Communist party or proletarian revolution in his works (although the farcical portrait of the oppression of workers in *Ethyl Gasoline* is certainly compatible with such ideology). While censorship prevented Proletarian writers from overly direct references to revolution, their political allegiance is made clear in their work. Kobayashi Takiji’s *The Cannery Boat* (1929), for instance, has a Russian man make a speech to Japanese sailors who are being exploited by the owner of their boat. He explains the desirability of a Proletarian revolution in Japan. “The fishermen wondered vaguely if this was the terrifying Communist propaganda they had been warned against - if so, it was nothing extraordinary, they realized with some surprise.”31 Miyamoto Yuriko’s “The Family of Koiwai” (1938) and Nakano Shigeharu’s “The House in the Village” (1935) both deal explicitly with young writers involved in the Proletarian
movement who are not only persecuted by the police but also must work to persuade their families of the justice of the cause.

While Nyozekan believes in the pedagogical value of literature, he is opposed to views which see it only as a didactic vehicle for social education. To him literature does not attempt to convey a scientifically-derived theory of history to the reader or to expound on a philosophy. Instead, it tries to grasp the historical trends of the present, through a sort of direct perception involving the subconscious mental activities of the writer. In this sense, literature functions, epistemologically, at a level a priori to that in which social science or philosophy operate, because it seeks to grasp the living, organic reality of society, which it is then the task of the analytical sciences to interpret. This point should be borne in mind when considering the theme of this study: Nyozekan’s literature as a form of social criticism. While his literature may be criticized as being overly pedantic or lacking the subtlety and ambiguity of “pure” literature, it is important to remember that Nyozekan did have a distinct concept of how literature differed from social criticism. The former involves narrative, while the latter involves reportage. Furthermore, if literature deals with social problems in a more immediate, experiential way than do political essays, Nyozekan’s literature should provide an essential key to his political thought.
CHAPTER 2

CHARACTERISTICS OF NYOZEKAN’S LITERATURE

While Nyozekan wrote extensively on the nature of fiction and its social and political value, he left little material commenting on his fiction save for incidental remarks indicating, for instance, that the real-life source for the character Professor Dupont in Dyupon hakase to sono tsuma (Professor Dupont and his Wife, 1928) was an Englishman from whom he wished to take English lessons until he learned about the exorbitant fee. In this chapter I will discuss the structural and stylistic features of Nyozekan’s fiction in addition to common themes, relating these to the pedagogical goals evident in his career, as well as to the theories of literature expressed in his nonfiction writing. However, since it is possible that Nyozekan’s literary theory does not provide a sufficient account of the various features of his fiction as he actually wrote it, I will in all cases give the fiction itself priority.

Nyozekan’s fiction is distinguished, on the one hand, by his distinctive treatment of abstract philosophical ideas, and on the other hand, by his determination to catch something of the essence of the “real world” by
portraying characters making decisions about their lives in gritty, often mundane settings. A story by Nyoze kan, then, is at once an essay-like discourse on a philosophical issue, and a journalistic collection of concrete events and details designed to leave the reader with a strong impression. To attract and keep the reader’s attention, Nyoze kan uses techniques typical of popular literature and popular journalism, including the creation of characters easily identifiable by their manners and appearance, the employment of vernacular language, and appeals to traditional moral values. I will discuss in this chapter the social and philosophical themes which are particularly prominent in Nyoze kan’s fiction, and identify the structural features which he employs to facilitate the presentation of these themes. I will then discuss other stylistic features of his fiction, and suggest that many of these features are typical of the popular literature (taishū bungaku) of Japan.

View of Society and Power Structure

Nyoze kan’s stories deal with social issues in a fairly abstract way, and the same questions recur in almost every story. For example, Zōya no Kumesan (1921, appended in translation as Kume the Elephant Trainer) illustrates many of Nyoze kan’s themes. It is typical of a number of stories Nyoze kan wrote in the early 1920s featuring characters connected with traveling circuses and animal shows. The material, of course, is derived from Nyoze kan’s
childhood experiences at the Hanayashiki. The wild animals from Africa and the acrobats, clowns, and magicians with their magical skills create an exotic, appealing atmosphere, yet Nyozekan does not pause to savor this atmosphere, focusing quickly on the problems of a single character.

Kume is typical of Nyozekan’s protagonists, who typically possess an unusual and marketable skill (for Kume it is the ability to train elephants), yet lack the ability to perceive and successfully battle the broader social forces which oppress them. Such is the case with Kume, who lacks what we might call “class consciousness,” although he has an intuitive dislike for the upper classes. Like other such characters, Kume confronts the problems created by these social forces, in particular the economic exploitation which Nyozekan perceives to be one of the salient features of Japanese society. Nyozekan shows how these social forces create insoluble dilemmas for ordinary, “small” people, by leading the character - and the reader - through the process of the character’s pursuit of his or her ambitions, decisionmaking, and frustration and suffering at the end. The extent to which the character gains “consciousness” varies from story to story.

Kume is a middle-aged widower who sells toy elephants in the street. Because he makes so little money, his daughter is forced to work at a factory and is prevented from marrying by her impoverished circumstances. Kume had been the trainer of an elephant at a circus years before, but when the elephant died in an accident, he had lost the will to work. Suddenly, Kume
receives a job offer “made in heaven”: he will be paid a large salary to train an elephant belonging to a local Viscount and his family. While Kume dislikes the nobility and their frivolous use of the animal, he takes the job, and soon his daughter is working at the estate as well. He does not enjoy his newly-found prosperity for long, however: he feels that the job robs him of his dignity by forcing him to cater to the whims of the spoiled son of the family. However, he finds himself trapped when he realizes his daughter will lose her job if he quits. Finally, a request comes from one of the brothers of the Viscount to make Kume’s daughter his mistress. Kume is determined to stand firm against at least this kind of sexual exploitation of his daughter. But then he receives a shock: she has already been caught dallying in the bedroom of the brother. The story ends here, with Kume’s stupefied shock at the probable loss of his daughter’s hopes for future happiness as a free woman.

The meaning of labor: Nyozekan deals with a number of philosophical and social problems in this story. One is the question of the meaning of labor, and how a person can work with dignity and achieve happiness. Kume’s problem is that he is not able to do work in which he takes satisfaction. When he was younger, he had felt satisfaction in his work as elephant trainer. The elephant Zenpachi, he says, was his best friend (he uses the word mabu, originally meaning the true love of a prostitute), they shared good and bad times together, and when the elephant died, he too wanted to die. However, even then, there was something inherently unsatisfying about his job. Kume
worked with the elephant to make money which would feed the animal and the people in the traveling show. Yet Kume was not interested in the money-making process; he was concerned with the survival and comfort of his charge, and himself. That he experienced a sense of isolation from society is evident in the fact that he can only speak freely and eloquently to the elephant, who does not understand.

In other stories, Nyozekan portrays characters who do take pride in their work. In particular, urban artisans who produce a product through their handiwork are portrayed as highly admirable. The nail-maker in Osaru no ban ni naru made (Before becoming the monkey trainer, 1921) is one such character, and he passes on to his boy apprentice, Tomezô, the joy and pride of his craft. Nyozekan describes how the craftsman, "bald, with a fearsome face, who hardly ever spoke," would make nails as Tomezô pumped the bellows. "When he pounded the red-hot wire a couple of times, it was instantly transformed into a nail. He was amazingly fast, and Tomezô was entranced by the way the new nails would spring from the hammer one after another with great speed." When the craftsman is gone, Tomezô attempts to make nails himself by imitating what he has seen. At first he is unsuccessful, but he improves, and when the craftsman discovers him at work he praises Tomezô and says that he will give him the business when he is older.

In every case the pride in craftsmanship comes from intangible factors which reside in the tradition of a craft but which cannot be duplicated by mass
production. The opening scene of *Hitai no otoko* (*The Man with the Forehead*, 1909) is satiric in tone, but the sentiment is serious. In this scene, Hani, the protagonist, discusses the declining quality of fresh-cooked green beans. Holding a green bean in front of his face with chopsticks, he laments its inferior taste. When he was a child, he says, a certain man sold incredibly delicious green beans. "According to that old man, green beans must be cooked in a special pot for a specific period of time in a specific way, and they must be eaten within a certain period of time. If even one of the rules was broken the true taste of the beans will be lost."34 Because of this, the bean seller sold the beans as he ran, and if he did not sell them in time, he would give them away to the neighbors. His career ended when his house burned down, destroying the special bean-making pot which he used.

But the craftsmen portrayed in these stories are a dying breed. Most of the stories portray them in the process of being driven out of business by big industry. The nail-maker in *Osaru no ban*, for instance, is forced to release Tomežo from his apprenticeship because his business is gradually being lost to factories which mass-produce nails. Furthermore, for such craftsmen, giving up their independence and working as a laborer does not bring happiness. Nyozekan believed that work under capitalism could never be joyful and satisfying, since the worker was selling his labor on the market and was inherently distanced from the product and process of his labor. He thus disagreed with the socialist ideal of "work as art," or at least with the
possibility of its achievement under capitalism; and he believed workers needed to strive for control over the products of their labor, while recognizing that labor inherently involves pain and suffering.\textsuperscript{35} Thus, for the characters who work as factory laborers, the issue is not that of finding satisfaction in the work itself, but rather in gaining power. \textit{Sanma-sensei} (1923) illustrates this viewpoint. The main character, Jūkichi, strives to educate himself in order to improve his possibilities for advancement in the company; however, pride and love of work are absent from this account. We are not even told what Jūkichi’s factory manufactures. The character Chieko, a cafe waitress, brings a new dimension to the struggle for advancement by her involvement in organizing a labor union, which raises Jūkichi’s consciousness of the potential courses of action he can take.

\textbf{Exploitation of workers:} closely related to the issue of work is that of exploitation. If a person is being exploited for his labor, he naturally will not take satisfaction in his work. Nyozekan wishes to encourage the laboring classes to improve their own position through education and joining labor organizations. This issue, too, is dealt with in \textit{Zôya}. In the past, Kume had had a vague sense of guilt at his involvement in the exploitation of the animal’s ability to make money: “When he got insolent, I often yelled at him saying that anyone who wasn’t useful to humans could go ahead and die, but who would want to work being made fun of and forced to go places?”\textsuperscript{36} Kume’s ambivalent feelings about working with the elephant, then, are not
so much satisfaction in a job well done, but come from the feeling of
comradeship with a fellow living being who is being exploited. For Kume too
was being exploited, even though his employer was not manifestly uncivil.
As a general rule, Nyozekeached avoids the conventional stereotypes of the
exploiter such as the evil landlord or the greedy factory owner.

When Kume returns to the trade of training elephants, working for a
noble family which keeps an elephant to entertain their child, the nature of
the exploitation becomes even clearer to him, and to the reader. Although the
job seems like a gift from heaven, and he receives an extravagant salary for
his work, he is completely dissatisfied. Ostensibly, this is because the elephant
does not have the spirit of Zenpachi, and it obsequiously submits to orders to
do tricks. However, the real reason is that Kume himself feels humiliated by
having to obey the wishes of the Viscount and to cater to the whims of his
little boy. The story ends with Kume’s full realization of the Viscount’s
exploitation of him and his daughter, and his complete lack of options which
would enable him to escape this exploitation.

The exploitation of workers is a constant concern of Nyozekean’s,
and it is a prominent theme in his other “circus” pieces. In some cases it
is presented even more starkly than in Zôya. Futari no keigyôshi (The
two acrobats, 1921), for example, is the story of a man and woman who
perform a trapeze act together, and who are involved in a budding
romance. The story is told from the perspective of the man, identified late
in the story as "Hô-chan." Hô is aware that the owner of the circus is planning for his son to marry the woman, "Kii-chan," who is the star of the show, and for Hô to marry his daughter, in whom Hô has no interest. But Hô, who is fearless when performing his tricks, utterly lacks the courage to take action to prevent Kii-chan being taken away. That evening, when he and Kii-chan perform, his worries affect his concentration, and he fails to catch Kii-chan. The story ends with both of them plummeting through the air, presumably to their deaths. Here the theme of exploitation is even more starkly portrayed than in Zôya. Both involve persons working for aristocrats (Hô's show is sponsored by an aristocrat), and both involve the use of economic power to force women into unwanted marriages.

It is worth noting, however, how Nyozekan's treatment of exploitation differs in tone and approach from a Marxist/Proletarian treatment of the same issue. Typically, his characters are involved not in mass production, but in the entertainment and service occupations which do not mass produce material commodities. They occupy a marginal area of society in some ways comparable to the demimonde; and their reliance on specialized, often physical skills makes their position in society very unstable at the same time that it fosters an independence of spirit. For Nyozekan's characters, the loss of their livelihood to capitalist enterprises is a severe problem, but it is only one
of several problems that they confront. Another problem is the persistence of “feudal” practices such as arranged marriage and the granting of special privileges to the aristocracy. Yet another is the compromising of traditional values for short-term economic gain. This can be seen in Osaru no ban, for example, in which the barber who cares for the Tomezô after he leaves the nailmaker stubbornly refuses to sell his business to a large company which plans to remodel it into a fashionable, western-style operation. When the barber falls ill, his wife takes advantage of his incapacity and collaborates with an uncle to have the business transferred. Certainly, capitalist exploitation is presented here, but the immediate evil is done by members of the victim’s class, including family members, whose attempt to act in what they see to be their best interests is portrayed as understandable, if ultimately misguided. The character Shin plays a similar role in Zôya. As a gardener who works for the Viscount, he plays the role of negotiator, first to bring Kume to the estate, and second, to have Kume’s daughter made into the mistress of the Viscount’s brother. Shin’s character is not entirely consistent: he feels sympathy for Kume, but is also cunning and cruel in his efforts to get Kume to agree to give up his daughter.

This is not to say that Nyozekan was less vigorous than the Proletarian writers in attacking what he saw as capitalist exploitation. In the short farce entitled Ethyl Gasoline (1925), he caricatures the heartless attitude of
industrialists and their disregard for the safety and well-being of their workers in a manner quite akin to Proletarian drama. In this story, an oil company has invented a new type of gasoline, “ethyl gasoline,” which is ten percent more efficient than ordinary gasoline, but is highly toxic and has caused insanity and death among numerous factory workers. For the company president, Awaji, the increased efficiency is worth the human sacrifice. By paying small amounts of compensation to the families of the workers, he believes he has discharged any obligation to them. Later, Awaji himself is driven to the same insanity and death suffered by his workers. In order to frighten him into allowing them to marry, his daughter and her fiancee decide to fool him into believing that he has inhaled ethyl gasoline and has only minutes to live. The plan apparently is working, when suddenly all three of them actually go into fits and die with precisely the symptoms of ethyl gasoline inhalation.

The individual and society: the individual and his or her relation with society is an important issue in liberalism, since liberal values and the concept of human rights are predicated upon the value of the individual human being. One would expect Hasegawa Nyozekan, as a liberal, to embrace some form of individualism and to place it in opposition to the collective morality of nationalism. This is generally the case, but Nyozekan’s treatment of the individual and society is influenced not only by Spencerian individualism but also his conception of the structure of Japanese society. Nyozekan inherited from the liberal Seikyōsha journalists not only
liberalism but also nationalism. While Nyozekan found ultranationalism repugnant, and advocated the creation of a cosmopolitan Japan which would take its place among the industrialized Western nations as an equal, he took a nationalistic pride in Japanese tradition. In The Japanese National Character, Nyozekan discourses on his belief that a tendency to work cooperatively, even communally, is one of the outstanding national characteristics of the Japanese people. This emphasis on communalism has a tempering effect on Nyozekan’s individualism.

Nyozekan abhors the forcing of individuals to marry and work against their will, as the above-mentioned storylines in Zôya and Futari no keigyôshi illustrate. He also appears to hold the view held by the teacher Hirokawa in Sanma-sensei that the educational system of the Taishô period, with its regimentation and suppression of individuality, is designed to produce nothing but cannon fodder. Nevertheless, Nyozekan does not find the answer to social problems in an extreme individualism. On the contrary, he views the problems of the individual from his social evolutionary perspective which sees “society,” the continually evolving entity which is the subject of history, as the primary object of analysis. The concept of society is meaningless without consideration of the individuals which constitute it, but conversely, the individual cannot ever be truly separate from society. In Nyozekan’s stories, the main requirement of being human is to be integrated as a fundamental part of a community.
This philosophy is best illustrated in Sanma-sensei, the story of Jûkichi, a young factory worker living with his elderly mother, and his friendship with an eccentric elementary school teacher, Hirokawa. Hirokawa is nicknamed "Sanma-sensei" by his students due to his resemblance to the fish of the same name. He views modern education as nothing but a tool used by government and industry to enslave the working classes, and consequently makes no effort to control or instruct the children. Jûkichi invites Hirokawa to stay with him and his mother after he Hirokawa is evicted from his apartment. Later, Hirokawa returns the favor by moving the hairdressing business of his sister, O-Kinu, into the same building to prevent Jûkichi and his mother from being evicted.

Jûkichi’s mother recovers from her depression once she has a role doing housework for this extended family, and everyone appears to enjoy a cheery life together. Unfortunately, their happiness is soon disturbed by Hirokawa’s alcoholic, abusive father. Hirokawa’s “delinquent” younger sister, Chieko, who works at a cafe, appears and asks O-Kinu for money to help start a waitress’s union. The various family tensions make the atmosphere at the apartment increasingly tense and gloomy. When Jûkichi decides to move out, he informs Chieko, asserting that he must take care of his own needs first. Chieko agrees; she herself had used emotional manipulation to get money from her sister. Just then a telephone call comes telling them that Sanma-sensei is dying, probably from drinking poison in an act of suicide.
This novella illustrates both Nyozekan’s faith in the power of human beings to improve their lives through cooperative action, and his despair at their failure to do so. Jūkichi is not a man who possesses an individualistic vision; he merely displays civility towards Hirokawa, motivated by some intuitive sense that they can be helpful to each other. After Hirokawa’s sister moves in, Jūkichi, his mother, and the Hirokawas form a kind of extended family, achieving a happiness which is portrayed, at first, in a highly sentimental way. It appears that the urban working class to which all the characters belong does possess the ability to form a network of relationships which can compensate for the absence of biological family members. Jūkichi’s desire to improve himself through education - he asks Hirokawa to give him lessons, and later studies with one of Hirokawa’s colleagues - is one of his admirable traits, as is his ability to integrate himself and his mother into a larger community. This results in the temporary abatement of his mother’s depression over the long-past loss of her husband.

But why does the happy group of people fall apart? One reason is that the divisions within Hirokawa’s family are too deep. Hirokawa’s father, an alcoholic and a failed businessman, regards his son’s teaching with great contempt, and constantly berates him for not having become a powerful industrialist or government official. Hirokawa, ironically, accepts his father’s negative evaluation for the opposite reason that education is a tool by which
government and industry subdue the masses. In addition, the father and O-Kinu are estranged, and each pressures Hirokawa to abandon the other.

Moreover, the dissolution of the group is due perhaps to the fact that Jūkichi and others do not carry their obligation in taking care of others far enough. Hirokawa is driven to suicide by a deep sense of despair over the meaningless of his life. In addition, he hopes that Jūkichi will marry O-Kinu, and feels, irrationally, that his presence in the household is a barrier to this. However, Jūkichi, instead of doubling his efforts to help Hirokawa, decides to move out, on the grounds that his comfort and that of his mother come first. This decision to put himself first parallels Chieko’s manipulation of her sister for money. By juxtaposing these two actions with Hirokawa’s apparent suicide, Nyozekan appears to raise the question of whether there is a connection. Jūkichi enjoyed the benefits of community living, but left the community when it failed to meet his needs. The text serves as an unspoken indictment, and suggest a limitation to Nyozekan’s individualism.

Nyozekan presents a more optimistic picture of the ability of a community to solve its problems at the grass-roots level in *Osaru no ban*. Tomezō is essentially orphaned, having lost his mother and having been sent by his uncaring, alcoholic father to any household that will take him. Despite his misfortunes, he manages to achieve a sense of family with the hairdresser’s, the nailmaker’s, and the barber’s families by learning new work skills and developing a sense of belonging. Despite a heartbreak over a girl he
likes, the story ends optimistically with Tomezô reconciled with his father and looking forward to the prospect of a new, interesting job. This story is individualistic in its focus on Tomezô’s coming of age among turbulent social conditions, but his destiny is decided as much by the will of the community as by his own efforts to improve himself.

Workers, intellectuals, and aristocrats: as an intellectual with roots in the urban shitamachi culture, Nyozekan experienced many of the conflicts attendant to Japan’s modern development: Westernization versus tradition, industrial capitalism versus highly localized economies, individual freedom versus obligation to the community. His fiction reflects this struggle through its portrayal of both members of the urban working class and intellectuals. Another class of people which figures in many of Nyozekan’s stories is the aristocracy. The peerage as it was created in early Meiji represents both the inequalities carried over from medieval times and the modern compliance with Meiji state-building and industrialization. Nyozekan’s anti-aristocracy stance is prominent in his stories, and it is also clearly evident in his non-fiction. One famous nonfiction piece indicts the aristocracy even in the death of his favorite dog, which was killed by dogs belonging to the baron next door when it wandered onto the baron’s estate. As a general rule, aristocrats are portrayed as distant figures, and Nyozekan does not attempt to develop any aristocratic characters in detail.
Nyozekan was praised in his lifetime his colorful and convincing portrayal of characters belonging to the urban merchant class, specifically, the Tokyo shitamachi class. He was said to be so adept that his writing was mistaken for that of Natsume Sōseki, and conversely, it was the portrayal of the common men and women of this class which Nyozekan most admired in Sōseki’s prose. He identified certain characteristics, which he admired, as native to this class of people. They were quick-tempered but did not hold a grudge. They were industrious, and were perfectionists in their craft. They were parsimonious. They were frank and honest. They communicated affection through the good-natured exchange of insults. They disliked pretentiousness and ostentation of any kind. Set characters who display these qualities are: the heavy-set, tomboyish young lady who is equal to men in working and talking; the older craftsman, who is taciturn, with an intimidating appearance, and who pursues perfection in his craft, relaxing only when he drinks; the shrewd older lady who manages family finances; and the Oliver Twist-like ragamuffin.

The urban merchant class has a broader function in Nyozekan’s fiction, however, for the character traits described above are employed in political opposition to Meiji state-building, militarization, and the creation of a capitalistic industrialist society. Characters in this class thus server to express Nyozekan’s own criticism of society. One almost feels Nyozekan’s own voice raised in anger in the case of women being forced to marry undesirable
partners for economic reasons in Futasujimichi (Crossroads, 1898), when the character O-Sen is forced to marry “a man with a terrible reputation, with no end of bad rumors about him.” The character Roppei says: “I don’t care about the mother and father, but I feel so bad for O-Sen-san...last night she was acting completely normal, because she’s like that, but when I think about how she must feel inside, I feel so sorry for her that I want to cry.” Or, one feels the sense of loss in the plight of the baker in Tora kara hyô e (From Tiger to Leopard, 1922), who studied baking in France and makes “the best bread in the world,” as he is slowly driven out of business by commercial bakeries which take away his customers through advertising, more efficient distribution, and saving money by skimping on ingredients. And one shares Kume’s disdain for the aristocrats in Zôya, who use their money to exploit people and animals for their own amusement.

The class consciousness of the urban merchant characters is, however, limited. While they feel anger at injustice, disregard for quality, and the frivolity of the ruling classes, they lack the insight that these are all manifestations of larger social forces. It is the intellectuals who have the potential to recognize these patterns; however, because of their inability to take any positive action based on their knowledge, they are portrayed as an unhappy and ineffectual group. Since Nyozekan identifies himself as an intellectual as well as as a child of shitamachi, his portrayal of intellectuals can be seen as, simultaneously, self-criticism, criticism of intellectuals as a
class for their failure to take positive action, and criticism of a society which
denies power and status to intellectuals. The character Hani in *Hitai no otoko*,
and the teacher Hirokawa in *Sanma-sensei*, represent Nyozekan’s most
complete portrayal of individual members of this class.

Hani is an intellectual who possesses an enormous range of eclectic
knowledge, from philosophy to the science of mining - a man much like
Nyozekan. He is characterized by his huge forehead, which “takes up the
greater part of his face” and which changes color according to his moods. He
does not work, living off of a stipend left by his father, and he spends his days
idly, entertaining the nihilistic philosophy that “the only serious people in
the world are those who choose to die.” Hani is confronted with social
injustice indirectly through the engagement of his sister to his childhood
friend, Kadono. Kadono has become wealthy through unscrupulous business
activities which are never specifically identified, and he has won Hani’s sister,
Taeko, over to his way of thinking. Their motto, engraved on Taeko’s
engagement ring in Latin, is “to drink from the overflowing fountain.”
Kadono and Taeko attack Hani for his impracticality, calling him a “wen” or
“growth” (kobu) on society, but Hani remains aloof, holding his large
forehead high and saying that a kobu may have a useful function in a
decaying society. Hani’s single useful function is taking care of Koyoko, the
younger sister of his friend who is studying in America. However, the story
ends with Hani deciding to “go to the West” (seiyô) and to leave Koyoko with
others. It is unclear whether his leaving Japan represents a new beginning or escapism.

Since Hani’s indolence stands in sharp contrast with Nyozekan’s lifelong involvement in intellectual and social movements, his attitude may be taken as a parody of the aloof intellectual. Nyozekan may have had a “superfluous hero” similar to the character Oblomov in Ivan Goncharov’s A Common Story (1847), who resurfaces in Japanese literature ever since Futabatei Shimei’s creation of the character Bunzô in Ukigumo (1887). Indeed, Nyozekan’s motto, “I refuse to take action,” would seem to be the same as Hani’s. But for Nyozekan the motto meant that he would not seek political office, but would devote himself to criticism of society as an “outsider.”

Sôseki praised Hitai no otoko for its witty portrayal of the various and sometimes bizarre opinions of its characters, but he criticized it for giving its own cleverness precedence over the serious treatment of the issues involved.41 This criticism cannot be made of Sanma-sensei, however. The character Hirokawa is quite similar to Hani in his refusal to make any attempt to influence others, and his cynicism about life. However, the interesting point of this story is that the intellectual, Hirokawa, comes into contact with a poorly-educated laborer, Jûkichi, and the latter is exposed to the opinions of the former and has his class consciousness affected to some extent.
Jûkichi asks Hirokawa to tutor him in subjects such as mathematics so that he can improve his career prospects. In response to this request, Hirokawa insists that there is no value in education - only working people are doing anything "real." Too much education, is destructive, since it creates people who have no skills and are fit only to be soldiers and servants to the state. Hirokawa's view is a caricature of Nyozekan's actual view, since he valued education but not the regimented educational system which he felt had been implemented in Japan since his youth. To Jûkichi, this view is incomprehensible, and he persists in asking Hirokawa for help until the latter finally refers him to Sakadera, his colleague at the elementary school and his spiritual opposite. Sakadera is a complete tyrant on the schoolyard, drilling the children like soldiers and tolerating no deviation from the norm. Yet ironically, Hirokawa respects him as a "good person," since Sakadera is doing what he sincerely believes to be best and since his criticism of Hirokawa's way of life is in good faith. Jûkichi's lessons with Sakadera prove to helpful to him, possibly even building his class consciousness, although another unfortunate result of these lessons is to raise doubts in Jûkichi's mind concerning Hirokawa's sanity. The other factor in building Jûkichi's class consciousness is his acquaintance with Chieko, Hirokawa's younger sister, who, as mentioned before, is involved in the organization of a waitress's labor union. Here, Jûkichi becomes interested in the potential of labor unions to solve some of the problems facing working people. Hirokawa's apparent
suicide at the end of the story ends the narrative of Jûkichi’s growing
consciousness, but the possibility that it will continue to develop remains.

**Education and development of class consciousness**: the distinctiveness
of Nyozekan’s treatment of the social issues described above comes from his
construction of situations which model the process of gaining class
consciousness, or demonstrate how a lack of such consciousness limits the
ability of the characters to improve their situation. In contrast to Proletarian
literature, which depicts scenes of labor strife and direct conflict between the
proletariat and the ruling class, Nyozekan’s emphasis is on the developing
class consciousness of the characters; the actual events of the stories are less
important and often commonplace. Nyozekan’s focus on the experiences and
perceptions of individual characters, and his emphasis on class consciousness,
reflect his pedagogical aims. By portraying the development of an
individual’s social awareness or class consciousness, he hopes that the reader
will make certain discoveries which will expand his or her own awareness.
The reader’s discoveries may parallel the discoveries of characters, or may be
of a more profound nature than any made by the characters. In any case,
Nyozekan presents his social ideas in a sequence intended to keep the reader’s
interest. The technique is analogous to that used by mystery writers, but the
“mystery” does not concern a crime, but rather the search for the larger social
causes of the characters’ conflicts.
In Zôya, the elephant trainer Kume starts with a cynical, apathetic attitude based on his past work experience in which he was both exploited and forced to exploit another living being, namely, his elephant. While he loves his daughter, he is unable to motivate himself to do anything to help her. Then comes the miraculous job offer from the Viscount’s estate. When both father and daughter find profitable employment in the fairy-tale like estate, it seems their problems have been solved. Kume, however, retains his cynicism and his disgust with the luxury and prestige enjoyed by the aristocrats, who to his mind have done nothing to deserve them. He thus has what Nyozekan would call a sense of class oppression, and the accuracy of his perception is demonstrated by the quickness with which he understands that Prince Sadamori, the Viscount’s brother, wishes to have his daughter as a mistress. However, he is only fully able to express his resentment when he is drunk, and he is sufficiently drawn by the good pay and the exotic trappings of the mansion to be drawn to a point beyond which no retreat is possible. Ultimately, Kume learns from his experience at being humiliated at the estate, and he becomes more firmly convinced of the injustice of the present social system. He resolves to protect his daughter from the degradation of becoming a kept woman, and he decides to quit his job, yet in his isolation, he is powerless to prevent the union of his daughter with Prince Sadamori.

In comparison with Kume, Kii-chan’s consciousness is undeveloped. She is enamored with the life of the aristocrats, and she goes to Prince
Sadamori of her own accord. However, it is clear that sheer desperation is one of the main reasons motivating her. When Kume gives a long, drunken speech expressing his deep resentment at class oppression, with an eloquence and conviction he had never displayed before, Kii-chan feels frightened, and is unable to respond except to ask him to stop. She is unwilling to accept the truth of her father’s perceptions.

The process of one or more characters coming to some sort of increased social awareness is present in most of Nyozekan’s stories: the growing social awareness of Tomezô in Osaru no ban; the realization of the character in Torazukai no shigan ("Applying for Tiger Trainer," 1919) and Tora kara hyô e that his boredom with people is caused by his lack of a productive social position (he too has a woman taken from him by an unjust marriage); the increased social awareness and desire for self-improvement of Jûkichi in Sanma-sensei. Perhaps one of the best examples of the development of class consciousness occurs in Aru kafe no onna (The Story of a Cafe Waitress, 1921). A young woman, Mineko, works at a cafe run by her widowed mother. Her mother receives financial support from a wealthy businessman, Shiba, and he is pressuring Mineko to be adopted into his family so that the girl can get an education and marry well. But Mineko dislikes Shiba and wants her mother to remain independent of him. An episode takes place in Mineko’s school, in which the daughter of a brothel owner, whose father brought her to school in a flashy automobile, is forced to leave the school for her alleged
poor performance in her examinations. With the unsavory nature of the father's business known to all, no one comes to the girl's defense. Mineko, however, perceives the injustice at the girl's being forced to leave the school because of her social background, and writes a furious letter of protest to the principal of the school for which she herself is expelled. Mineko then decides that her home life is more important than school. She absorbs herself in the cafe work, flirting with men but remaining chaste. Finally, Mineko learns to her astonishment that her mother has promised her to the son of a wealthy businessman, and that she will be forced to go to Shiba's house to be trained as a proper wife. Mineko is bitter, and tells an envious colleague that her situation is no different from being forced to be the concubine of a wealthy farmer.

Nyozekan makes a point of describing the growth of Mineko's consciousness, and she is probably the character most aware of her social status. At the beginning of the story, Mineko knows only that she dislikes "Uncle" Shiba, but she cannot understand why, since he is kind to her, gives her gifts, and so on. She soon realizes that he is using his financial power to manipulate her mother, and it is even implied that Shiba had something to do with the financial ruination of her late father. Her social consciousness deepens as she becomes aware of the injustice done to others, as in the incident of the expulsion of her friend from school, and her one-woman effort to prevent the expulsion demonstrates a high capacity for action. The
story ends unhappily, as do many of Nyozekan's stories, with the character failing to escape from the position imposed on her by her position in society. Still, one senses that Mineko will not go without a fight.

Nyozekan as an Author of Popular Literature

That Nyozekan wrote his fiction with the masses in mind is evident not only from his preoccupation with working-class subjects in his works themselves but also from his essays concerning literature and politics. However, his political seriousness and his disdain for some of the more vulgar elements of popular fiction prevent us from classifying him unqualifiedly as a "popular writer." I prefer to argue that Nyozekan's fiction has enough in common with other works described as "popular fiction" to merit being analyzed as such, provided that we keep in mind the ways in which he is not a popular writer. Furthermore, he was an earnest participant in the debate which took place in the Japanese literary world in the late 1920s over how literature should be "popularized" and be made to address the needs of the working classes. His views on the relationship between art and politics, and his attempts to address the problems of the laboring classes through his fiction, are closely related to those of the Proletarian writers. It may even be possible to regard Nyozekan as a precursor of this movement,
since these concerns appear in his earliest fiction, preceding the Proletarian movement by nearly 30 years.

In the literary world, Nyozenka is generally denied the status of a creator of junbungaku, "pure literature," and this judgment is probably not unjust. As Yasukawa Sadao points out, Nyozenka regarded the writing of fiction as outside of his specialty, and produced only a handful of works which are truly memorable as literature. However, the qualities of his fiction which discount it as junbungaku are precisely those which mark it as popular literature. I would like to discuss the following stylistic features which Nyozenka’s fiction shares with works generally deemed to be “popular fiction” or taishū bungaku.

First, Nyozenka enjoyed a mass readership for his fiction, or at least for part of it, since many of his stories appeared in publications with large circulations. Second, he employed a variety of extra-literary language in his stories, in particular making heavy use of Tokyo’s shitamachi dialect in the speech of his working-class characters. Third, his works are theatrical, with a high proportion of the text consisting of dialogue which is emotional and often humorous. Fourth, Nyozenka’s characters fall into certain stereotyped categories, although they are presented seriously and differ from the caricatures used in other genres of popular fiction. Finally, Nyozenka attempts in his literature to deal with contemporary problems - political corruption, the destruction of
traditional communities through industrialization, the collapse of the family, and so forth - by invoking moral values derived from the wisdom of the past. Long-standing values like cooperation, kindness, the work ethic, and so forth are appealed to, although he simultaneously challenges traditional notions of social hierarchy, the position of women, and so forth.

Nyozekan's fiction appeared in a variety of periodicals, some of which enjoyed true mass readership. His first published story, Futasujimichi appeared in the publication Shinchô gekkan, a popular fiction magazine, and Hitai no otoko was published in the Osaka mainichi shinbun. Many of his stories appeared in distinguished monthly journals like Chûô kōron and Kaihô, which also enjoyed considerable circulation, although aimed at an educated audience. On the other hand, perhaps half of his fictional work appeared in Warera and its descendants, which were published privately by a small circle of intellectuals and read by only a few thousand highly educated subscribers. But it is not necessarily the case that Nyozekan writes in a simpler style for the more popular publications. Hitai no otoko, for instance, appeared in a newspaper with massive circulation, yet in my view it is one of his most difficult works, full of abstract political arguments spoken by bourgeois, educated characters. Torazukai no shigan, a simple story about a world-weary and unemployed teacher who briefly works by wrestling a
tiger in a sideshow, appeared in Warera, and Nyozeke published the sequel, Tora kara hyō e, in Chûō kûron.

A large number of Nyozeke’s stories are set in Asakusa, where he grew up, and they feature lengthy and highly animated dialogues by working-class characters speaking in the Shitamachi dialect. This use of dialect is one feature of Nyozeke’s literature which has been praised for its authenticity, expressiveness, and humor; it also was the feature of his work which led him to be compared with and even confused for Sôseki, although as Yasukawa points out, Nyozeke disliked the high-class Yamanote elements portrayed in some of Sôseki’s literature, and associated himself with shitamachi.43

Nyozeke has several preferred settings in which he shows off his mastery of shitamachi dialect. One is that of the older man who, lacking power to improve his status in life, vents his rage in scathing terms at aristocrats or at some individual whom he blames for his condition, often while drunk. Zôya contains splendid passages which convey both pathos and humor using dialect. The character Kume, who has just become the caretaker for the elephant owned by a Viscount, refuses to conceal his contempt for the spoiled young son of the family. His daughter reprimands him:

“Daddy, how can you call the young master a ‘brat’? Think what would happen if somebody heard you.”

“What do you mean? A brat is a brat, even if he’s a “young master”....So I can’t make a living without bowing and
scraping to a brat like that? I’m like him...just like Gorugo [the elephant], I ‘stand up,’ ‘bow,’ and all the rest...” 44

In another scene, Kume’s past is recalled, in which he used to scold an elephant vehemently for refusing to cooperate:

“What the hell is this? With your huge body, eating a mountain of food, you don’t want to work? Even though you’re just a beast, because you help a lot of people make a living, I serve you and don’t scold you. If you don’t want to work, and just want to loaf every day, do as you damn well please.”45

Needless to say, one function of these passages is to express Nyozekan’s work ethic and hatred of class oppression. Still, they are also amusing for the reader for their wit and frankness. Nyozekan admires the shitamachi art of communication through the aggressive exchange of wit and insult. In Futasujimichi,46 Kichi and O-Sen banter with each other about his small, and her large, size. In Osaru no ban, Tomezô “bonds” with O-Hatsu, the older daughter in his adopted family, by exchanging good-humored insults. 47

Nyozekan uses a variety of other forms of speech in his stories, including the formal “de arimasu” form in courtroom testimony (Aru bōsatsu hannin no chinjutsu), the English-laced vocabulary of an indolent intellectual (Hitai no otoko, Sanma-sensei), and English spoken by a Frenchman, expressed in Japanese with katakana syllabry used to indicate foreign pronunciations (Dyupon Hakase to sono tsuma).
Elsewhere, Nyozekan tries his hand at a play written in the dialect of Osaka, where he spent much of his newspaper career. These tactics are comparable to those used by writers like Oda Sakunosuke, who used regional dialect, or Tachibana Sotoo, who represented the speech of foreigners by the creative use of katakana.

As stated above, Nyozekan attempts to give his fiction a theatrical quality. The heavy use of dialogue discussed above is one such tactic. Not only does it give the stories a living, performed quality, it is also used to convey information and voice the opinions of the author. For instance, in Sanma-sensei, the character of the peculiar teacher with the pointy, fish-like face is gradually revealed through his statements expressing his philosophy of life (he is basically an intellectual who believes that his knowledge is useless to society), but late in the story his sister Chieko appears to provide information on his family background and relationship with his father. This story and others also rely on coincidence to push the plot forward, as in the scene where Jûkichi, the protagonist, repeatedly observes Sanma-sensei in a schoolyard across from his apartment, and then encounters him camping out in a field after having been evicted from his apartment. In this way Sanma-sensei comes to live with Jûkichi and his mother, thereby setting the plot of the story in motion. Nyozekan’s use of coincidence, as in the theatrical conventions of Edo period dramatic narrative, serves mainly to move the
plot along quickly and does not render his stories implausible. On the other hand, while I have praised his use of dialogue, his use of other characters to voice his own opinions can give his work a contrived, didactic quality. For instance, Futasujimichi, Zôya no Kume-san, and Tora kara hyô e all contain the theme of a young woman being forced to marry or become the kept woman of a wealthy man; in every case a character is present who expresses outrage at the arrogance and cruelty of such men (while doing nothing to prevent the union), although the frequency of the practice makes one suspect that many Japanese probably faced it with a resigned acceptance. The monologues of Nyozekan’s characters can also be excessively lengthy, a feature shared with some of his critical essays.

Also worthy of mention is Nyozekan’s use of set character types which are easily identified by a reader familiar with his work. Since he attempts to create realistic characters based on people he has actually met, his characters are more believable than the evil businessmen wearing diamond rings and other such characters created by a melodramatic writer such as Ozaki Kôyô. Nevertheless, his characters do fall into distinct types who share distinctive features. Among these are the disaffected intellectual, the socially mobile working-class woman, the factory worker eager to improve himself, the arrogant aristocrat or capitalist, and so on. These characters are also marked by association with
physical objects or caricatured descriptions: Hani’s enlarged forehead in *Hitai no otoko*; the pointy, fish-like face of “Sanma-sensei” and the useless lamp which he always carries with him; the large physiques of his “older sister” heroines, etc. Some of these character types appear with regularity in Japanese literature and some, I believe, are Nyozekan’s innovations, but the tactic of stereotyping and the use of visual cues is typical of popular literature.

Finally, we come to the question of how Nyozekan deals with contemporary problems by evoking moral platitudes or the wisdom of the past. As a liberal thinker, Nyozekan’s views may appear to go against certain traditional values: he supports equality of the sexes, the labor union movement (Chieko in *Sanma-sensei* is a cafe waitress who organizes a union, for example), and pacifism (a theme prominent in the same story), for instance. Yet are such values purely modern inventions? It seems that for Nyozekan solutions to social problems are, to a large extent, found in basic “family values” similar to those currently advocated by politicians of both conservative and liberal persuasion in the United States: neighbors helping neighbors, the work ethic, courage to try new things, honesty, respect for the elderly, and so on. These values are not lacking in the literature of the past from Japan or elsewhere; many of them were doubtless promoted by the official organs of the Japanese government as well. What makes Nyozekan more than a
popular writer is his desire to educate his readers not only morally but also politically and socially. Particularly evident in his literature are: (1) his macro-view of society which sees industrialization as destructive to traditional values; (2) his view of society as an organic entity which evolves according to universal principles; and (3) the primacy of the concept of class conflict in analysis of social problems. His emphasis on political freedom, the preservation of the social and economic autonomy of local communities, and the improvement of the standard of living for working people, as well as his dislike for military aggression, set him in opposition to prevailing government ideology.

Nyozekan combines techniques and values of popular literature with a class-consciousness similar to that of the Proletarian writers. He is highly akin to the Proletarian writers in preferring realistic literature to both literature which is highly abstract and symbolic and that which is sensuous and decadent. He especially sees both symbolism and decadence as motivated by social escapism and a lack of vitality. His parting of the ways with the Proletarian school seems to lie in his belief that revolution should be democratic and take place "organically" rather than by the forcible overthrow of the ruling class. Organic social change, according to Nyozekan, is both more comprehensive and more lasting than that brought about by violent revolution.
It is notable that Nyozekan's first published story, *Futasujimichi*, was also his first composition in colloquial Japanese; this suggests that his discovery of the masses is reflected in his development of a popular literary style. Nyozekan expressed in his autobiography and in essays written in the 1920s and 30s his belief that the positive qualities of the Japanese masses could be observed in the urban merchant class, a class of people who had developed democratic, liberal qualities historically but who were still held back by their acceptance of feudal ways of thought. The idea that native Japanese cultural developments were crucial Japan's modernization has also been popular with Western theorists of Japanese modernization, such as R. P. Dore, who argues in his essay *The Legacy of Tokugawa Education* that widespread literacy and popular regard for education in the Tokugawa period were an important condition for the ready adoption of universal education in the Meiji period. Through his literature, as through his criticism, he attempts to address this problem and to promote what he sees as the positive, democratic qualities of ordinary Japanese people. His stylistic choices reflect his own perceptions of how the actual consciousness of the masses is reflected in popular literature, and also reflect his judgment of what will appeal to them. Thus, his popular style is intrinsically connected with his pedagogical objectives.
CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS

In the previous sections I have tried to demonstrate how Nyozekan wrote fiction with the aim of communicating political ideas to a mass audience, using various stylistic devices to do so. In particular, he aimed to promote the ideas of liberal democracy, but at the same time, he urged the Japanese people to take pride in their traditions and to integrate these traditions with modernization. With Sōseki, we may find that his fiction has characteristic strengths as well as weaknesses.

Yasukawa describes Nyozekan’s fiction as “essay-like,” and this description touches on the basic quality of his fiction: it deals with abstract social issues through the presentation of specific persons and situations. The main problem in each story is then developed in the plot, as the changing situation shows the full implications of the problem. A solution is sometimes reached, but often the end is inconclusive. Zōya, for instance, presents the problem of an individual who has fallen through the cracks of society, and lacks constructive employment despite his unique talents. How
can his problem be dealt with? The promising solution, from an upper-class view, is to offer him a job which suits his needs. Yet in the end, we learn that it is no solution at all, since the very social inequality which enables the ruling class to offer this solution, at the same time gives power over the man which result in his further oppression and degradation as a human being. Nyozekan thus effectively presents a fairy-tale like melodrama and then subverts it in an unanticipated way. Whether nor not one regards such a story as “pure” literature, or even as satisfactory narrative, it is certainly a highly effective and entertaining type of political essay. On the other hand, the reader may become impatient with Nyozekan’s sometimes repetitive spelling out of issues in some of his more purely essay-like passages. While there are many exceptions to the literary principle that one should “show, not tell,” Nyozekan’s “telling” sometimes overwhelms, or conflicts with, his act of showing. The lengthy descriptions of the protagonist’s state of mind in Torazukai no shigan, for instance, are not as effective as the dialogues between the protagonist and the tiger-trainer in the same story. And in Aru kafe no onna, Nyozekan’s description of the unpleasant characteristics of the “Uncle” Shiba make the claim that Mineko “had no idea why she didn’t like him” sound unnatural, or implausible.

At the same time, Nyozekan’s use of dialogue to present abstract social concepts can be highly effective, as in the statements made by Kume in Zōya. They sound like mere cantankerousness at first, until we realize Kume’s
bitterness at being unable to do anything when he is kicked by the young master and otherwise humiliated. Nyozekan’s employment of the shitamachi dialect in his stories is ranked as superior to Sōseki’s by Yasukawa. On the other hand, the placement of modern, liberal sentiments in the mouths and minds of uneducated characters is not always effective.

Nyozekan’s fiction is also noteworthy for its sympathetic portrayal of working class women. Most of the women in his stories are ordinary types, yet they display diligence, intelligence, and a strong wish to improve their lives. Nyozekan’s stories are virtually free of any eroticization of women: his heroines are physically sturdy, and frank and straightforward in expressing their feelings. Mineko in Aru kafe and Chieko in Sanma-sensei are particularly admirable in their willingness to fight injustice in a public forum. Nyozekan emphasized the importance of women’s rights in his critical writings, believing that capitalism had freed women from the traditional limitations placed on them by their biological roles as mothers by enabling them to sell their labor on the market; there was now little difference between men and women in terms of social problems or social potential. Accordingly, he supported women’s suffrage and equality under the law.

Nyozekan’s fiction contains melodramatic elements in its fairly clear delineation between good and evil, and its exaggerated scenes of confrontation and suffering. However, it is more sophisticated than most
melodrama in its ambivalence concerning the possibility of solving social problems. Despite Nyozekan's belief in progressive social evolution, a dark, pessimistic quality is present in many of his stories. Blossoming romances are torn apart by arranged marriages forced upon characters whose economic and social status allow them no choice in the matter. Intellectuals fail to escape from their existential angst. Elderly craftsmen see their livelihood die out, their lives and skills made superfluous by larger and more efficient capitalist operations. The result may even be fatal: Samna-sensei ends with the apparent suicide of the teacher to whom the title refers; in Tora kara hyôe the protagonist, after learning the woman he loves has been "bought" by a rich lawyer, deliberately attempts to enter a leopard cage before the animal has been fully trained. In both cases these alienated individuals were in the process of re-integrating themselves into society with the help of members of the local community. Nyozekan's seemingly naive and optimistic portrayal of the ability of the community to help individuals is sabotaged and the result is tragic for the persons involved.

This pessimistic aspect of Nyozekan's literature can be viewed as a function of his social philosophy, his personal philosophy, and finally his didactic aims. With respect to his social philosophy, we may first observe that the evolution of society into higher forms, even if viewed as a positive phenomenon, still requires struggle at the individual level as its dynamic. Nyozekan was thoroughly aware of this. He was no stranger to hardships
himself, having lived in poverty after his father lost his fortune in the Hanayashiki business, and no doubt he had viewed firsthand the sacrifice of the livelihoods of many individuals in the name of “progress.”

Nyozekan’s personal philosophy also has a pessimistic side. In his autobiography, *Aru kokoro no jijoden*, he demonstrates his sense of life as struggle. Writing in a humorous mode, he starts his autobiography with the time spent in his mother’s womb, and he describes the trauma of being born into a cold and unfamiliar world. This is only the beginning of the trauma: growing up, for Nyozekan, is a process of moving “from happiness without self-awareness to unhappiness with self-awareness.”

Life is a struggle; but the problem is that in modern capitalist Japan, as Nyozekan sees it, it is essentially impossible for people who lack access to money, education, or social prestige to achieve any real measure of happiness. The crises into which such people are plunged are portrayed by Nyozekan in melodramatic terms, yet a sense of realism is maintained through the detailed, realistic portrayal of characters who are manifestly based on his own experience. Tradesmen, such as the nail-maker in *Osaru no ban ni naru made*, are made irrelevant by large-scale industry; a lifetime of accumulated experience and community involvement suddenly becomes worthless, and if one is fortunate enough not to be driven to begging or stealing, it is only to become an employee at a factory where one’s humanity is demeaned and one lacks any control over the manufacturing process or any feeling of fulfillment.
or pride in one's work. Women of intelligence, ability, and high moral character, such as O-Sen in *Futasujimichi*, are forced by their families' poverty into becoming, if not prostitutes, kept women of men for whom they have no love. Orphans and the elderly, too, are deprived of their basic needs and face dark prospects. This alienation also affects intellectuals. While they are aware their knowledge is a product which can be exchanged for money, they lack access to the true centers of power in society, and therefore, they have no ability to enact fundamental change.

The repeated occurrence of such situations in Nyozekan's literature demonstrates Iida's view that to Nyozekan, literature is essentially a vehicle for social criticism. Nonetheless, although a contrast is evident in his work between the evil aristocrats, corrupt politicians, and money-hungry industrialists on the one hand, and the good - common people of the city with their human warmth and modest industriousness, on the other, Nyozekan does not resort to out-and-out stereotyping. Nor does he portray either simplistic solutions or utterly hopeless situations. Tamezô in *Osaru no ban* emerges with strong feelings of hope and optimism despite the hardships he has suffered. It appears that, even as much as the cards are stacked against him in life, the possibility of meaningful employment and reconciliation with his father give him the hope to go on living. Conversely, why does "Sanma-sensei" see no option other than suicide? Surely he has more options and resources than Tamezô. Nyozekan implies that Jûkichi and
Chieko bear some responsibility for his fate by having chosen to put their personal needs (however legitimate they may be) ahead of the concerns of their community of family and neighbors. In portraying these complex situations, Nyozekan is not merely criticizing the powers that be; he is also exhorting individuals to look after each other. And this includes getting educated, Sanma-sensei’s cynicism to the contrary. In this sense Nyozekan may be said to be proselytizing to the “masses” who are the subject of his fiction.

My conclusion concerning Nyozekan’s fiction is that it occupies a limited position in Japanese literature. At best, it is successful as an original form of socially critical fiction. In his shitamachi and carnival stories, he creates a persuasive, entertaining, and living world based on his own experiences. He can write with great humor in a story like Uma (The Horse, 1922), whose protagonist is a Don Quixote-like figure, an ex-soldier who loves his horse more than his wife, who wrestles with waitresses when drunk and who insists on pronouncing his family name in an unorthodox way (he advocates the Romanization of Japanese because fellow Japanese refuse to pronounce the name his way). At the same time Nyozekan writes with great pathos in stories like Zōya.

As time passed, it appears that Nyozekan exhausted the world of his childhood as a source for literature. Dyupon Hakase to sono tsuma, for instance, written in 1928, is based partly on Nyozekan’s experience, but the main part of
the story takes place abroad. The story is narrated by a university professor who is speaking to a group of students. The professor recalls his student days, when he briefly took French lessons from a certain Professor Dupont. Dupont had bizarre mannerisms and his face and body were grossly deformed, in contrast to his wife, a stunningly beautiful woman of Middle Eastern appearance. The couple moved away one day without a word. Years later, the professor met the son of the Duponts while traveling in France, and learned the story behind this mysterious couple. They had left their son in the mother’s native country, Algeria, when he was an infant. While the son was growing up, he had received letters from his mother declaring her hatred for France for brutalizing her people, and her intention to take revenge by slowly destroying her husband (whether by psychological abuse or by sorcery is unclear), who had been a handsome man determined to make the Algerians “pray to the God of France.”

The story ends with the son contemplating the brutality of imperialism and the endless cycle of revenge it induces, and declaring that he will never fight with anyone in his life. A military band outside plays the French national anthem. The critique of Japanese imperialism in this story is obvious, and the story is effective and entertaining, yet it lacks the persuasiveness of Nyozekan’s earlier shitamachi stories.

Nyozekan wrote little fiction after 1930: this was probably partly because the liberal ideas expressed in his fiction were bound to be suppressed, but it also has to do with the fact that the world of small-time craftspeople was becoming
more and more a thing of the past. Nyozekan’s career as an intellectual and public figure doubtless removed him still further the world of the shitamachi craftsmen. Furthermore, the pessimistic possibilities expressed in his fiction were perhaps becoming all too real. Still, a post-war Japan saw fit to regard Nyozekan as one of the forebears of a new, more democratic society. J. Victor Koschmann attests to Nyozekan’s continuing influence in postwar Japan with his critical discussion of Seki Yoshihiko’s view that “the most valuable contributions to political thought during the Occupation period were the essays on democracy published by the ‘old liberals,’ “ including Nyozekan. In his fiction we can find the most eloquent expression of his sympathy for the oppressed classes of Japan and his belief in their ability to survive and improve their lot.
"An elephant, come get yourself an elephant. A present for the boys and girls at home."

Sitting beneath the gently swinging outdoor lamps, with a table arranged with toy elephants in front of him, a man called out these words in an absent-minded tone of voice. He wore a coarse padded jacket and a thick muffler, and was both young-looking and old-looking, with a very red face resembling somewhat those of the elephants which were for sale.

"Come get yourself an elephant. Large elephants, medium-sized elephants, small elephants, whichever suits your taste. Elephants are the biggest and the most lovable of animals, and when such lovable things are made this small, they’re truly adorable. ‘Hey, little Elephant.’ ‘Yes sir, what is it?’ The little elephant answers by waving his trunk and whistling. Made of high-quality imported rubber. With this item, there will be no ‘oh no, it broke,’ before you even get home. Young man, pick one up and take a look. He’s stuffed with silk floss to meet the Japanese taste. The reason he doesn’t make any noise is because he was brought up so well. For your young lady friends, this little elephant is just the thing. A-choo! Elephants come from
Bengal in India. India is a tropical country, so they have a little trouble handling the cold. The trunk has the function of the fingers of two human hands. Come and get one. Come right this way and get yourself one. Ha, ha, ha."

"Mr. Kume, you look fine as usual." The old woman who sold balloons greeted him as she came up.

"I'm nothing of the sort. It seems like there are more elephants than there were this morning." The elephant salesman regarded the "large, medium, and small" elephants on the table, and pretended he was crying.

"The elephants can hardly be having babies. You're kidding me. Not selling any?" The old woman was carrying a large bundle on her back. She had come nearer and spoke as if to console him.

"No, I'm not. What would children these days want with elephants? Look at them! Too damn grown up and sophisticated." He was looking at the children clad in Western clothes, coming towards him with a gentleman and his wife.

"Who would buy anything from a salesman who talks like that? Look, it's time to close. I feel raindrops." The old woman looked up at the dark sky.

"Going home already? I'll go with you. Why don't you close, Mister? She says she felt rain." The elephant salesman addressed the nearby peanut vendor as he packed up his goods.
“Rain?” The peanut vendor was cranking the handle of the peanut roaster. “A lousy time for it. My business is only getting started at this hour.”

“Don’t be greedy.” The old woman sniffed loudly. “If you make too much you’ll be robbed on the way home.”

“If I make enough to get robbed, I wouldn’t mind giving even a robber a little.”

“Good night,” said the elephant vendor to the peanut vendor. He shouldered his bundle and left with the old woman.

“Mr. Kume, I hear you’ve started drinking again recently,” said the old woman as they entered a narrow, dimly-lit alley.

“‘Started’? That’s hardly fair, since I never even have the chance to drink enough to feel like I’m really drinking.”

“But think how Kii-chan is suffering. You don’t bring a penny home because you drink it all away. That’s not fair to Kii-chan either, is it? She labors away at the factory during the day, then she works at home all night repairing sandals and the rest. It must be unbearable for her.”

“That’s true. I know Kii-chan suffers, but I suffer too.”

“What are you saying? Honestly! Are you still brooding about losing your wife? Of course, it’s only natural, but can’t you be more of a man about it?”

“Well, then, what’s going on?”

“Nothing, really. There’s nothing to be done about it.”

“What a strange one you are! Maybe that’s all right for you, but think about how Kii is suffering.”

“And I’m saying I’m suffering too.”

“It doesn’t make sense. You keep complaining that you can’t sell any elephants, but you absolutely refuse to try another business. If you did that, you couldn’t keep on feeling sorry for yourself.”

“Whether people buy them or not, I can’t give up selling elephants.”

“That’s what I mean by strange! Even though Kii-chan is old enough to marry, with no mother and a father who doesn’t help, she works alone after dark. You don’t get a finer daughter than that. If she wasn’t such a fine daughter, you’d be lost, and even crying wouldn’t help you. You should be grateful.”

“I am.”

“You’re taking people for granted. You’d better be ready to pay the price some day.”

“I am...but look, it’s like this, in this world you can’t let yourself get too concerned about things. When I set up the elephants and talk away as I please, I forget about everything else. I feel free. Completely free. You’re like that yourself, you know.”
“Sure I am. If I let myself worry too much, how could I go on living at this age, selling balloons with my grandchild?”

“That’s right. And that’s good enough. I don’t know much about the world, but I know the best thing is to be like you, taking it easy while you sell balloons. In my opinion that’s the best thing to do.”

“What are you talking about? The best thing! I can’t believe this man. You’re at the peak of your working years, you can do all kinds of things. You want to be the same as an old lady like me? Get yourself together!”

“Well, that’s what I want. I can’t stop selling elephants. It just wouldn’t work.”

“You’re joking me. There really must be something wrong with you.”

As this conversation continued, the two entered an alley, slid open two tattered doors which faced each other, and parted. Mr. Kume the elephant seller came right up to a dimly-lit staircase and went up.

“Oh, it’s you, Father. You’re back early tonight.” Under a dim lamp, holding the thong from a sandal, sat Kume’s daughter, a girl of 15 or 16, with big round eyes, a fine mouth, and an intelligent face quite unlike the elephant-like face of Kume.

“Today was a complete waste. Business is never any good there for some reason. Plus, the balloon lady across the street felt rain, so I closed up quickly.” Her father unpacked his bundle and sat down by the long brazier.

“It’s gotten pretty cold. From here on the wind’s going to get rough.”
"Yes, it will," said his daughter. "How about a drink?"

"Sure, thanks. You have something?" Kume's expression was like that of a child trying to cajole something from a parent.

"Sure." His daughter got up, swiftly placed a pot of water on the brazier, poured some sake into a small bottle and placed it in the pot.

"Do you know how I got this?" She cocked her head to one side.

"Oh, no, you didn't have to do that." Her father seemed taken aback.

"So you brought your work to the shop today?"

"Oh, no, not that."

"No? Then how did you get it?"

"Well, you see, today..." She paused tantalizingly. "I've got good news."

"What do you mean, good news. It can't be anything that special."

Kume kept pulling out the bottle, which could not possibly be ready yet, and feeling the temperature.

"It is good news. You know Shin-san, he was just here. He brought the sake. A gift, he said."

"Oh, Shin from the tree nursery? He hasn't come to see me in years. What was it about? And he brings sake to boot. I hope there isn't any poison in it." Kume pulled out the bottle gingerly, poured a little into his cup, and placed it back in the hot water.
"That’s an awful thing to say, Father.‘‘ As if to reprove him, she added: "Shin-san is a very fine gardener now. He even works regularly for the nobility, like Viscount Tamaru...that’s where he works now."

"What did you say? Works regularly for a Mr. Tamaru the nobleman? Shin’s been good at bowing and scraping since he was young, that’s what’s made him a success. Anyway, what’s the good news?"

"That noble family has a villa in Shibuya or somewhere, and the property there is supposed to be just huge, huge like Ueno. They say the estate has a main building, and a Western building, and they have peacocks and cranes and all sorts of animals there, just like a zoo. They keep lots of horses there too, which the Viscount and the young master ride. Even the Viscountess rides. And now, a certain businessman - I knew the name but I forgot - he’s donated an elephant to the estate."

"What, an elephant?‘‘ The sake cup stopped halfway on its way to his mouth. Kume stared intently at his daughter with his small eyes.

"Yes, an elephant,‘‘ she continued. "Anyway, it seems the businessman gave them the elephant because the young master and his playmates were always saying they wanted to ride one. The nobles sure are lucky. They only have to say they want something and someone brings it right away. It seemed to me they really are lucky."

"So what about the elephant?‘‘ Her father was impatient.
“So, it seems they’ve looked for a trainer for the elephant but can’t find one. They brought him all the way from India, and no one has tamed him yet. So someone asked Shin-san, and when he remembered that you had worked with elephants, he got really excited and looked all over to find where you live, and finally found out. And so he was just here with the gift of sake. I told him you get home late, so he said he’d come back early tomorrow morning, and to make sure you didn’t go anywhere, and then he left. I would have had him wait if I’d known you’d be back so early.”

“So you’re saying they want me to become that elephant’s trainer and tame him?”

“Yes, you’d live in an apartment on the estate, and you’d get a good salary. Basically, it seems that since people who can tame elephants are so rare, the people at the mansion will pay whatever it takes if you come. I don’t know how much, but it sounds like an awful lot. That’s what Shin-san said, an ‘unbelievable’ amount of money. Shin-san asked whether I thought you’d accept, and I said you probably would. You will, won’t you?"

“That’s a pretty tempting offer. If they were going to use the elephant to make money, drag him all over Japan, and finally kill him like they did to Zenpachi, I wouldn’t even consider it, but that kind of thing wouldn’t happen at the mansion.” Kume’s face took on a gloomy expression.
“Zenpachi” was the name of the elephant Kume had once taken care of. Kume was born in Yokohama, and had worked for an animal seller from India known as “the black from Yokohama.” When the manager of a traveling show bought an elephant from this Indian, Kume went along with the elephant and joined the traveling show. Since Zenpachi was then still a small elephant less than two years old, Kume raised him like his own child, and for more than ten years, until the elephant had grown to the size of a small mountain, Kume never spent even a day away from his side. This was not necessarily due to his fondness for the elephant alone: Zenpachi had grown attached to Kume like a child, and though he might be all right for a day, if he went for two or three days without seeing Kume, he would get agitated, and trumpet madly. Since no one else could calm him down, it was necessary for Kume to avoid leaving Zenpachi alone for any substantial period of time. Still, when Kume heard from everyone how Zenpachi would refuse to eat and rampage about, he agreed that he could not be apart from Zenpachi for very long.

“So, Zen, they say you lost control while I was gone!” When Kume would walk up to him and shout, Zenpachi would lower his head as if in apology, swing his lowered trunk from side to side, and pant heavily and happily.
It was impossible to put Zenpachi on a train, so when Kume led Zenpachi around the country to perform, he made something like a big mosquito net out of hemp cloth, covered Zenpachi’s body with it, and led him along the road. Zenpachi would stick the tip of his trunk out from under the cloth and skillfully feel his way as he trundled slowly down the street.

One year, as Zenpachi was thus making his way down the Kiso Highway, he unwittingly trod on a spot of earth over a cliff which was soft from the rain, tumbled several dozen feet down a cliff into a riverbed, and so ended his life. Kume, who had been walking with Zenpachi, tumbled down with him, but fortunately merely slid down the sandy soil, and though he briefly lost consciousness he recovered quickly after being taken out of the riverbed. The first thing Kume asked about when he came to was Zenpachi. When he learned that Zenpachi had been struck by a boulder and was gravely injured, he went down, helped by others, to the riverbed where Zenpachi lay. There, clinging to the neck of Zenpachi, whose enormous body was sprawled in the sand of the riverbed, he called out the animal’s name with all his strength, his mouth drawn back in grief. When Zenpachi heard this, he opened his tiny eyes, and after two or three dreadful wails, he died right there. Still holding onto Zenpachi, Kume shouted like a madman. “Zenpachi’s dead, Zenpachi’s dead. I want to die too.” He then lost consciousness, and remained that way for the next several days, only occasionally repeating the words: “Zenpachi’s dead. I want to die too,” which lead the company to put
him under strict surveillance. Zenpachi’s body was cremated at the riverbed, and the mountain of bones was buried right there. The company moved on, but some time after they returned to Tokyo, with the assistance of the proprietor of the show Kume was admitted to a mental hospital. Even after he had recovered, Kume was still in the habit of saying: “When I’m ready to die, I’ll go to that riverbed and jump in.”

After that Kume went from job to job, and it was some years later that he became a roadside seller of toy elephants. No matter what work he tried, Zenpachi would flash before his eyes, and he would lose all enthusiasm, causing every endeavor to end in failure. Kume was plunged into poverty. Many were the days he, his wife, and his daughter spent languishing with nothing to eat or drink. Around that time, Kume ran into a trader on the street to whom he had often gone to do business in the Yokohama days. When asked how he was, Kume explained what had happened to him since then, and the manager, feeling sorry for him, gave him some of the toy elephants he sold at his own store, and so Kume had begun selling these on the street.

Once Kume got the job selling elephants, he devoted himself feverishly to it, and except for when it rained, not a day went by in which he was not out somewhere selling elephants. And when he arranged these on a table, sat in front of it, and jabbered away, he felt at peace, whether they sold or not. On the other hand, when he did not have the elephants in front of
him, Kume would find it bothersome to speak, as if he had forgotten how; and except when he was drinking - he still talked enough then - even his responses to simple questions were often quite incoherent.

Granted, Kume had been like that even when Zenpachi was alive. The only one to whom he would speak with interest was Zenpachi; speaking to people appeared to be an ordeal to him. When he was feeding Zenpachi or changing his straw, he would say: "Oh Zen, time for dinner. My, look at that happy face. Don't drool now, that won't be a pleasant sight. Well, I suppose being that big you must get hungry. Be patient, I'm not going to let you down." Kume was withholding some of the usual share of brown rice, because on slow days brought on by continued rain or other reasons, the amount of animal feed was reduced. Kume would take out a little bit on normal days and add it on the bad days.

"Well, Zen, your bed is ready, better get some sleep. It must be nice having your high status. Well, since it's thanks to you that we're able to eat, I suppose it's reasonable that we serve you. I hope you don't mind, but tonight I'm camping out with you. You can't imagine how much nicer fresh straw is than a smelly futon. I'm not sleeping there for anything!"

So Kume would often say as he stretched out on the straw with Zenpachi. And if Kume found out that anyone was teasing Zenpachi or making fun of him, there was trouble.
“Hey Zen, are you going to just sit back and let these people who owe their living to you treat you like that? Why don’t you swat them with your trunk! There’s a limit to being nice, you know. Any insult to you is an insult to me. Hold on, I’ll make them pay.”

When Kume said that, if the offenders wanted to avoid his coming after them with the fireman’s hook he used to control Zenpachi, they would have to atone by bringing cheap sake and brown sugar to Kume and Zenpachi.

However, if Zenpachi disobeyed Kume in the slightest, and didn’t perform his tricks satisfactorily, Kume would shout at him for nearly half the day.

“What the hell is this? With your huge body, eating a mountain of food, you don’t want to work? Even though you’re just a beast, because you help a lot of people make a living, I serve you and don’t scold you. If you don’t want to work, and just want to loaf every day, do as you damn well please. Don’t think I’m going to keep on serving you. Human beings have no duty to serve animals that play around. We feed you your massive meals because we see you as our provider of life. If you don’t want that then I don’t want it either. We’ll make a clean break in this partnership. But in that case don’t let me catch you eating the rice for humans. No one has the right to eat our rice who doesn’t do anything for us. And if anyone calls you a parasite and wants you killed, don’t expect me to ask them to spare you....”
And Kume would go on and on haranguing Zenpachi in this way. Kume’s power of expression when he had had Zenpachi before him was just the same as now, when he spouted his eloquent nonsense with the toy elephants before him.

* * * * *

“According to Shin-san,” Kume’s daughter continued the story for him, “that elephant is still small, but it’s a little wild, and when he was let out of his cage he went really crazy, and hurt the keeper badly who had come over to stop him. Now they keep him tied up, and feed him from far away by pushing a bucket of food to him with a pole. Apparently no one can go near him. Shin-san says you should be all right, but since it’s been a long time since you’ve worked with elephants, he’s worried about what would happen to me if you got hurt. What do you think, Daddy? Will you be all right?”

“Oh, I’ll be all right. Old Zen was pretty wild too, all his life. I can even tame an elephant that’s been shut up in a zoo or something. A baby like that is a piece of cake.” As Kume sipped his sake little by little, his face assumed its usual red color.

“Well, I hope so. But here’s what Shin-san said. In the off-chance that you were to get hurt and become crippled - not that that would happen with you, Daddy - the estate will provide an allowance that will enable you to live
in relaxation and comfort for the rest of your life. Shin-san said they don’t skimp on expenses even for one elephant.”

“Oh, really? So it’s like this, right? If I go and play with the elephant, I can get paid a lot of money, huh? Excellent! When Shin comes tomorrow, let’s go straight to the estate. The real thing is a hell of a lot more interesting than toys. Kii, things are finally looking up for me.” With a foolish smile, Kume continued to drink his sake contentedly.

“Oh, this is wonderful. If you can do this, maybe I won’t have to work at the factory anymore. Wouldn’t it be nice if I could help out at the estate too?”

“Yes, it would. Elephants are fine, but people come first. This would make things a little easier for you, too. Going to the estate will be worth it for that alone. But wait a minute. The estate isn’t going to rent the elephant to a show, or charge money for people to see him on display or doing tricks, or anything like that, are they?”

“I shouldn’t think so. A nobleman wouldn’t do something like that.”

“Then why are they keeping a thing like an elephant?”

“Oh, Daddy! Didn’t I just tell you? Someone gave them the elephant because the young master wanted to ride one. You’re getting senile, Daddy.”

“Oh, right. A plaything for the young master...still, it doesn’t make sense...if that’s what they want, it seems like they could just buy some of my toy elephants.”
“But those elephants are much too expensive to sell on the street. The old lady across from us says so too. That’s why they don’t sell, you know.”

“Of course they’re expensive - they’re elephants. A real elephant will cost you a thousand yen. No one has that kind of money these days. So to get a toy version of an elephant, thirty or fifty sen isn’t expensive at all.”

But they’re a noble family. Do you think most people have money like that? It’s pretty extravagant to spend thirty or fifty sen on a child’s toy.”

“But they’re toy versions of real elephants that go for a thousand yen! Compared to that, thirty or fifty sen is...”

“Daddy, you’re repeating yourself again. That’s why I hate it when you drink.”

It was some days later that Kume moved to the villa of the Viscount Tamaru - which was actually the main estate, since the mansion in the city served instead as a retreat for the Viscount’s wife.

The next day, Kume was brought to the villa by Shin the gardener to see the elephant. Kume’s first reaction was amazement at the elephant’s newly-built, fancy Western-style shelter, which was located next to the riding ground. The first thing he said to the elephant was about this.

“Hey, you! You’re one arrogant bastard, doing just as you please after they put you in this fine Western building. Think about Zen! He supported all of us by traveling around Japan all year long making money, and spending his days and nights in a little tent. And after doing all that, he fell from a cliff
and died." Kume sighed. "I wish I could have let him stay in a place like this just once."

Tears rolled down Kume's cheeks as he spoke. Clustered all around the area were men and women, from the Viscount and the Viscountess and the young master, to butlers and servants, who had come in droves to see the famous elephant tamer. When they saw Kume start to weep after saying these things, they were not so much surprised as amused, some of them were actually clutching their sides with laughter. However, the gardener, Shin, who knew Kume's reasons, sympathized with him.

"It's natural for you to think of Zen, Mr. Kume. Just think of this fellow as Zen's successor, and take good care of him."

When he heard this, Kume could no longer bear it, and heedless of the people present, rubbed his eyes with a handkerchief and sniffled constantly. The sincerity of his behavior was enough to make the people who were laughing as they watched feel guilty about it, and their expressions became glum.

"Sorry about that, Shin. I've gotten a lot older, and it's made me weak-willed." Kume had finally brought his tears under control and moved toward the little elephant as he spoke.

Since no one would go near the elephant to take care of it, the floor that had been carefully paved with stones was completely covered with the
animal’s droppings. The elephant churned these around with his thick legs as if he were wading around in a muddy swamp.

“Oh no, this is terrible.” Kume grimaced when he saw this. “Even an elephant won’t like it when you let it get this bad. It’s the same as when a baby bawls when you don’t change its diapers.”

After driving the elephant out into the riding ground, Kume called on the men servants to clean up the shelter. The people present all protested that this was too dangerous, and the elderly butler said that it was like letting a tiger out into an open field, but Kume reassured them, telling them to watch and see, and with his fireman’s hook in hand slowly walked up in front of the elephant’s trunk.

The elephant was swaying his trunk slowly back and forth, putting everyone on edge with fear that Kume might be tossed in the air by that trunk, but surprisingly, the elephant merely raised his trunk high, like a Westerner being robbed in a holdup.

Kume brought his body nearer to the elephant, and no sooner had he grabbed the lower half of its mouth, which protruded downward, than the elephant cried out in a terrible voice. Those who were gathered around let out a similar sound, and began to run away, but from that point on Kume was the elephant’s friend. Standing firmly in front of the elephant’s trunk, he took out a hard biscuit from inside his shirt and gave it to the elephant. Everybody burst out laughing when Kume waved his hands to show that
there was no more and the elephant proceeded to stick its trunk inside his shirt.

Kume went behind the elephant and untied the rope from its hind leg which was fastened to a thick post. Since the elephant was now completely free, the gathered spectators became afraid and moved through the gate to outside the riding ground. Since he had been tied there for so long, the elephant made no attempt to move now that he was free. He did not move even when Kume enticed him with a biscuit. The men tried pulling all together on the rope around his neck, but like a great boulder, he did not even budge.

At this point, Kume sent all of the men outside the fence, stripped down to a single shirt, took his fireman’s hook, and went around behind the elephant. As everyone viewed Kume from afar wondering what he would do, Kume suddenly brandished the hook in the air with great authority, and letting out a sharp yell, jabbed the elephant in the rump. To everyone’s amazement, the elephant still did not budge, but when Kume went on yelling and jabbing two or three times, the elephant suddenly flew out of the hut with a terrible cry, propelling his roly-poly body along like a fierce gale, and circled around once inside the fence of the riding ground, trumpeting at the onlookers outside and making as if to chase them as they fled in confusion. The elephant then stopped in front of the hut, panting heavily. The parts of the fence which the elephant had struck had been bent outward like bark that
had been peeled off of stems of flax. And what surprised everyone most of all at that time was that Kume, who should have been behind the elephant jabbing it in the rear with his hook, had circled the ground along with the rampaging elephant by dangling from the rope around its neck. Now, underneath the neck of the panting elephant, Kume too was panting.

After awhile, when Kume held the rope which was around the elephant’s neck and slowly started to walk, the elephant started to trudge along with him. Everyone cried out in admiration. From that time on, the elephant was the young master’s and everyone’s friend, and would stretch his trunk over the fence to accept biscuits to eat from the people there.

And so Kume came to live in the apartment on the estate of Viscount Tamaru, receiving the “unbelievable” salary, and working as the “home tutor” - so the young master put it - for the elephant.

Kume had thought of naming the elephant “Zenpachi,” but when he thought of Zenpachi’s sad demise, he decided to forego this for the elephant’s sake, and instead took the first part of his original name, Gorukonda, and added “san,” to make “Goru-san.” His reason for adding “san” was to show respect, since the elephant was the property not of a traveling show but of a noble family.

Now that he had become the elephant’s caretaker and lived on the Viscount’s estate, everything about his life and the lives of the people around him amazed him. First of all, Kume was astonished at his monthly salary of
one hundred yen. When he had led Zenpachi around the country his salary was only twenty-five yen per month, and although he also received a percentage of the admission proceeds, this amount varied greatly. When business was extremely good he might indeed receive one hundred yen, but that was extremely rare: usually, he received less than half that amount. Furthermore, whether Kume’s percentage was one hundred yen or, for that matter, two hundred yen, he did not feel particularly grateful to anyone for their kindness, since it was simply the share that had been promised to him based on the number of people who paid admission. How it was calculated that he would be paid one hundred yen for being an elephant’s caretaker, Kume had no idea. Once, he cornered Kii-chan and said:

“I was completely bowled over! I thought a hundred yen for taking care of the elephant was a lot, but listen - it’s nothing! They say even the chauffeur gets about that much. And you know what else? He’s not there anymore, but there was a doctor for their puppy - now don’t be shocked - he got three hundred yen a month! The dog itself cost over a thousand yen, they say. And that fellow Shin, sometimes he’s in charge of the Viscount’s guns, and they say that the things the Viscount and his companions bring along cost over ten thousand yen! My God! First of all there are the guns, there’s a name for them, they cost over 1,500 yen each, and there are several people with one gun each, so that alone makes about five thousand yen! Then the dog costs a thousand yen. And their clothes - made of fine leather. These come out to a

89
thousand yen, they say! It’s like a dream! And as for the automobile, I had never realized before what a big deal they are, but the one the Viscount uses costs 16,000 yen! It’s too much for me, 10,000 yen everywhere you look. It’s really too much for me to take!”

Apparently, however, Kume forgot all about such things when he was taking care of Gorukonda. Apart from having the young master ride him, Kume taught him a great variety of tricks - lifting up his front legs to beg; lifting one leg to beckon like a Japanese “welcoming cat”; “bowing” by bending his front legs; standing on a square stone and turning around and around (this was called “standing on the go board”); playing a trumpet with his trunk; stepping to a count of “one, two,” and more. With all this to do, Kume was out of the house all day. As for his daughter, Kii-chan, she now had time on her hands, neither working at the factory nor at home, but at the request of the estate, she began working in the kitchen there during the day. Then, when evening came, father and daughter would tell each other about what they had seen and heard of life at the estate, which might as well have been life in some foreign country. Kii-chan, her eyes wide with wonder, said:

“Oh, Daddy, do you know what? Today the whole family was away, so I went along with the housecleaner and saw the whole mansion. It was so beautiful, it was just like a palace in a play. The halls went on and on, with lots of huge rooms on each side, and nobody in them. The straw tatami mats were so smooth, when I tried to run I slipped and fell over. And the Western
building is out of this world. All the big oil paintings, and it’s so clean and
beautiful it seems to shine, yet it feels like a furniture shop with all the things
they’ve put there. And listen, Daddy. I saw the bedroom. There were curtains
drawn all around the room, with a big bed in the middle with curtains that
completely hide it. And I heard when the Viscount and the lady go in, they
lock the door from the inside! Ha, ha, ha! Isn’t it odd?”

“Heh, heh, heh. Good for you!” Kume sipped his sake slowly in his
usual manner as he spoke. Then he told his own story of how Shin had taken
him to view the estate grounds.

“It’s incredible - I saw mountains, valleys, forests, and just when I was
feeling completely lost, we came to a beautiful lawn, and from there you
could see all around. Not only was there a fine stone bridge, but there was
also a weathered earthen bridge like you see in the country, crossing a sort of
narrow channel. And then there were a bunch of bridges leading into the
center of the pond, and a wisteria arbor. That must be what they mean by
’elegance.’ And then, in the grassy area I told you about, there was a strange,
pure white object that looked like the remains of a storehouse. I asked what it
was, and Shin said it was a stage for outdoor performances. Shin said he’d
seen a performance before, and apparently a bunch of beautiful girls entwine
themselves together and dance with their bodies in full view, wearing only
thin silk dresses. He says it’s unbelievable. I’d like to see that once. In the old
days, the daimyō used to make the palace servant girls dance in the nude, and
drooled over them as they watched, but this is Western style, I guess. But then again, it’s really finer than what the daimyô did, because it’s outdoors. It’s really splendid. They’ve sure got it good. It’s too good to be true, doing whatever you want all year round. I’d like to do that even for three days. Oh, dear, there must be something wrong with me.” Kume inevitably ended his utterances with an exclamation of this sort, but he did not appear to be particularly unhappy as he brought his puckerèd lips to the sake cup with a satisfied look.

“But you know, the Viscount and the Viscountess are really straightforward and easygoing,” Kii-chan added. “I heard that the lord of one of the new noble families somewhere or other has never even been in his own kitchen, but the Viscount here sometimes goes into the kitchen with the Viscountess, and gives directions to the carpenter, saying “there shouldn’t be a sink here,” or “make the cupboards like this.” And on top of that he has the kitchen rearranged every time so nobody can find anything. I heard today a whole bunch of students from the girls’ school came to see the kitchen, and made a big racket with their chattering. The Viscountess came and was there for a long time talking to them, opening things, and taking things out to show them. That’s why this morning everyone was at work arranging the containers and putting all sorts of foods all over the place. I thought there must be something happening, and it turned out they were preparing for the
girl students’ visit. But I wonder why they come to see a noble family’s kitchen.”

“Well, obviously they visit there because the kitchen is so big, and they’ve put all kinds of delicacies there. It’s like when you went to see the Viscount’s bedroom. It’s what commoners do. Nothing comes from seeing something like that, but you still want to see it. Live is sure pitiful in ‘lower-class society.’” Kume ended with a sad exclamation after all.

Two or three months passed in this way. Then one evening, Kii said this to Kume:

“Guess what? The head of the household maids, you know, the pudgy older lady who always comes to see the elephant, she asked me if I’d like to go and be a serving girl at Prince Sadamori’s mansion. She says my manners are really getting good. And if I continue for a few years, I’ll get to learn flower arrangement or the tea ceremony or something like that.”

“Who is this Prince Sadamori?” Kume’s eyes were fixed sharply on Kii, who spoke with a happy look on her face.

“Prince Sadamori, the youngest of all the Viscount’s brothers. You know, the gentleman who came to see the elephant all those times.”

“My, your speech is getting refined these days. I guess when you’re working in a mansion, you become a proper human being.”

“Never mind the way I talk. Are you saying I can’t go to Prince Sadamori’s mansion?”
“Prince Sadamori is the one who rides a horse and is always making fun of people, right?”

“Yes, he’s a fine young gentleman. But he’s really no different from an ordinary student.”

“Speaking of students, even the Viscount is just like a student. Even the Viscountess isn’t much more than a girl student. Why do people like that need such a fine mansion and grounds? The daimyō in the old days were so imposing that when they swaggered down the middle of the street their attendants shouted “get down, get down!” to the people, so I guess they needed palaces, but the nobles now are no different than university students. They’ve got no need for a structure like this. It seems ridiculous.”

“What does that have to do with anything? Anyway, I’m going to Prince Sadamori’s.” Kii-chan kept saying the words “Prince Sadamori” in making her case.

“Well, if you want to, go right ahead. It can’t be any fun for you to stay here every night looking at your drunk father’s face. Go! Go to Prince Sadamori or Master Kasamori or whoever.” Kume’s tone was not particularly sharp; his tone was ironic.

“Oh, Daddy, that’s not what I mean! Is there something wrong with wanting to learn some etiquette, and take lessons in something? All I ever did was work at the factory and work at home. I’ve never had any schooling
to speak of, so even though I work at the estate, I have no status there. It makes me want to cry.”

“My, you’re thinking pretty highly of yourself now that you work at the estate. What’s next, you want to get some nobleman as a husband?” Kume’s joke was just as much out of character as Kii-chan’s proper-sounding speech.

“Don’t you make fun of me, Daddy. If you talk like that I’ll just go and leave you to yourself.”

“H-hold on there. I need you here, you can’t just leave.”

“How can you say that? With all the trouble you’ve caused other people before, what right do you have to talk about what you need now?”

Kii’s spirit was formidable.

“But that’s just it, I especially need you here now. Oh, I’m used to being alone. Maybe it’s my age, but being by myself is just too lonely....”

“Well, you have Goru-san, don’t you? I thought just seeing his face was enough for you.”

“Well, it’s not.” Kume was drunk, but this statement seemed to come not from drunkenness but from a different sort of feeling. “I don’t think Goru-san can be like Zen.”

“Why not?” Kii’s mood also seemed a little different, and she stared at him quizzically.

“How can I explain - when I took Zen everywhere to perform, it was like Zen and I conquered all the people. All it took was for the two of us to be
there, and no matter where we wandered, it seemed like everyone gave us money and worshipped us. Well, it’s true. Zen and I didn’t have to bow down to anyone anywhere to get money. My attitude was, if you want to see him, see him, if you don’t want to, don’t; but everyone came to see him, of course. And that’s not all. Zen and I were the ones that fed and provided for the whole group. The two of us were the leaders. If anyone so much as pointed a finger at us, they were in trouble. Even Zen: everyone called him “Captain, Captain,” and fawned on him when he was in a bad mood. We were the royal couple. But Zen went and died on me....” It had been a long time since Kume had thought back on Zenpachi’s death, and the tears rolled down his cheeks.

“Daddy, please stop. Whenever you start talking about Zen, you always cry. Isn’t it enough that you have Goru-san? Weren’t you saying how happy you were that Zenpachi had a successor?”

“Yes...enough of this.” Sniffling, Kume went on: “But you know, Kii, Goru-san isn’t right. He’s just no good. I’m completely fed up with him. I’ll miss the hundred yen, but I want to quit being the elephant trainer.”

“But why?” Kii looked a little uneasy.

“Didn’t I tell you? Zen and I were the royal couple. We never bowed down to or flattered anyone. I was proud to show people what I could do.”

“I know that, Daddy. But I’m asking what’s wrong with Goru-san.” Kii was irritated.
“See, Goru-san has no guts, giving a little brat like that rides, bowing, and all that. It’s not his fault, he has to do that to eat.”

“But wasn’t that the same for Zenpachi?”

“It was totally different! Zen was my true love. When I was there he would do anything, he was so happy. And when I told him I was unhappy Zen was unhappy too. And when Zen was unhappy I was unhappy. And when the two of us were unhappy, everybody suffered. They’d bring sake and brown sugar when they wanted us to do something. When he got insolent, I often yelled at him saying that anyone who wasn’t useful to humans could go ahead and die, but who would want to work being made fun of and forced to go places? Someone like that should say ‘if you need me to work, build a road and come to me yourself.’ ”

By now, Kume had forgotten about his cup of sake, and, sniffling, he went on.

“Goru-san is no good. Not that anyone will take any heed of me when I say that, not the parents of a brat like that...”

“Daddy, how can you call the young master a ‘brat’? Think what would happen if somebody heard you.”

“What do you mean? A brat is a brat, even if he’s a ‘young master.’ So I can’t make a living without bowing and scraping to a brat like that? I’m like him...just like Goru-san, I ‘beg,’ ‘bow,’ and all the rest....Goru-san, with that great big body, and I’m just the same. But even I’m a free
human being, you know. Why should the two of us have to beg and spin around for a brat like that, and be happy to get a biscuit or half a biscuit? What right do those brats have to make us do that? For only a little brat, they spend three thousand yen on an elephant as a toy, while no one will buy my fifty-sen elephants for ordinary children because of how much they cost. First of all, there’s something wrong with the dad there - spending a thousand yen on a dog and two thousand yen on a gun to get a bird, when he could get plenty of them in a store for one yen - it’s ridiculous. Building a storehouse for nude dancing, at his age? Doesn’t he think at all? It’s because the dad has ideas like that that the kid turns into a brat. He’s pleased with himself for kicking me in the head with his shoes while he rides on Goru-san’s back. Nobody would get away with that when I was walking Zen. Even now, if I wasn’t getting 100 yen I’d pull him down and kick him in the air. Here I was, at first, thinking how much 100 yen was, and it turns out those people are paying 300 yen for a doctor for the dog! When my wife was dying, no doctor would give her proper attention. My wife isn’t a dog, she’s a human being! They let a human being die, and spend 300 yen when a dog catches a cold....”

Kii had heard her father rail on when he was drinking, but this was the first time she had heard such bitter complaining from him. On tour with the show, when he and Zenpachi had been made fun of by their colleagues, Kume had invariably shouted at everyone until they had had enough and stopped listening, but Kii didn’t know this. So now, when she heard her
father yelling like this for the first time, she was frightened. There was the danger that he would be heard through the single thin wall of the house across the alley. She tried her best to stop him, but he would not quiet down.

"Daddy, stop it! For goodness’ sake, please stop it, Daddy! If you say things like that, I’ll just have to go somewhere else."

"Sure, go right ahead! Go to Prince Sadamori’s or wherever. I’m leaving too. Who wants to stay in a place like this?"

Kii began to weep softly. She must have been completely terrified to see her ashen-faced father shouting. And she must have been sad to think that she would have to go back to working at the factory and doing extra work at home.

"What are you crying for? You can always go to Prince Sadamori’s, right? I mean it - go! I can always wander off somewhere."

"Hello, Mr. Kume, you sound pretty spirited today." It was Shin-san the gardener, who had just come in. He had opened the sliding door and stood there with a puzzled expression, unable to grasp the situation.

"What, Shin! This won’t do. You can’t come in!” Kume waved his arms frantically.

"I can’t come in? What’s wrong with you, Mr. Kume? You’ve had quite a lot to drink. What, Kii-chan’s crying? What’s wrong?” Appearing at a loss for further words, Shin-san sat down where he was.
“I said get out of here! We don’t want you people coming around here. Get out, get out!” Kume spoke vigorously, shaking his head.

“Mr. Kume, really, what’s the matter? Why don’t you calm down and tell me about it? How about giving me a cup of sake?”

“Don’t talk nonsense to me. I haven’t done anything bad enough to deserve having to give you people a drink.”

“You’re a tough one. But I feel like I’m seeing the Mr. Kume I used to know for the first time in a long time. Ten years ago you left everyone speechless talking like that.”

“I didn’t ask your opinion. That’s enough. Go home.”

“This really is bad. Kii-chan, what in the world is going on?”

Kii-chan explained that all this had started when she mentioned to her father that she had been requested to go to Prince Sadamori’s.

“Daddy says he’s going to quit the job at the estate. I’m so upset....”

“That’s right. If you go to Prince Sadamori’s it’s only proper for me to quit the job at the estate,” said Kume.

“Mr. Kume, what’s this? You don’t approve of Kii-chan going to Prince Sadamori’s?” asked Shin-san.

“Mind your own business. Whether I disapprove or approve has nothing to do with you.”

“You’re wrong, it has a lot to do with me. In fact, Prince Sadamori said to me today, ‘I want O-Kiku as my serving girl, so listen, Shin, go to her father
and talk to him about it, because I hear the girl was saying she would come,' and I said, 'yes sir, I'll go there tonight,' and here I am."

"What's this?" Kume glared at Shin-san with a terrible, furious expression. "I knew it! Just as I figured. Shin, you came to discuss sending Kii to Sadamori to be his mistress!"

"D-don't talk nonsense," Shin-san was so taken aback that his body jumped about one foot to the side. "Th-that's a ridiculous idea. It's just a position as a serving girl. You mustn't say things like that."

"You liar." Kume laughed contemptuously. "Does a young prince in a noble family worry that much about his serving girls? He wants her as a mistress for sure."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha." Shin-san doubled over as he laughed so that he seemed to be licking the tatami mat. "Your view of things is out of date. The noble families these days aren't like that. Nowadays, they even give instructions on how the pickles are to be made, not to mention choosing their serving girls."

"Anyway, it won't do. You've been sticking your nose into mansions all over the place with business like that since way back, no doubt. Even if you haven't, when your face appears it's bound to be something like that."

"For goodness' sake. We just aren't getting anywhere. Listen, Kii-chan, I'm going home tonight, all right? Let's talk this over tomorrow when your father isn't drunk. Mr. Kume, why don't you quiet down and get some sleep."
“Get going. I don’t need your help to get to sleep.”

“Oh yes, you are so right. Ha, ha, ha. Good night, Kii-chan.”

Early the next morning Kume put on his clothes and worked with Goru-san, seemingly having completely forgotten the events of the previous evening. After he had worked for awhile, he sat down on a bench in front of the elephant hut to sun himself. Shin-san came along in his work clothes.

“Good morning, Mr. Kume. You were pretty lively last night.” He sat down next to Kume.

“Yeah, I guess so. I don’t remember too well, but I remember telling you to go home.”

“That’s right. In fact, that’s all you would say. By the way, about Kii-chan - are you sure you won’t allow it?”

“About Kii-chan - you mean about her going to Prince Sadamori’s?”

“That’s right. Naturally, it will be inconvenient for you to live alone, but since you’re getting a 100-yen salary, you can easily hire an older lady as a housekeeper. Or if you like, you can get someone a little younger to serve you. Ha, ha, ha.”

“Don’t joke with me like that. Use your head. It’s been thirty years since I’ve done anything like that,” Kume replied cheerfully.

“Thirty years - that’s a bit of an overstatement. With you doing things to make people talk about you until just recently!”

“All right, cut the joking! Goru-san is laughing at me.”
“Anyway, enough of that - let’s talk about Kii-chan. Is it all right with you? How about it?”

“I don’t care what happens to me. But I just don’t like the idea of giving her to a pasty-faced prince like that as a serving girl.”

“Whether he’s pasty-faced or jet black, a prince is a prince. Who cares about that, when Kii-chan wants to do it. Just let her. There’s nothing bad about it. On top of that, the pay for a serving girl is excellent.’

“Oh, yeah? How much?”

“Well, there’s no rule, you know, but if Kii-chan goes to Prince Sadamori’s, she’ll get a lot - thirty yen, fifty yen, depending on what’s worked out.”

“Fifty yen!” Kume’s eyes were open wide. “What, for a serving girl?”

“Well, there are many types of serving girl, you know. Taking care of an elephant gets you 100 yen, right? For taking care of a prince, 50 yen is too low.”

“Ha, ha, ha.” Kume was in surprisingly good spirits. “You’ve always liked to talk nonsense. I don’t imagine it’s any different in Kii’s case.”

Shin-san gave a strange chuckle. “Mr. Kume, aren’t you going to tell me to leave?”

“What the hell do you mean by that?” Kume forced a cheerless smile. “Is it about that?”
“Well, actually, it has got something to do with that.” Shin-san went on, as if testing the waters. “Prince Sadamori’s wife is ill, and she’s been secluded in Karnakura since this spring. They say it’s tuberculosis, so she’ll probably be stuck there indefinitely. Now what happened is, that when Kii-chan was working at the estate, she caught Prince Sadamori’s eye. There are lot’s of young girls at the mansion, but it’s like this - they come from the girls’ school as part of their education to meet the Viscountess. So even the young ones are an uninteresting group, unrefined, and too gaudy. Compared with them, Kii-chan is modest, easygoing, and - excuse me for saying this, but she’s much prettier than average. I mean it, after not seeing her for two or three years, I didn’t even recognize her. When I went to your house the other night, I thought it must be someone else. I couldn’t believe what a beauty she was. Ha, ha, ha.”

Kume chuckled softly, with a good-natured expression on his face.

“So what do you say? Why don’t you just say ‘yes’ to the original request - Hey! now don’t tell me to go home!”

“No, no.” Kume shook his head. “You just don’t have any sense, do you. To tell the truth, if this had happened when you first came asking me to take the elephant trainer job, when the two of us had to make to with one baked potato time after time, I might have agreed to it, since there was no other option. But now, I’m getting 100 yen a month, you know. How could I
face people if, with all that, I gave my daughter away to serve as someone’s mistress?”

“Yes, you have a point.” Shin-san was unexpectedly understanding. “You’re right about that, but then again, the prince who wants your daughter is the one who pays your 100-yen salary. So if you don’t agree, there might be unpleasant consequences.”

“Don’t be ridiculous! Even a noble family or a prince wouldn’t be so harsh as to fire a father because he wouldn’t give up his daughter as a mistress.”

“But you know, Mr. Kume, there’s a problem there.” Shin-san sounded deeply troubled. “Last night you made a terrible blunder.”

“What do you mean?” Kume’s eyes were open wide in astonishment.

“What I mean is, the man who lives on the other side of the alley heard everything. All the outrageous things you were shouting - that the young master is a brat, that the Viscount is a lecher…”

“I don’t remember saying anything like that. Who said such a thing?” Kume looked disgusted.

“That’s why I told you not to drink! Since the man across the alley heard it all, there’s no use in your denying it. Calling the young master a brat is one thing, but what is this calling the Viscount a lecher? There’s a limit even to saying offensive things.”

105
“I guess I may have called the young master a brat, but I’m sure I didn’t call the Viscount a lecher. That fool across the alley is making things up. I’ll make the bastard pay for it.” Kume was in a rage. This was the true “Mr. Kume the elephant trainer.”

“Hold or, hold on, Mr. Kume. Maybe he exaggerated a little, but there’s still something to it, so you can’t just dismiss it. If you get worked up he’ll just tell the head butler and we’ll be done for. Never mind that, let’s just say that the horse got jealous because the elephant is so popular. Ha, ha, ha.”

“It’s no laughing matter. Just wait till you see what I do to that bastard.”

“Now hold on. Sit back down.” Shin-san forced Kume, who had stood up, back down onto the bench. “If the family finds out it’s all over. The head butler will play the loyal servant and won’t do anything to help you. Lately he’s been complaining that the elephant costs too much to take care of, and he may just take this opportunity to get rid of you. And at your age, you can’t keep setting up your rubber elephants and giving your sales pitch forever. Think how terrible it will be for Kii-chan if you do that. She won’t have any opportunities in life if she goes back to working at the factory and staying up all night with a sandal in her hand. Think about it. Do you have any better idea?”

Kume was lost in thought. There was no doubt that at this point if he tried setting up the elephants and giving his sales pitch, he wouldn’t be able to provide for even himself, let alone the two of them. Still, Kume, who had
never been able to waken from his dreams of Zen, was not certain himself whether he could live without elephants. There was no way for him to make a living unless it involved elephants somehow. He had not the least desire to find some other way.

“You’re really thinking about this, aren’t you. Got any good ideas?” Shin-san pressed him for an answer.

But however much he was pressed, Kume could not come to a decision. Even if he wouldn’t miss Goru-san - and there was no doubt that taking care of Goru-san, who had been made into a child’s toy, was unpleasant - there did not seem to be any prospect for better work. Not only “better” work - there was no work at all save for setting up the toy elephants and standing up all night in the wind under the cold winter sky. If it had to be toy elephants, the rubber and stuffed elephants could not compare with Goru-san, who provided him with 100 yen a month. Suddenly, the job which he had been recalling with utter distaste seemed like a wonderful job and a precious opportunity.

“Mr. Kume, you mustn’t think so much.” With a kindly air, Shin-san went on: “You’re too honest. I shouldn’t have told you the truth about your neighbor overhearing, because you’ll just get us in trouble. Don’t worry about losing your job. There are ways to take care of that head butler. If I make the request to Prince Sadamori and he agrees, that butler fellow can thrash around all he likes and it won’t do him any good. Prince Sadamori’s got that
fellow by the balls. So everything’ll be taken care of if you just say ‘all right’ to
Prince Sadamori’s request to have Kii-chan come to his estate. Just do it, all
right, Mr. Kume?”

“No, no.” Kume shook his head firmly. “I wouldn’t have any pride as a
man if, at my age, I let something like that happen to my daughter because I
was worried about my own job. I may be weak-willed, but that’s one thing I
can’t do.”

“Now, there’s no need to be so narrow-minded about it. That’s not the
way the world works nowadays. Also, you talk about letting something like
that happen to Kii-chan, but what if Kii-chan wants to do it?”

“Don’t be a damn fool.” Kume appeared to have regained his vigor of
the previous night even though he was sober. “My kid would die in the street
before her pride would sink that low.”

“Ha, ha, ha!” Shin-san was not daunted as he had been the night
before, and laughed dismissively. “Come on, Mr. Kume, you can’t say that,
when you never did a thing for Kii-chan. You’re in no position to talk about
her being your kid.”

“But how could I take care of her even if I wanted to when I was
practically dying in the street myself?” Kume was beginning to waver
somewhat.
"But you still can’t say that. I understand that you can’t do anything for Kii-chan even though you want to. But the fact is you didn’t help her. You have no right to complain now, of all times."

"That may be true, but I’m still her father. I won’t let her just do whatever she likes."

"Now look, you may be her father, but it’s pointless for you to get all worked up like this. I’ve got to tell you something." Shin-san gazed around with an important air, and lowered his voice to a whisper. "Apparently, Prince Sadamori and Kii-chan have already got something going."

"What!" Kume nearly flew into the air in shock. "Are you serious? Listen, Shin, I won’t listen to any of your nonsense."

"It’s nothing to be so shocked about." Shin was strangely calm. "There’s nothing wrong with it. For the daughter of an elephant trainer to bag a prince - that’s quite an achievement."

"Don’t joke with me." Kume was breathing heavily.

"Come on, come on, calm down and think about it. Your destiny has come at last. It’s no lie, no joke. It happened last month, when the whole family was away. Prince Sadamori and Kii-chan went into the master bedroom and locked the door behind them. He paid off the maid to keep her from talking, but the truth always comes out. Nobody can do anything wrong without Shin-san finding out about it. Sorry, I didn’t mean to say ‘wrong,’ it just slipped out!"
NOTES


3. Ibid.


5. Barshay, 134.

6. Barshay, 139.


16. Barshay, 163.

17. Ōyama Ikuo (1880-1955) was a professor of political science at Waseda and worked with Nyozekan at the *Asahi* until both left in the wake of the 1918 “white rainbow incident.” A co-founder of *Warera*, Ōyama later ran for office as a candidate for the Farmer-Labor party, with Nyozekan’s support.


29. ibid., p. 5.

30. ibid., p. 10.


33. Senshū 1, p. 32.

34. Senshū 1, 6-7.


36. Senshū 1, 203.

37. Barshay, 181.


40. Senshū 1, 20.


42. Yasukawa, 125.

43. Yasukawa, 133.

44. Senshū 1, 204.

45. Senshū 1, 191.

46. Senshū 1, 8.

47. E.g. Senshū 1, 62.


51. Bungei senshû 1, p. 317-327.

52. Hasegawa Nyozekan, “Ôsaka Asahi kara Warera e” (February 1919), in Hasegawa Nyozekan shû 1: 347.

LIST OF REFERENCES


Pyle, Kenneth B. *The New Generation in Meiji Japan: Problems of Cultural*


