AN INTRODUCTION TO SHIBUSAWA TATSUMIKO
AND HIS WORLD OF THE IMAGINATION

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ABSTRACT

Shibusawa Tatsuhiko was a prominent presence on the literary scene in Japan from the 1960s until his death in 1987. I believe that, in many respects, Shibusawa was in the vanguard of a literary and artistic movement that was to have a decisive effect on the direction of contemporary Japanese culture. He was fascinated by the dark, exotic, and the erotic. He introduced de Sade to the Japanese public and wrote numerous essays on the essential role of sexuality in the development of civilization. By the 1970s, however, he tired of these themes and went on to categorize and describe the derivation of magic from the natural world. He ended his career as a writer of fantasy novels.

Because Shibusawa is an intellectual who has not been studied in or introduced to countries outside Japan, I have tried in this study to provide a general outline of Shibusawa's life and work. My thesis focuses on the ways in which Shibusawa incorporated such disciplines as natural history, folklore studies, and studies of the supernatural into his literary works and championed eroticism, exoticism, mystery, and geometric images. In doing so, I analyze his essay collections and his novel *Chronicle of Prince Takaoka's Journey Overseas.*
To my parents
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Shibusawa championed eroticism and fantasy at a time when realism dominated in Japan. He was in the avant-garde in Japanese literary history. He was most active during the 1960s and 70s, when a radical student movement led by Zengakuren (The National Federation of Student's Self-Government Associations) and Zenkyōtō (All Campus Joint Struggle Committee) dominated the intellectual discourse in Japan. It was also a time when Japanese had an optimistic belief in the power of technology because of its tremendous economic growth. In the literary world, realism, the I-novel and romanticism continued to dominate. However Shibusawa campaigned against the main trends in literature. Shibusawa contended that it is eroticism, not political commitment, that is universal and essential.

Consequently, Shibusawa interpreted literary works and the arts from the perspective of eroticism. One of his achievements is his introduction of French writers such as Marquis de Sade to Japan. He majored in French literature at Tokyo University, and his thesis was on de Sade. Later in his life, he continued to introduce French writers in the fields of mysticism, symbolism, and eroticism to Japan. He translated the works of de Sade, Cocteau, and wrote articles to interpret these writers
from the perspective of eroticism and fantasy. Due to Shibusawa’s interpretation of literary history, people began to rethink and reevaluate literary history according to a new and different standard.

Given the political polarization of the literary world in the 1960s and 1970s, there is the temptation to view Shibusawa as an anomaly, an eccentric out of touch with his time. However, I argue the contrary that he was in the avant-garde of his society because he foresaw many new tendencies which came to dominate in contemporary Japan. In the 1960s, eroticism was still very much taboo. Shibusawa was arrested on obscenity charges because of his translation of Sade’s work *L’Histoire de Juliette; ou les Prosperites du Vice*. This became known as the de Sade Trial, and together with the equally famous Chatterley Trial challenged the sexual taboos of Japanese society in such a way as to make acceptable the open discussion of eroticism, a discussion that has permeated most aspects of present society.¹

Shibusawa was prescient as well in his articulation in a number of his essays of an intention to isolate himself from society and immerse himself in a fantasy world. This is particularly relevant to the present time. We have seen that rather than be politically engaged, after the 1960s and 1970s, the younger generation seemed more inclined to follow Shibusawa’s lead in enclosing themselves in a personal interior world of fantasy and eroticism.

I began to have an interest in Shibusawa Tatsuhiko after I read his *Takaoka Shinō kōkaiki (Chronicle of Prince Takaoka’s Journey Overseas, 1987)*, his last novel. When

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¹ In the Chatterley trial of 1957, Itō Sei was charged with obscenity because of his translation of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* by D.H. Lawrence.
I read this novel, the author’s vivid imagination attracted me. Shibusawa wanted to resist the passage of time, and he succeeded in building up a fantasy world unconstrained by the boundaries of time. Later, after I read more of his essays, criticism and novels, I discovered he is a unique critic and writer. He only wrote about what he was interested in. He interpreted literature and art solely according to his own subjective criteria and used these elements to create his own utopia. It is probably not an exaggeration to say that Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis and the archetypal theory of Jung are the motivating ideas behind Shibusawa’s art. Shibusawa was an avant-garde artist, and his utopia was anarchistic. To look into Shibusawa’s world is to explore yet another side of Japanese modern literature, and perhaps its future.
CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHY

Shibusawa Tatsuhiko was born in 1928 in Tokyo to the eminent family of famous entrepreneurs and industrialists known as the Shibusawa Clan from Chiaraijima, Saitama Prefecture. Japan's most famous businessman Shibusawa Eiichi was from a branch family of the Shibusawa Clan. Shibusawa's father graduated from Tokyo Imperial University and became an important executive with Saitama Bank, still one of Japan's largest and most respected financial institutions.

Tatsuhiko was, then, the product of a highly privileged background, and he was raised in a liberal and cultured atmosphere. From an early age he was able to indulge his interests in adventure stories, cartoons, and collecting biological specimens. He was a good student. His intention from elementary school through middle and high school was to specialize in science, but in his last years in high school, when, like most students, he was drafted to work in factories for the war effort, he changed his mind and began to study assiduously French language and literature. From today's perspective, this might seem a bad career move, but it must be borne in mind that in the immediate postwar period in Japan, the French intelligentsia were perhaps the most influential intellectual force in Japan.
There was tremendous competition to enter the French Department at Tokyo Imperial University, where one could be initiated into the mysteries of Sartre and other existential philosophers advocating political engagement. Shibusawa failed the entrance exam to Tokyo University's French Department twice before he finally passed and entered in 1950. During the three years before he entered Tokyo University, Shibusawa built a library of French literature and took part-time work as a copy editor of a literary magazine, Modan Nihon, where he met Yoshiyuki Junnosuke and other prominent authors. At Tokyo University, his interests ran counter to the prevailing trend of political opposition; instead he became an advocate of surrealism and its central figure André Breton.

Shibusawa graduated in 1953. His graduation thesis was on Marquis de Sade. It was entitled "The modernism of de Sade," and it gave direction to the literary career that he would follow in the future. Shibusawa took a variety of jobs on the margins of the literary world, including copy editor at Iwanami and translator of Jean Cocteau's Le Grand Ecart (1954) and de Sade's L'Histoire de Juliette; ou les Prosperites du Vice (1959).

Shibusawa's father died in 1955, and the enormous residence and properties of the Shibusawa stem family in Chiaraijima were sold. For Tatsuhiko, the decline of what was once the premier family of finance and business marked the end of an era: "The destruction of that great house symbolized the end of an age. For me, personally,
it meant that huge dark old house, the source of so many of my childhood memories, had disappeared from the face of the earth” (v.16, p.326).²

During the rest of the 1950s, Shibusawa built a reputation as a translator of French literature and as a critic writing for little magazines such as *Mittei (Uncertain).* His coterie of literary friends came to include Mishima Yukio, who wrote an introduction for Shibusawa’s three-volume translation of the selected works of Marquis de Sade, Mori Mari, the daughter of Mori Ogai, Hijikata Tatsumi, the dancer and choreographer, Katō Ikuya, haiku poet and critic, Ikeda Masuo, the painter, Tomioka Taeko, essayist and a poet, and Yagawa Sumiko, translator, novelist, and poet, whom Shibusawa married in 1959.

However, Shibusawa gained national prominence as a result of the government’s decision in 1960 to prosecute him for obscenity for his translation of de Sade’s *L’ Histoire de Juliette; ou les Prosperites du Vice (Akutoku no sakae, zoku, 1959).* The obscenity charge came in the midst of the massive anti-government demonstrations against the renewal of the U.S. - Japan Security Treaty, and the absolutely apolitical Shibusawa became identified as an oppositional figure, especially since the obscenity trial and its appeal dragged on until 1969, when Japan’s Supreme Count found Shibusawa guilty.

Shibusawa’s response to his growing fame was an extraordinary outburst of creative energy. One critical essay followed another in leading intellectual journals, and these were anthologized in books: *Kuromajutsu no techō (The Notebook of Black*


In 1968, Yagawa and Shibusawa divorced and in the same year he helped found the journal Blood and Roses. In 1969, he married Mackawa Ryuko.

The 1970s continued to be productive if less intense for Shibusawa. He made several extended trips abroad, specifically, to Italy in 1974, France in 1977, and Greece and Italy in 1981. These, in addition to his travels in Japan, served as the basis for a number of travel essays. But his continued popularity among the young was probably rooted in his tales of the strange and bizarre collected from sources both in Japan and from around the world. His anthologies of these tales include Yojinkijinkan (Museum of Strange and Bewitching People, 1971), Tōzai fushigi monogatari (The Strange Tales from East and West, 1977), and Yoseitachi no mori (Forest of Spirits, 1980).

Throughout the sixties, seventies and eighties, Shibusawa extended his critical activities to the visual and theatrical, arts, and dance. He was a particularly enthusiastic supporter of Hijikata Tatsumi’s Ankoku Butō (Dance of Darkness), a
pre-modernist and post-modernist reconfiguring of traditional Japanese dance, which expresses the dark side of history by use of gestures and memories buried beneath everyday life.

Never a sociable person, Shibusawa confined himself more and more to his house in Kamakura during the last two decades of his life. He became interested in classical Japanese literature. In the eighties, he worked to give flesh to his theories of eroticism and fantasy by writing fiction. In the last seven years of his life, he produced four anthologies of fiction: *Karakusa monogatari (Tales of Arabesque, 1981)*, *Nemuri-hime (The Sleeping Princess, 1983)*, *Utsurobune (The Canoe, 1985)*, and *Takaoka Shino kōkaiki (Chronicle of Prince Takaoka's Journey Overseas, 1987)*.

Shibusawa Tatsuhiko's story is of some inherent interest in that the scion of Japan's most prominent capitalist family found himself adrift in postwar Japan and became a counter cultural media figure. However, of more interest for the purposes of this study are the enduring themes that he invested in his critical theories and fiction. In the next chapter, Shibusawa's seminal essays on eroticism and exoticism will be examined.
CHAPTER 3

SHIBUSAWA TATSUHIKO’S FANTASY WORLD OF EROTICISM AND MYSTICISM

The Ideological Eroticism of Shibusawa: Kōshoku vs. Eroticism

Eroticism and mysticism are the two foundation stones of Shibusawa's theory. In the following, I will first concentrate on Shibusawa's eroticism. In the tradition of Japanese literature, eroticism can be interpreted as kōshoku. However kōshoku, which bloomed during the development of merchant class culture in the Genroku period, is definitely different from Shibusawa's eroticism. In his essay "Kōshoku versus eroticism" (in The Impregnation of the Sacred, 1962), Shibusawa compared kōshoku and eroticism and clarified his ideas about eroticism. The essentials of Shibusawa's ideas on eroticism can be easily grasped in this essay. Shibusawa argued there are several levels to eroticism, kōshoku is a low level one, and "the ideal eroticism is an art of visualizing the hallucination of death" (v.2, p.378).

According to Shibusawa, there are two key points to his argument: First, since eroticism is a hallucination of death, it is inevitably tinged with antisocial elements such as violence and perversion. Second, since eroticism is an art, it belongs to the spiritual domain and has the features of the poetic and the fanciful. In contrast, Shibusawa argued, "Kōshoku is a form of low-level and limited eroticism which
comes into existence based on avoiding the death which it should envisage, making fun of fear, and obfuscating the communal requirement of common custom” (v.2, p.378). Here, Shibusawa emphasizes that kōshoku is an inferior form of eroticism. Compared to ideal eroticism, it is far from spiritual and is based on the parody of social, public morals.

Shibusawa came to this conclusion by reinterpreting Ihara Saikaku, the most famous writer of kōshokumono (erotic fiction) in the Genroku period. Shibusawa argued that the eroticism expressed in Saikaku’s fiction surpasses the level of kōshoku and reaches ideal eroticism. To prove this, Shibusawa reinterpreted Saikaku’s ideas by reevaluating Saikaku’s fictions. As is well known, the most representative work of Saikaku’s Kōshokumono is Kōshoku ichidai otoko (Life of an Amorous Man, 1682). It is a story about the endless amorous adventures pursued by the son of a newly risen merchant-class family. However, Shibusawa does not deal with this optimistic fiction; instead he introduced and emphasized another fiction by Saikaku: namely, Nanshoku ōkagami (The Great Mirror of Male Love, 1687), a collection of forty short stories on the subject of love between samurai men and boys, monks and boys, and male actors in kabuki theater. Shibusawa argued that the essential of ideal eroticism is the poetic aesthetics that arises from disintegration and death, and it is in Nanshoku ōkagami, which discusses the morals of the fading feudal warrior, that this poetic aesthetics is found. Therefore, with this Nanshoku ōkagami, Saikaku’s eroticism transcended the limitations of kōshoku and reached the point of spiritual eroticism.

Shibusawa argues as follows:
Although Saikaku was not a warrior, undoubtedly he discovered the poetic sentiment in the purified morals of the warrior class...and told the stories of homicide by misadventure, revenge, hara-kiri, and immolation of self which express feudal aesthetics in a casual manner. In this way, through the weakening of feudal morals, Saikaku caught the most brilliant beauty of eroticism (v.2 p.377).

In a word, Shibusawa treats eroticism as fantasy. It is spiritual and abstract, and at the same time, it is presented as violent and perverted action. Shibusawa based his understanding of eroticism in Saikaku on the works of de Sade, whom he enthusiastically introduced to Japan.

Shibusawa’s introduction of de Sade and his understanding of eroticism

Shibusawa is regarded as the non-academic authority on the study of de Sade in Japan. He is the first person in Japan to systematically introduce de Sade. His work Sado Kōshaku no shogai (The Life of Marquis de Sade, 1965) was the direct inspiration for Mishima Yukio to write his most famous drama Sado Kōshaku fujin (Marquise de Sade, 1965), and it also influenced Inagaki Taruho’s Vanira to manira (Vanilla and Manila, 1969), another important study of de Sade in Japan.

Shibusawa Tatsuhiro’s introduction of de Sade took place in the early years of his career, from late 1950s to 1960s. His anthologies of articles about de Sade are: Sado fukkatsu (The Revival of de Sade, 1959), Sado Kōshaku no shōgai (The Life of Marquis de Sade, 1964), Sado kenkyū (Study of de Sade, 1968). About ten years later, in 1980, he published his last essay collection about de Sade, Shiro to rōgoku (Castle
versus Prison, 1980), as a reexamination and summary of his understanding of de Sade. With these four anthologies, Shibusawa accomplished his introduction and explanation of de Sade.

Shibusawa was always interested in the darkness of consciousness. He claimed: “Compared to conservatism, which paints the world rose-colored in the frame of existing morality, I am much more interested in the nihilism which depicts the dark world based on the suffering and misery incurred by the development of civilization” (v.7, p.193). And de Sade is a very good icon for this outrageously dark world. His works picture the imagery of the underworld and shadowy aesthetic. Therefore Shibusawa was fascinated by de Sade and started building his own fantasy world based on the ideas of de Sade.

De Sade gives us the powerful idea that, “the darkest and most perverted haunts of Eros have a place in life and in the structure of the soul.” All aspects of culture-class, race, politics, economics, education, and business, can be analyzed in a Sadeian way. Violence and the “will to power” are essential in life. We are torn between victimization and violence. It is our nature to be both forceful and vulnerable. And eroticism, which has the virtues of violence, cruelty, coldness and corruption, is the great equalizer, and at the same time the symbol of this darkness in our soul, culture, and society.

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Two aspects of de Sade’s ideas that fascinated Shibusawa were: 1) the notion that all human life is essentially sado-masochistic life, and 2) that dark and perverted Eros is essential to the world.

Shibusawa Tatsuhiko notes and emphasizes the sado-masochistic themes in de Sade’s literature. He names his last essay collection about de Sade as *Castle versus Prison*, which is a very vivid metaphor of this sado-masochism. He explains that even in the case of the same edifice, to the powerful owner, it is a castle, while to the powerless people who are stuck in it, it is a prison. He argues, “In reality, de Sade was immured in the prison only as a victim of the establishment and power. However in the world of his novel, he changes to a despot who uses his power abusively…This conversion of the sado-masochistic imagination, this dualistic image from sadism to masochism and back, as I said in the beginning of this article, is consistent with the essentially paradoxical feature of de Sade’s literature” (v.17 p.19).

Based on this understanding of de Sade, Shibusawa expresses his idea of eroticism and writes: “The essence of the territory of eroticism is a territory of violence, infringing and being infringed” (v.9 p.90). Combining this foundational idea of eroticism, Shibusawa builds up a systematic idea towards eroticism as follows: First, essentially, eroticism is both personal and arbitrary; its relation with morality has been cut off. Eroticism is spiritual and imaginary. Second, eroticism has the aspect of connecting with violence and the desire for blood. At the same time, third, the antisocial aspect of eroticism is rooted in its deep connection with death (v.9, p.82, 84).
Shibusawa picked up de Sade’s idea of “the darkest and most perverted haunts of Eros having a place in life and in the structure of soul” and regarded this violent eroticism as the “great equalizer of life” (v.9 p.245).

Shibusawa compares the eroticism of terror and perversion in the traditional literary works of Tanizaki Jun’ichirō and Kawabata Yasunari with the dark eroticism of de Sade, and he points out that there is a difference in the two understandings of eroticism in Japanese literature and de Sade. Sade raised eroticism to the level of metaphysics and regarded it as the essence of soul and life, while Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, who is a product of the spiritual climate of Japan, did not connect Eros to the essence of life and soul but was simply interested in the mystery of Eros.

If we want to summarize Jun’ichirō’s attitude towards sex in one sentence, it is that mystery is accompanied by fear. Finally, he did not realize the essence of sex, the ultimate ground of it. Moreover he did not try to understand it; he was pleased with the irrational controlling power of sex in his expression of woman’s body. If it were de Sade, taking the opportunity of rebellion towards god and nature, he would overcome this mystery, and gain a firm foothold in the metaphysical world (v.9 p.152).

Shibusawa makes a clear distinction between these two understandings, and undoubtedly, he is fascinated by de Sade’s idea, and regards eroticism as the expression of the essence of life and soul, the “great equalizer of life.” In his “statement of purpose” carried in the first issue of the magazine Blood and Roses, which he helped found in 1968, Shibusawa argued as follows:

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*Blood and Roses (Chi to bara) existed from 1968 to 1970. Shibusawa was the main editor. The goal of this magazine was to introduce eroticism and gave it a positive valuation. It only published four volumes, and the publication was stopped because of the financial problem.*
A culture without eroticism is a pale anemic, fake culture...Because Eros is both arbitrary and universal, eroticism, though it aims at no system of thought in philosophy, dissolves all oppositions—class, racial, and so on—to the same essential surface. We believe eroticism is the great equalizer (v.9 p.245).

However, in Shibusawa’s introduction of de Sade, there is, to a great extent, Shibusawa’s own search for self-completion. Shibusawa departs from the reality of de Sade in order to create an image of him that is more in keeping with Shibusawa’s own self-image that was coming into being. The most significant example of this is Shibusawa’s portrayal of de Sade as an encyclopedist with a collection mania who also had an interest in natural history. This “new aspect” of de Sade that Shibusawa discovered is the product of Shibusawa’s own ideas. His assessment of de Sade is probably not justifiable, yet it opens a door for us to understand and discover Shibusawa’s ideas and his fantasy world. This interest in the encyclopedic that Shibusawa found in de Sade later became the foundation of his own ideas and helped him to establish his own fantasy world. I will leave the discussion of this interest in the encyclopedic to the next chapter.

The Avant-garde, Shibusawa, and Trends in the 1960s

The one most important feature of Japan’s postwar generation of avant-garde artists, whether novelists like Mishima Yukio and Ōe Kenzaburō, or choreographers like Hijikata Tatsumi, or film directors like Ōshima Nagisa, or essayists like
Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, is their search for a means to articulate the attraction of violence. They all spent their adolescence at a time when, as Mishima wrote:

I was convinced that I would soon be called into the army and would die in battle, and that my family also would mercifully be killed in the air raids, leaving not a single survivor... Thus I longed for the great sense of relief that death would surely bring if only, like a wrestler, I could wrench the heavy weight of life from my shoulders. I sensuously accepted the creed of death that was popular during the war.\(^5\)

This generation had encountered death so intimately that their postwar search was to explain the continuation of the sensual attraction of violence. Another characteristic shared by all of these young intellectuals is that they experienced the counter cultural protest of the Amo demonstrations during the 1960s, and they were all nurtured by the enormous creative energy released by the youth movement. Further, they were all influenced by the sexual revolution of the 1960s. As we can see from the flourishing of the civil rights, feminist and the gay rights movements, there was a worldwide “cultural revolution” during the sixties. Boundaries were broken down and foundational standards overturned at the time. People became to rethink and speak frankly about sexuality and violence, which had been suppressed in the past.

Shibusawa Tatsuhiko as an avant-garde artist broke the taboo of sexuality in Japan by introducing de Sade and his notion of dark Eros to Japan. However, Shibusawa is not the only person who was fascinated by this notion of eroticism and violence. Mishima Yukio and Hijikata Tatsumi are also in his circle and embedded this notion in their creation of art.

It is not a surprise to see that all of them cited *Eroticism* by Georges Bataille, a French writer and philosopher, who was heavily influenced by Marquis de Sade. In his book review of *Eroticism*, Mishima Yukio argues that, “Eroticism is the most central idea in the spirit of 20th century,” “Eroticism and death are united with each other,” and “eroticism is the dismantling of the discontinuity of our existence; it is also the dismantling of rules and social forms which established the discipline of our existence.” Mishima, like Shibusawa, also regarded eroticism as the essence of life, and associated eroticism with death. His later works, *Yûkoku* (*Patriotism*, 1961) and *Hôjô no umi* (*The Sea of Fertility*, 1965-1970), expressed in detail his ideas of eroticism and death.

Hijikata Tatsumi, an influential dancer and choreographer in the 60s, also applied Georges Bataille’s idea of confronting death to overcome the discontinuity of people’s existence. As a dancer, he thinks the body is the best way to express the idea of infinite approach to death. Hijikata claims that, “both rose-colored dance and dark dance should gush the blood in the name of the experience of evil.” His explanation of his work *Sei Kôshaku* (*Saint Marquis*) shows his aesthetic of horror and violence. When referring to de Sade, he uses the expression of the metaphysics of sexuality, and writes that, “In conceiving of this dance, I planned that it expose the bitter pain lying in the depth of madness that would bloom forth when sadist and masochist dance as one together.”

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In short, Shibusawa’s interest in de Sade and dark Eros is not a coincidence. He was a member of a group in Japan that was interested in the notion of the relation between eroticism, violence, and death. These intellectuals, who had encountered the war, were interested in finding an explanation for their experience when they had lived so closely to death and violence. For them, death existed as a constant in society, and they submerged themselves in the world of explaining the coexistence of violence with eroticism in human life. Shibusawa, using his keen intelligence, connects this notion with the reexamination and reevaluation of de Sade’s dark Eros, and he became the first to introduce de Sade in Japan as an explanation for the inherent erotic pleasure to be found in the all-encompassing violence that enveloped him and his whole generation.

From Heresy to Vanguard: the Maturity of Shibusawa

By the mid sixties, twenty years had passed since the end of the war; Japan celebrated an incredible development of its economy and changed to a consumer society. Facing this bloom in the economy and the transformation of the society, Shibusawa started to shift his interest from the notion of death and eroticism to hedonism. In other words, instead of explaining the relationship between death and human life, Shibusawa became interested in the interpretation of the way people should live in this capitalistic and consumer society.

Shibusawa claimed: “I heartily advocate ‘living with an animal instinct.’ Instead of threadbare humanity, animal instinct, which represents nature and vitality,
straightforwardly expresses the intention of seeking pleasure and pure consumption” (v.6, p.96). Shibusawa gave a further explanation of this animal instinct: “Returning to the world of childhood and the liberation of Eros are extensions of the way of animal instinct. Furthermore, the figure of the magician, the ascetic and the superman are also extensions of the same instinct” (v.6, p.96).


These collections of tales about vampires, magicians, secret societies, and poison build up a fantasy world that had never been seen before in Japan and soon became popular among young people. Shibusawa’s works were regarded as the height of intellectual fashion. The main reasons for Shibusawa’s popularity among young people were the notions of aristocratism and exoticism in his work.

These stories of black magic, vampires, and so on may not be shocking in the present day. However, in the 1960s, when Shibusawa first introduced large numbers of these stories drawing on European exoticism, they astonished young people and made them interested in literature. The aristocratism also interested young people. The literary world of Shibusawa is a world of aristocratism. He wrote, “Although in the
real life I do not have the wealth to live as a dandy, I believe that dandyism has some
collection with people's souls. As a cultured person, I would like to revive the basara
(dazzling and luxurious) spirit of ancient Japan in my works” (v.12, p.467).

In sum, after he violated the taboo against open expression of eroticism,
Shibusawa violated another taboo against the open expression of pleasure to be found
in stratified capitalist society. He campaigned for hedonism and built up a fantasy
world of exoticism and aristocratism with his works.

Shibusawa and His Exploration of Occult World

Kuromajutsu no techō (The notebook of Black Magic, 1961), Dokuyaku no techō
(The notebook of Poison, 1963), Himitsu kessha no techō (The notebook of secret
societies, 1966), these three anthologies work to constitute Shibusawa's world of
occultism and diabolism. These notebooks are basically collections of stories
concerning occultism in medieval Europe. Shibusawa enthusiastically introduced the
black mass, the horoscope, the tarot card, alchemy, the archetype of vampire,
mysterious associations such as Rosicrucian, and conspiratorial stories in history with
the keyword poison. These anthologies have the character of picture books, with
explicit and interesting pictures. They are interesting to read and easy to imagine and
understand.

The study of occultism originated in Shibusawa's interest in the dark side of
human spirit. It is consistent with Shibusawa's introduction of de Sade. Shibusawa
was always fascinated by "the knowledge concerning human nature in extreme
situations” (v.2, p.211), the power of the mysterious, violent, and irrational in the dark side of human nature. Shibusawa argues that historically, this dark power at time “erupts chaotically in the form of a religious longing for utopia or other world and a denial of temporality” (v.6, p.522). Shibusawa is very good at associating ideas with this understanding of the dark side of the human mind. He collected various stories, especially stories from medieval Europe that gave a great shock to people living an ordinary life.

Shibusawa’s collections of essays broke the taboo of the 1960s in Japan and formed Shibusawa’s reputation as a heretic. This was because they presented an exotic, unknown world and called for hedonism at a time when the public was deeply absorbed in the Amo movement.

Shibusawa was regarded as a heretic in 1960s. Shibusawa himself wrote in the postscript of The Notebook of Black Magic: “Now as I reconsider the time when I wrote this Notebook of Black Magic, it was the time that society of Japan was totally involved in the Amo movement” (v.2, p.216). Shibusawa always attempted to extricate himself from the trends of society. His introduction of de Sade broke the taboos on discussion of sexuality in Japan; and his philosophy of hedonism, which is the underlying foundation of his introduction of occultism, violated the values of the work ethic and political commitment that were so important in Japan in the 1960s. It goes without saying that his posture of indifference towards trends in society when intellectuals were suffering for their involvement in the Amo movement was itself considered a cowardly evasion of moral responsibility.
Another reason why Shibusawa was considered a heretic was his style in writing these collections of essays. In these three collections, Shibusawa gathers all kinds of information and builds up a museum of occultism. However the display of exemplars in his museum is not necessarily systematic. Shibusawa intends to break with the spatiotemporal order. Using his ability of associative information and his extensive knowledge, he chooses stories that interested him, shows off his knowledge, and intentionally tries to shock. This style of presentation is one of the most prominent features of Shibusawa’s writing. The underlying idea of the style is the spirit of child-like amusement and play. In his collection *The Philosophy of Hedonism* and in other essays, for example “Waga musō no oshare” (“The Ideal Dandy of My Dream”), he argues against the ethic of productivity and champions the sense of purposeless leisure, playing around like a child merely for amusement. In these three collections, his activity is motivated by the sense of having fun. Mishima Yukio admired *The Notebook of Black Magic* because he said it typified the “dandyism of an assassin.” Young people were amazed by Shibusawa’s encyclopedical knowledge of the dangerous, aesthetic, and exotic. They accepted Shibusawa’s idea of child-like play and enjoyed Shibusawa’s essays as embodiments of knowledge for entertainment.

Shibusawa’s heterodoxy is also shown in his introduction of unknown knowledge to the literary and art worlds. This made him a pioneer and an important figure in the Japanese intellectual world. For Japanese in the 1960s, Shibusawa first showed others the world of European occultism and magic and the stories and legends behind them. This atmosphere of exoticism was enhanced when Shibusawa started to introduce the
art of Europe based on his notion of occultism. His collections _Gensō no garō kara_ (From a Picture Gallery of Fantasy, 1968), _Gensō no kanohō_ (To the Other Shore of Fantasy, 1967), and _Yōroppa no nyūbō_ (Breasts of Europe, 1973) carry explicit pictures depicting the subjects of his essays, Shibusawa opened the door to the exotic European art world in Japanese.

**From Heresy to Vanguard: the Changing of Shibusawa’s Style and Idea**

From the 1950s through the 1970s, the economy of Japan maintained a growth rate higher than 10% a year. With this high-growth of economy, Japan turned into a commercialized and information-oriented society. Living in the network of the mass media, a new generation came to regard all kinds of information as entertainment. Eroticism, black magic, fantasy stories-- all of this exotic, frightening but fascinating information was no longer heretical or shocking. “With the debut of authors born around the 1950s, in the world of girls’ cartoons, fantasy, decadence, fin-de-siecle unrest, boys love, this kind of aesthetic became known to a wide public.

Anti-humanitarianism, the absence of morality, and the absolutely priority of sensation became the basic tones of their writing.”8 With this influence, on the one hand, intellectuals lost their authority and control over underground knowledge. On the other hand, more and more young people left the mainstream and formed all kinds

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of cultural subgroups to enjoy their own interests. Therefore, Shibusawa, in the 1970s, suddenly became popular and became the vanguard of certain subculture groups that were fascinated by dark and exotic beauty.

However, as one of the vanguard rather than as a heretic, Shibusawa suddenly found he had lost the privilege of introducing and enjoying underground knowledge. He realized this information no longer violated the taboos of society, and he had nothing more to write about. Shibusawa started to search for new areas to explore. He noticed that though he did not organize his works systematically, there seemed to be an underlying theme to his work. He wrote: "I have a vague presentiment that there must be a connection relating the subjects--eroticism, utopianism, hermaphroditism, or even alchemy, diabolism, automaton, secret societies and so on--that strongly attracted me" (v.12, p.454). Therefore Shibusawa started to search for this connection, the reason why he was interested in these subjects. He gradually changed his interest from the searching for the bizarre to exploring and expressing his own inner world.

This change in his writing is reflected in his three collections: Yume no uchūshi (The Cosmos Record of Dream, 1964), Kurumi no naka no sekai (The World Inside a Walnut, 1974) and Shikō no monshōgaku (The Heraldry of Thought, 1977).

Shibusawa's method of exploring and expressing his own inner world seems quite different from other modern Japanese novelists. When compared to writers like Natsume Sōseki, Shibusawa is not interested in seeking the meaning of life at the psychological level. Instead, he uses visible figures to portray abstract thought. As he wrote, "I am not at all interested in the solution to questions like how one should live
his or her life. Therefore from the first, I turned away from the literature of seeking the truth of life and only read aesthetic novels” (v.22, p.354). For Shibusa, “the proper characteristic of literature is the supernatural tale” (v.22, p.356), and the way he focused his thought in this regard was, “From my childhood, my favorite way of thinking was to visualize every image. I never think in other ways. Expressing the mental through sensation, fixing the spiritual by the physical image—this is my greatest virtue as a writer” (v.4, p.370).

Shibusawa began the process of visualization by describing geometric forms. He believed that the disordered world could be systemized and explained with geometric principles. The geometric forms he chose were the globe, the cone, and the ellipse.

The globe contains the greatest volume per surface area; it connects with the image of expansion. For Shibusawa, the globe is the symbol of completeness. On the other hand, like a spherical waterdrop falls down and changes to conical waterdrop, the upside-down cone is the distortion of a globe; it is the symbol of an incomplete world. The spiral line of this cone: “indicates the descent. It can be regarded as searching towards the depths of ones heart. This search contains the descent and death. However it always accompanies rebirth. Therefore the spiral implicates death and rebirth; it is the symbol of renewed energy of the spiritual” (v.13, p.66). The other geometric symbol Shibusawa showed interest in was the ellipse. Ellipse is curved like a globe; it shows harmony and unification. However it also has two focal points,
which indicates duality and has the potential to split into two conflicting parts. Therefore ellipse is the symbol of unification, which includes duality (v.13, p.99-p.114).

With all these geometric forms, Shibusawa started to classify and organize the phenomena and objects in nature. He was fascinated by the discovery that all the geometric forms which people had discovered and tried to study had already been presented by nature hundreds of millions of years ago. This stimulated Shibusawa's interest towards the mystery of nature and natural history, which will be taken up again in Chapter 4. The transformation in Shibusawa's interest in the mysterious is most apparent in his later reiterations of mineral imagery, like stones, jewels, and in ellipsoidal forms like eggs. In other words, his interests change from such subjects as exotica or diabolism to the signification of the mysteries of recurring shapes in nature.

Shibusawa's interest in minerals is not only because of the mysterious and beautiful geometric shapes that minerals have, but also because of the immortality that minerals possess. As he wrote, "Minerals do not age. They transcend time.... When people want to imagine a world that annuls time and breaks out of the boundary of history, spontaneously, the vision of stone as an ideal image will come to people's minds" (v.22, p.459-60). Shibusawa next associated the immortality of minerals with the notion of utopia and his idea of existence without purpose. He realized that the image of utopia actually parallels the image of stone. In order to escape from the oppression of mundaneness, people make up utopias; in order not to be corroded by the lapse of time, people dream about petrification to achieve immortality. This
petrifaction takes various forms like mummification, sudden enlightenment, human transformation into stone animals, and so on in myths and historic stories all over the world. Therefore, Shibusawa concluded that the notion of utopia and mineral image share the same feature—trying to get away from the constraints of time and history.⁹ Shibusawa also associated the immortality of minerals with his advocacy of existence without purpose. He wrote, “The existence of human beings, or any other existence, has limited life. Since they are all mortal, the actions of human existence hold meaning. However, the state of immortality does not have purpose and meaning” (v.14, p.327). The haunting idea of death constrains the mind, impels people to search for the meaning of life, and makes people’s actions purposeful. In contrast minerals are immortal and do not have the final destination of death. This enigmatic unconscious thing does not possess meaning or purpose. The idea of minerals fit Shibusawa’s ideal: The enjoyment of an existence without purpose, unbounded by the constraints of time and space.

Therefore minerals became some of Shibusawa’s favorite objects. On the one hand, they contain mysterious geometric shapes; on the other hand, they contain the notion of utopian and purposeless existence. In his later works, Shibusawa collected all kinds of mineral images and showed his encyclopedic knowledge. Furthermore the image of minerals frequently appears in Shibusawa’s late novels. The stories about petrifaction, mummification, and the undecomposed bodies of Buddhist monks recur in Shibusawa’s fictions.

⁹ This part is the summary of Shibusawa’s idea based on v.14, p.309-323.
Shibusawa was not content with the recurring shapes in nature and expanded his inquiry to the world of the imagination. He argued that recurring shapes are also embedded in the construction and center of ideas in some literary works. The two patterns he demonstrated in his essays are: the concentric circle structure and toroid structure. The concentric circle refers to a nested structure, which is a set of similar objects of graduated sizes fitting inside one another. Shibusawa argued that this structure is applied in many literary works. One of the variations Shibusawa was fascinated by was the confusion of dream and reality in certain literary works. In the story of “Zhuangzhou's Dream of a Butterfly,”\(^\text{10}\) when Zhuangzhou woke up from the dream, he did not know if he was in a dream or in the real world. Had he dreamed of changing into a butterfly, or had a butterfly dreamed of changing into him, and his dream a dream in the butterfly’s dream? Here, Shibusawa was fascinated with the overlapping of dream and reality: you wake up from a dream, and it is at the point that you are no longer inside the circle of the dream that you realize it is a dream. However, you are still not sure if you are in the circle of reality, or just in a bigger wider circle of another dream which contains the former one. This pattern reiterates forever. Therefore dream and reality are like graduated sized boxes fitting together. Shibusawa introduced other stories containing this concentric structure such as "Dream of

\(\text{10}\) A story in the chapter “On the Equality of All Things” in a Chinese Daoism classic The Book of Master Zhuang. According to this story, Zhuangzhou dreamed of changing into a butterfly, and fluttering about, even forgot that he was Zhuang Zhou; but when he woke up, he felt he was Zhuang Zhou again. Then he wondered which was true, Zhuang Zhou dreaming of changing into a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming of changing into Zhuang Zhou.
Nanke,” Ueda Akihira’s work “The Carp That Came to My Dream”, Franz Kafka’s novels, Jorge Luis Borges’ stories and so on. Shibusawa was enthusiastic about playing with the image of concentric structure and created this structure in his novels.

This concentric structure also connects with another recurring shape—the toroid structure. Shibusawa introduced “The Mummy” written by Nakajima Atsushi as typical of this structure. In this story, in a stone chamber, the main character realizes the mummy there was his own preexistence. He suddenly remembers a similar scene that occurred in this previous life, his preexistence standing in front of a mummy, which is the preexistence of his preexistence. When he looked back to all his existences, this scene reiterates again and again. Shibusawa argued that the pattern in this story is a toroid structure. He wrote, “All the origins are nothing but the results of the results of themselves” (v.14, p.394). Shibusawa also cited such stories as Gustave Flaubert’s *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* (1874) as an example of toroid structure. In this story, a group of birds sets out to find the feather the king of birds left behind. After the trials of a long and arduous journey, only thirty birds arrive at the place, and they find that the king in the tale was none other than themselves. At this point, the journey of searching for the deity is the same as the search for the hidden atman. In these stories, the origin and the result are in an antinomic condition and form the toroid structure. This pattern also appears in Shibusawa’s later novels.

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11 In this story by the Tang writer Li Gongzuo, the main character Chunyu Fen entered the Kingdom of Dahuai’an, where he served as the magistrate of Nanke Prefecture. For 20 years he enjoyed great fortune and wealth, but then he awoke to find what had happened was just a dream, which only took him several minutes.
In sum, Shibusawa visualized his subjects as geometric forms and expanded these images as mysterious recurring shapes in nature and literature. Shibusawa’s visualization of his subjects indicates two directions in Shibusawa’s later career. First, Shibusawa has revived interest in the mysteries of nature and natural history and started to create his encyclopedic works concerning zoology, mineralogy and botany. Second, Shibusawa began creating novels. He started to play with these images and patterns and created stories containing these recurring shapes.

**Encyclopedic: The Utopian Territory of Shibusawa**

Shibusawa was not the only person in Japan who was interested in the dark Eros, exoticism, and mystery in his time. However, he was one of the few people who had the encyclopedic knowledge to combine this aesthetic and build up an imaginary world that was not familiar to the masses. As a scion of the Shibusawa clan, he took advantage of his highly privileged background and grew up as a liberal and cultured person. In addition, his acquaintance with French and English helped him to get first-hand materials about the grotesque and strange. In our contemporary communication society, people can easily get all kinds of information with the help of computer and Internet. However, at the time, without this communication technology, Shibusawa’s encyclopedic knowledge was valued a great deal, and he became the spokesperson for a sub-culture that was fascinated by mystery and sensual beauty.

In the later part of his career, he started to use his encyclopedic knowledge to build up a utopia in an imaginary world. His essay collections that might be termed
“encycledic” are: Gensō hakubutsushi (The Natural History of Fantasy, 1978), Watashi no Purinius (My Plinius, 1986), and Furōra shōyō (Wandering among the Flowers, 1987). These essay collections are the products of Shibusawa’s interests towards the mysteries of nature and natural history.

When composing these essay collections, he did not value textual research. In My Plinius, he wrote: “The way of reading Plinius is to not read it in a serious manner for the purpose of academic research” (v.21, p.183). Further, he wrote, “I will not expound on such grand topics as textual research. It might be appropriate to say that my interest towards Plinius’ encyclopedia is to explain his trick of arranging and relating a bunch of nonsense” (v.21, p.192). On the other hand, he claimed that he took seriously his effort to write his own encyclopedic collection. He believed in the utopia he built up. He wrote: “I am not interested in a scientific discourse on botanical properties of flowers; rather, the subject I want to take up is rather my ideology, the ideology I live for, the ideological world I live for” (v.16, p.421).

Based on this idea, Shibusawa collected all kinds of bizarre stories concerning zoology, mineralogy, and botany, and wove them into his encyclopedic essay collections. A close reading of these essay collections might help us to apprehend Shibusawa’s ideal encyclopedia.

My Plinius is the most important encyclopedic work Shibusawa wrote. However, he was forced to cut it short due to bad health. The structure of this encyclopedia is that Shibusawa chooses the themes that fascinated him, then lists and cites paragraphs.

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12 Gaius Plinius Secundus, (23-79) better known as Pliny the Elder, was an ancient author and scientist of some importance who wrote Natural History.
concerning these themes from Plinius’ *Natural History*. Finally, he gives other
background information and his own comments on these citations. He was fascinated
by the nonsensical stories Plinius wrote in *Natural History*. He pointed out that the
pattern of Plinius’ creation of his accounts was to base the first part on the truth, with
the latter half being totally the product of his imagination. Shibusawa wrote: “After
reading one of Plinius’s accounts, I was left wondering if the author himself really
believed this, or whether he was making a fool out of the reader, but nobody knows
the truth. What irresponsibility! This can only be regarded as literature not science”
(v.21, p.199). When dealing with the grotesque and strange in Plinius’ *Natural
History*, he suggested that there was no need for textual research, but rather one
should just enjoy the grotesque. For example, he wrote: “Although in this story there
are a lot of unfamiliar names of Romans, I hope the reader can go on reading without
getting hung up on these names” (v.21, p.300). These comments show how Shibusawa
thought his readers should read these works.

Shibusawa was not looking for the scientific truth about the botany or zoology he
described in his encyclopedic works, but was interested in the symbolic meanings and
images associated with them. In the postscript to *Wandering among the Flowers*, he
wrote: “I am a person, who, by nature, prefers abstraction, not only in the case of
botany, my basic attitude towards everything is conceptual” (v.21, p.419). In this
encyclopedia of flowers, Shibusawa associated the images he was interested in with
the flowers. For instance, instead of the general image of the cherry blossom, which
represents the beautiful yet fleeting and ephemeral nature of life, Shibusawa
associated cherry blossoms with the tales in the Konjaku monogatari (Tales of the Past and Present, 1120), or Kabuki, in which cherry blossoms are associated with a dead body buried under the cherry tree or with the metamorphosis of a fox. He related the cherry blossoms to voluptuousness and bewitching. In the case of sunflowers, Shibusawa was interested in the fact that the image of the sunflower existed before the sunflower was brought to Europe. Although the real sunflower was introduced into Europe in the sixteenth century, the idea of a plant that follows the sun existed centuries before. His introduction of the rose and the passion flower concentrated on the fact of the discovery of the symbolic meanings of things in the natural world. These plants were regarded as the symbols of various ideas in history. In his encyclopedia, Shibusawa was interested in playing with concepts as images: the mysterious, bewitching, decadent, devilish, erotic, and so on. He used these images to form a miniature of his ideal world and visualized his ideal world through them.

The encyclopedic work of Shibusawa is a microcosm of the world he created in his study, a result of his personal interior world’s encounter with mystery and fantasy. Shibusawa later fully developed this microcosm of an imaginary in his last long novel Takaoka Shinnō kōkai (Chronicle of Prince Takaoka’s Journey Overseas, 1987).
CHAPTER 4

CHORNICLE OF PRINCE TAKAOKA’S JOURNEY OVERSEA

Introduction

By the 1980s, Shibusawa knew he did not have long to live. His health was not very good, and it kept declining. He suffered from headaches, throat pain and had to limit his social activities.

He started to collect materials for a work that embodied and gave unity to his life. The result was his one and only long novel, a work titled *Takaoka Shinnō kōkaiki (The Chronicle of Prince Takaoka’s Journey Overseas)*, 1987).

This work of fiction incorporates and expands on his previous writings and interests—the dark Eros that fascinated him in his early years, his fascination with the exotic and mysterious, his encyclopedic categorization of the grotesque and strange, and the geometric forms and minerals that indicate the immortal existence without the constraints of time and space.

In this section, I will introduce this novel and analyze how it represents the broad picture of Shibusawa’s ideas.
Background of the Story

The Chronicle is the story of Prince Takaoka's one-year journey to Tenjiku, the ancient Japanese name for India. Prince Takaoka was a historical person, the third son of Emperor Heizei (774-824), and he was designated a crown prince (shinnō) when Emperor Saga (786-842) came to the throne. However, he was deposed in the so-called Kusuko Disturbance (809-810), when his father's lover Fujiwara Kusuko plotted, but failed, to regain power through reinstalling Heizei as emperor. As a result, Takaoka retired into Buddhism and became a disciple of Kūkai. In 864, he went to China to study esoteric Buddhism. Dissatisfied with Buddhist teachings in China, he decided in 865 to make a sea journey to India. There are no historical documents concerning his life after he left China, and it is thought that he died during his voyage to India.

The principal character, Prince Takaoka, in the novel is based on this historical person, but Shibusawa made up the journey to India from his own imaginings.

Judging from the bibliographical introduction to this novel (v.22, p.568-9), it appears Shibusawa consulted the historical travelogue Zuda Shinnō nittō ryakki (Brief Story of Dhūta Prince's Journey to Tang China), but he changed the characteristics of Prince Takaoka and the motivation for his journey to India. The following is the document source, or travelogue, that describes Takaoka's decision to depart for India:

[貞観六年] [咸通五年] 五月二十一日、長安に至る。春明[門]自り入り、西明寺に安んず。即ち、本国留学の円蔵法師、親王入城の由を奏聞す。[懿宗]皇帝、感嘆す。仰いて[法王]阿闍梨に請求し、難疑を決せ
On the 21st day, Fifth month of the Sixth year of Teikan (or Fifth year of Gentō) (864), Prince Takaoka arrived at Chang’an. He entered from the Chun Ming Gate, and stayed at Ximing Temple. Japanese Buddhist priest Ensaï, who was studying in Tang, China, reported this to the Emperor without delay. Emperor Yi Zong expressed great admiration. Prince Takaoka looked to the Ajari for advice on difficult questions concerning Buddhism. However, six months passed, and Ajari was not able to illuminate the Prince’s search for the truth of Buddhism. Because of this, Prince Takaoka presented, through monk Ensaï, a memorial to the Tang Emperor to gain permission to go to India. Emperor Yi Zong approved and gave credentials to Prince Takaoka.

On the 27th day, First month, Seventh year of Teikan (865), Takaoka with Antei, Enkaku and Akimaru set off towards the west (v.22, p.568).

In the following passage we see how Shibusawa transformed this brief historical notation:

ここでおどろくべきは、五月に長安に入城したばかりの親王が休むひまなく、その年の夏か秋に、ただそのに円載をして渡天の手づきを執らしてゐることであろう。どうやから最初から親王の真の目標は天竺にあり、諸国行脚も入唐も、洛陽も長安も、そこに到達するための単なる布石にすぎなかったのではないかという気がしてくる。洛陽や長安で、かの地の高僧を相手に何度も問答をかさねて末、どうしても解くことができなかった仏法の真理を求めて、やむなく天竺へわたることを決意したというのは、とうやあるまい。そんな悠長な話ではなく、単刀直入に、ぶっつけ本番に、親王は長安に入城するとすぐ、天竺へわたり手ざくを求めていたのだ。広州に着いてみると、あたかもよし、風は東北モンスーンの最終季節にあたっていたので、親王の一一行はここで稽留すべからずと、ただちに南へ向う便船に乗りこんだ。それが貞観七年正月二十七日のことである (p.29-30).

13 All references to the text of Takaoka Shinnō kōkaiki are from volume22 in the Shibusawa Tatsuhiko zenshū (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1995).
14 Yi Zong (833-873, was on the throne from 859-873): The seventeenth emperor of Tang Dynasty.
15 Ajari (āchārya) the title for high rank monk in Esoteric Buddhism.
What surprised everyone is that Prince Takaoka spared no time to rest and had Monk Ensai go through the formalities to go to India in the summer or autumn, soon after he arrived in Chang’an in spring. This gives the impression that, from the very beginning, Prince Takaoka’s real goal was India. His pilgrimage, his going to Luoyang and Chang’an, were all just preparatory steps for reaching the final goal India. Surely the truth is not that Prince Takaoka exchanged questions and answers with priests of high virtue in Luoyang and Xi’an, and consequently made up his mind to go to India in order to look for the truth of unresolved teachings. Things were not so leisurely or complicated; rather, immediately after Prince Takaoka arrived in Chang’an, he acted without hesitation and began to look for ways to go to India... When Prince Takaoka’s party arrived in Guangzhou, it was the last of the year’s opportune time to travel south, when the monsoon blew from the northeast; they did not delay, got on board, and headed south. It was the 27th Day, First Month, Seventh year of Teikan (865) (p.29-30).

If we compare the original historical travelogue and the paragraph from this novel, it is clear the main date and events are the same, but Shibusawa changes the details and gives a different interpretation of the events. For example, he changes the date when Prince Takaoka presents the memorial to the Tang Emperor to gain permission to go to India. In the original historical travelogue, Prince Takaoka presents the memorial six months after his arrival in Chang’an. In the novel, he presents it as soon as he arrives in Chang’an. The changing of this historical fact is to emphasize that Prince Takaoka’s journey is not to seek the truth of Buddhism, but to satisfy his curiosity concerning unknown worlds and exotic elements in Buddhism. With this assumption, Shibusawa is able to create a story of exotic worlds. The treatment of this passage suggests two things: Shibusawa has an encyclopedic knowledge. He searched through historical records before writing this novel. Second, he is not always faithful to the historical record, and always plays with the historical materials. There are many
other similar examples in this novel. Because the Chronicle is a novel full of 
encyclopedic knowledge, Shibusawa plays with geographic, historical, botanical and 
biological facts, and changes the meaning of the original source to suit his novelistic 
purposes.

From the previous argument and information, one of the most important 
techniques Shibusawa uses in his novel is clear. Based on his encyclopedic knowledge, 
he chooses various stories in history or the literary world and uses his imagination to 
revise them and give them new interpretations.

Outline of the Plot

Since nothing is known of Takaoka’s fate after he left Chang’an in 864, 
Shibusawa is making up Takaoka’s one-year journey to India. He has Takaoka travel 
from Guangzhou to Champa, an ancient country that existed in the Indochina 
Peninsula, to Shinrō, the old Chinese name for Cambodia, and Banban, an ancient 
country existing in the Malay Peninsula, then to the Andaman Island, to Yunan, China, 
to Bengal Gulf, and to Śrī-Vijaya, an ancient country that existed in Sumatra from 
seventh to fourteenth century.

The world in Prince Takaoka’s journey is bizarre. During his one-year journey to 
India, Prince Takaoka travels to several locations in Southeast Asia. He does not reach 
his goal, India, at the end of the novel. Instead he dies in Singapore. But he finds an 
alternative, and distinctly Buddhist, means of accomplishing his goal—namely, he lets
himself be eaten by a tiger that is traveling between Singapore and India. Thus, according to Shibusawa, the Prince manages to arrive in India in spite of his physical death.

Shibusawa’s description of the geography of Takaoka’s imaginary journey is faithful to what we know about ancient Southeast Asia from historical sources. However, the events that Takaoka and his attendants experience are fantastic and wholly fictional. Shibusawa created a fantasy world mainly based on his imagination, and the story he describes is highly unpredictable. Readers have no clue as to what will happen next, and we are fascinated by the exotic nature of the regions he describes.

Shibusawa displays his encyclopedic knowledge and incredible imagination by creating an exotic world in this novel. For example, it begins with the story of Jugon, an imaginary creature that has the features of a mermaid and a dugong. There are also many other mysterious animals in the novel: there is the ant eater, which is supposed to have been discovered in America six hundred years later; a baku, a tapir-like creature that can eat people’s dreams; kentōjin, a creature that has the head of a dog and body of a human being. Besides zoology, Shibusawa is also interested in botany. In this novel, he describes nature in the tropics with all kinds of bizarre plants. For example, there is a bokuchiku, a giant bamboo originating in Yunnan; or, the carnivorous flowers that help to keep the bodies of the dead fresh. In addition to the natural world, Shibusawa describes an exotic artificial world to his readers. We travel to Champa to see the custom of drinking through the nose. Then, we see the
unbelievable scene of an anthill, resembling a prehistoric site, which is embedded with a mysterious emerald. We also see a ringa, a cylinder stone with round face carved in the middle that represents a male sex symbol in the jungle. As an overseas journey, the novel also includes many adventure stories of Prince Takaoka: he leaves his party and travels with a Chinese to the King of Shinran's imperial harem and meets chinkaran, the king’s concubines, who have heads and upper bodies of women and tails of birds covered by colorful feathers; he goes to the desert by himself to poach mitsujin, a mummy-like creature that is a cure-all medicine; he also has the horrific experience of being attacked by a phantom corsair. In order to protect the beautiful pearl from the corsairs, he swallows the pearl, which sticks in his throat and later causes his death. The following two passages from the novel illustrate Shibusawa’s power of imagination and the fascinating world he describes in the novel.

Prince Takaoka’s party went 4 kilometers, and suddenly the range of vision broadened. They were all astonished and stood there dumbstruck when they saw the towering anthill. It was the first time any of them had seen such a mysterious thing. It is hard to describe. The shape looked like a pinecone but was enlarged to an incredible size. It breaks up through the ground, standing
tall and upright in the air. Seeing the awesome height of the anthill, it is hard to believe that this was built up by insects. It has the magnificence of ruins of a local ancient civilization (p.40).

この鬱囲の中でも、猿囲はもっとも奥まった枢要な一つにあった。いまさら説明するまでもあまるが、ここに飼われている動物はマライ半島に産する猿であり、親王と秋丸が二日前にたまたま目撃したのも同じ動物である。古書によれば象の鼻、犀の目、牛の尾、虎の足をそなえ、よく銅鉄や竹を食うというが、少なくとも親王と秋丸が目にしたかぎりでは、それほど化け物じみたところは見あたらず、かなり不恰好であるとはいい、むしろ正常な哺乳類の一族であるように見えたものであった。しかし猿は見かけによらず気難しく贅沢好きな動物であるらしく、檻の中の猿舎は煉瓦造りでひとときわ豪奢をきわめ、猿舎の隣りには専属の番人の小屋があって、つねに神経質な動物の要求を怠りなくあられこれと満たしてやらねばならないおうであった。」「あれは猿の食った夢のかすだよ。」「え、夢のかす。」「そう、猿は人間の見る夢を食う。それ以外のものは一切食わない。だから猿の飼育は非常な困難を伴うのだ。」「きょうの夢もだいぶきいな。このごろでは、かわいそうに、わるい夢ばかり食われているものと見える。よい夢を食った夜のあくる朝なんては、こちらが陶然とするほどの」(p.78).

The garden of baku was in the most secluded part of the park. There is no need to explain that the animal raised here was baku from the Malaysian Peninsula. This is the same animal Prince Takaoka and Akimaru had seen two days before. According to some old book, it is an animal that has the nose of an elephant, eyes of a rhinoceros, tail of an ox, and the feet of a tiger, and it eats copper, iron, or bamboo. However, from what Prince Takaoka and Akimaru had seen, the baku did not appear so monstrous. Although it was strangely shaped, it seemed a normal mammal. However, despite its appearance, the baku is a fussy and extravagant animal. The house for baku in the garden is built of brick and is especially luxurious. There is a hut for the guards of baku, and the guards must satisfy the demands of this extremely sensitive animal without delay… "Oh, those are the dregs of the dreams eaten by baku." "Eh? The dreg of dreams?" "Yes, the baku eats people’s dreams. They don’t eat anything else. Therefore, it is very difficult to raise baku." "Today’s dregs are very odorous. These days, what a pity, they only get bad dreams to eat. The morning after they have eaten good dreams, they defecate strongly fragrant dregs that are pleasant, however, when they eat bad dreams, the result is completely different thing!" (p.78).
Prince Takaoka

Prince Takaoka is a man of marked individuality. He is a man full of curiosity, a dreamer, and, at the same time, an adventurer.

The first and most unique characteristic is his curiosity. He undertook his journey to India when he was in his sixties. However, the motivation that drove him on this journey was his curiosity about unknown worlds, which he possessed since his childhood, and the attraction of *michi no sekai* (unknown realms) is repeatedly emphasized in the novel. Rather than the sacred land of Buddhism, it is the image of India in Prince Takaoka’s mind as an inverse world, which has bewitching power and seductive charm. He first heard the name of India from his father’s lover Fujiwara Kusuko when he was seven years old. Kusuko herself is presented as an exotic, seductive temptress. She tells the young prince,

“そう、お釈迦さまのお生まれになった国よ。天竺にはね、わたしたちの見たこともないような鳥けものが野山をはね回り、めずらしい草木や花が庭をいろどっているのよ。そして空には天人が飛んでいるのよ。そればかりでないわ。天竺では、なにもかもがわたしたちの世界とは反対なの。私たちの昼は天竺の夜。わたしたちの夏は天竺の冬” (p.23).

“It is the country where Shakyamuni was born. In India, there are many birds and beasts that we have never seen frolic in the hills and fields. There are also rare plants and flowers that color gardens. And there are angels flying in the sky. Moreover, in India, everything is reversed. Our daytime is India’s night; our summer is India’s winter” (p.23).

Shibusawa connects the image of India with the image of Kusuko, and he emphasizes that the goal of Prince Takaoka’s journey to India was “merely curiosity
towards an unknown world” (p.75). Princess Takaoka was always interested in what was exotic about the world around him. And this interest extended to flora and fauna, and how they are different from those found in Japan.

めいるがちな気をひきたせるために、親王はあるきながら、道ばたにはえている草花や、その草花にとまっている虫を一緒に示して、それらがいかに日本で見慣れているそれとちがった種類のものであるかを観察させた。本草学にくわしい円覚がすすみ出て、いちいちこれに説釈をつけた (p.68).

In order to lighten the gloomy atmosphere, Prince Takaoka pointed out the plants and flowers on the roadside and the insects perched on the plants and flowers to his attendants as they walked. He made them realize how different things were from what they were used to see in Japan. Enkaku, who knew herbs very well, came forward and taught them the names and properties of the plants they passed (p.68).

Instead of a journey full of trials like The Iliad or Odyssey, or a journey of introspection leading to a religious awakening as in Pilgrim’s Progress, this journey of Prince Takaoka is an exploration of an exotic world filled with various imaginary and unexpected creatures, customs, and manners.

There are many scenes describing Prince Takaoka’s curiosity concerning the exotic world of Southeast Asia. The following is an example that describes his initial reaction to the ringa.

舟がすすむほどに、最初はごくまばらであった岸の植物もだんだんに密にはびこって、棕櫚や槟榔樹や榕樹の気根や、さては奇怪にねじくれた蔓性植物などの繁茂をみせるまでになった。唐人の摺さばきは意外に急ピッチで、きづかぬうちにおそぶん遠くまできていたらし。陽のあたった掘割の石の上に、一匹のとかげが背中を金色に光らせて、オブジェのようにじっと動かずにいるのを親王は見た。また、ガラスのように透明な蝶がゆっくり
りと羽ばたいて、水面すれすれに飛んでゆくのを見た。五色の鶴鶴が手のとどきそうな低い枝にとまって、人間そっくりの声でおめくの見た。すべて日本ではみたこともないような珍奇なものがあったので、親王の好奇心心はそれだけでも大いに満足させられた。しかし親王の好奇心心をもっとも強くひきつけたのは、これら自然のもよりもじろ人工のものだった。密林を切り開いて、やや広くした岸の一隅の、茂った羊歯の葉がくれに、稚拙な丸い顔のついた石造りの円筒が立っているの見で、親王っぱんなだろうと思った。そう思って見ていると、同じような円筒が一つだけではなく、一定の間隔を置いて、いくつも立っているのに気がつく。おそらく何らかの祭祀の対象であろう。てっぺんが丸い円筒で、その中ほどから丸い顔が飛び出している。唐土にあっても、ついぞ見たことのない異なるのだった（p.48).

As the boat proceeded, the vegetation on the shores, sparse at first, became thicker and more verdant. Takaoka watched the passing overgrowth of palm trees, areca palms, banyan trees and other kinds of strangely twisted liane. The Chinese increased the pace of his earing, and, before they realized it, they already passed a long distance. Prince Takaoka saw a lizard as still as an inanimate object, sitting on a stone glittering in sun. They had traveled quite a distance. A butterfly, as pellucid as glass, fluttered, skimming over the surface of water. A five-colored parrot perched on a low branch within easy reach was yelling like a human being. These wonders of nature did not exist in Japan and thus fascinated Prince Takaoka. However, what attracted Takaoka even more were the manmade things. Cutting their way through the jungle, hidden among the leaves of the thick pteridophytes, they came upon stone cylinders with crude round faces carved on them. Prince Takaoka wondered what the cylinders were for when he noticed there were numerous such cylinders spaced at regular intervals. He concluded they were probably the objects of some sort of religious ritual. A round face protruded from the cylinder. It was a grotesque thing the likes of which was not to be found even in China (p.48).

Moreover, a connection is drawn and developed between Prince Takaoka as a person who delights in the imaginary and the personality of a dreamer. His experience of visiting the imperial harem of the King of Shinrô in Chapter Two, and offering his dream as food to the baku animal in Chapter Three, are examples of this linkage.

Prince Takaoka and his attendants go to the country of Banban, and they are forced to
stay there because the symbolic animal of the country, the *baku*, feeds on human
dreams, and Prince Takaoka is an especially good dreamer. We are told that “He had
been good at dreaming since his childhood; and he felt proud that all his dreams were
cheerful” (p. 82).

The place where the *baku* live has a concentric circle structure, and the bedroom
for people who offer dreams to the animal is at the center of the circles and
surrounded by the living space of the *baku*. The bedroom has several little windows,
and the people inside it can see the *baku* walking around the outside corridor. The
*baku* can see the people inside, and when they eat peoples’ dreams, they do not need
to actually touch the person. It is enough to simply suck the dreams out of the minds
of the sleepers. Shibusawa describes a fantastic and eerie scene: whenever Prince
Takaoka has a dream, the *baku* eat it. Then the Princess of Banban, Patariya Patata,
eats the *baku* to cure her illness. Forced to lose his memory of the dreams that he
dreamed, Prince Takaoka grows increasingly more neurotic, fatigued, and physically
weak. Finally he dreams a nightmare: Kusuko is trying to kill his father Emperor
Heizei. He tries to warn his father but fails, and Kusuko notices him and glares at him
with a cruel gaze. Later, Princess Patariya Patata eats the meat of *baku* and recovers.
She comes to the garden of *baku* and plays with the surviving *baku*. While Takaoka is
looking at this scene, the image of Princess Patariya Patata overlaps with the cruel
image of Kusuko in his nightmare, and an image of himself overlaps with the image
of the *baku* that are being toyed with by Princess Patariya Patata. Suddenly, The
Prince wakes up.
In sum, Chapter Three is a story centered on a dream, and it demonstrates Shibusawa’s ability to visualize and articulate the image of what is his favorite recurring geometric structure previously discussed. Prince Takaoka dreams a dream. The *baku* feast on his dream, and Princess Patariya Patata lives on the meat of *baku*. In the end, it all turns out to be part of a dream on Prince Takaoka’s part. The sequence of events focuses the structure of concentrated circle. At the same time the toroid structure is also described. Therefore, Shibusawa succeeded in visualizing in prose his favorite geometric shapes that are described in his early essay collections like *The Heraldry of Thought*.

Meanwhile, Chapter Four, “The Honey Men” (*Mitsujin*), tells the story of Prince Takaoka’s mummy hunting in the desert, another of Prince Takaoka’s great adventures. He and his attendants depart from Banban and head for India. However, they encounter a strange wind and are blown off course to a country called Arakan on the Bengal Sea. Because it was hard to find a ship going to India in Arakan, Takaoka’s party had to travel in the ship of an Arabian merchant. As remuneration for taking them to India, the merchant asked them to hunt for “the Honey Men”, or the mummified corpses of yoga monks. This was an extremely risky venture because the mummies can only be found in the vast expanse of a desert. The desert is an unbearably hot place that produces many deceptive and dangerous mirages.

うむ。問題はそこなのだよ。なにしろ砂原は炎熱が照り付けているし、はげしき風がふきささんでいるから、とても人間があるて行われるような場所ではない。そこへ行くには箇をもって全身限なくおおって、顔や手足
Er, the problem lies here. Because the desert is under the burning sun, and the strong wind blows violently, people can hardly walk through it. When one goes there, he/she must use a straw rain-cape to cover the whole body and prevent the sand from blowing against face, hands, and feet. One rides on a dugout canoe with wheels and two-meter high sail, harnessing the power of the wind, and one rapidly pedal the wheels with both feet. Merely doing this will take a lot of energy. Soon, when you arrive in the center of the desert, you can see the honey men lying about on the ground here and there. How should one pick up the honey men? There is a secret. You should use a bear paw-shape tool to catch the honey men and drag them through the desert. Never get down from the dugout canoe. If you get down from it, you will be dazzled by the blazing heat and never be able to get on the canoe again. Therefore, if you fail to pick up some honey men, you will become a honey man yourself (p.101).

Even after hearing all the difficulties involved in mummy hunting, Prince Takaoka does not hesitate. He is fascinated by this task, and he insists on going to the desert by himself, though he is the oldest one in his group. He says: “Nevertheless it does not matter. When one dies, then everything is complete. For me, as a trial of my faith, I will travel to the desert beyond the mountain and look upon the dried out honey men scattered about there. Observing these unclean things will enable me to meditate on the transient nature of existence” (p.105).

Thus we see that from the first to the fourth chapter of the novel Shibusawa depicts exotic worlds, and Prince Takaoka is portrayed as a man full of curiosity, a dreamer, and an adventurer. But, starting from the fifth chapter, the Mirror Lake, to
the seventh and last chapter, *Binga* (Kalavińka), the theme of the novel changes from the depiction of the exotic world to the realization of death and the interpretation of its meaning. This theme actually parallels Shibusawa’s realization of his own impending death due to throat cancer. From January to February of 1986, Shibusawa was hospitalized because of throat pain, and in September his illness was diagnosed as cancer of the hypopharynx. Chapters Six and Seven were written after he learned of the diagnosis. Shibusawa realized that he would die soon, and in an essay he writes about his experience in the hospital:

私が咽頭に腫瘍を生じたのは、美しい珠を呑み込んでしまったためで、珠がのどにつかえているから、声が出なくなってしまったという見立てである。そこで呑珠庵。あるいは呑珠亡声居士かもしれない。私は子どものころ、あやまって父親の金のカフスボタンを呑み込んでしまったことがあるので、この見立てはますます自分の気に入った。あのスペインの放蕩児ドン・ジュアンに音が似ているところも、わるくないと思った（p.274).

The swelling in my throat is caused by a beautiful pearl I swallowed. Since the pearl is stuck in my throat, I cannot make a sound. Therefore I call myself “donjuan” (pearl-swallowing hermit), or “donju-bōsei-kyosi” (retired scholar of swallowing a pearl and losing voice). When I was a child, I once swallowed my father’s golden cuff button by mistake. Therefore calling myself “donjuan” seems appropriate to my nature. Also, the pronunciation of “donjuan” is similar to the Spain debauchee Don Juan. I think this is also not bad at all (p.274).16

Shibusawa was fascinated by the idea that his sickness was like a pearl, and that his suffering came from a beautiful pearl caught in his throat. Shibusawa incorporates the idea into the novel, and uses the main character Prince Takaoka to embody it. He creates a scene in which Takaoka swallows the pearl in order to protect it from a

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16 This paragraph is from “Toshin no byōin nite genkaku o mitarukoto (The hallucinatory I saw in a hospital in downtown Tokyo),” in vol. 22 of *Shibusawa Tatuhiko zenshu* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1995), p.594.
phantom pirate. It is this pearl that finally brings on the death of Prince. At the same,
this image of the fatal pearl is also linked to the episodes earlier in this novel in which
Kusuko, the temptress who seduces Takaoka and his father, throws a pearl (tama)
from Japan toward India, thereby awakening Takaoka’s fascination with the unknown
and exotic.

Moreover, in Chapter Six, “The Pearl” (shinju), Shibusawa enthusiastically
argues for a relationship between sickness and beauty, thereby linking his own fate to
the fate of Prince Takaoka.

In short, for the oyster, pearl is nothing but an illness. The pearl is a foreign body,
beautiful though it may be, that is disgorged by the oyster. I am not sure if it is
beautiful because it is an illness, or since it is beautiful, it must be an illness. But I
am sure that there is some connection between beauty and illness (p.153).

Shibusawa had always been interested in dark and exotic beauty, and here he
incorporates his aesthetic of dark beauty. In fact, he goes further and argues that the
pearl is the symbol of beauty, and beauty cannot occur without the sickness.
In my view, the beauty of Prince’s heart and the beauty of the pearl are the same thing. One cannot discriminate between beautiful things. Even if beauty is caused by illness, it is beauty. In regards to the Prince’s supreme love of pearls, perhaps I should not say so, but isn’t it a kind of mental illness? If that is the case, the pearl and Prince’s mind are both products of this world. Therefore, they are similar. I do not want to interpret the old maxim, “Beauty cannot be created without illness,” only from a negative perspective (p.155).

Finally, Shibusawa connects the pearl to Prince Takaoka’s death. On a journey across the sea, Takaoka’s party meets the phantom pirate. In order to protect the pearl, Prince Takaoka swallows it. Prince Takaoka then realizes that, since he chose the pearl, he cannot run away from the fate of death. At the same time, he is excited by the idea that he can foresee his death and die with the beauty of the pearl in his throat.

What causes your death is this pearl. But, it is so beautiful. If you choose the beautiful pearl, you cannot avoid death. If you avoid death, you must give up the beautiful pearl. Now, what is your decision? Of course, you are free to choose either one (p.190).

Because the pearl causes a precipitous decline in his health, Prince Takaoka is not able to reach his goal of getting to India at the end of the novel. However, he argued that: “Die after I arrive in India, or arrive in India after my death, the result is almost
the same” (p.128). He chooses an imaginative and alternative means to go to India. He lets himself be eaten by a tiger, and lets the tiger carry his body to India. The novel ends with this occult and grotesque scene. Thus we find that Shibusawa incorporates and argues for his ideal dark and mysterious beauty, which contains the absolute priority of sensation and is based on exotic, frightening but fascinating ideas in these final chapters.

Subplots: Kusuko, Petrifications, and Minerals

In addition to the adventures of the main character, there are also several subplots, namely, the story of Kusuko, the lover of Prince Takaoka’s father Heizei; the topic of mummification, which is described in several ways—chikaran, mitsuji, Monk Kūkai’s dead body after his enlightenment, and the custom of mummification with the help of carnivorous flowers; there is also the repeated use of mineral imagery—the little shiny object thrown to India by Kusuko, the emerald in the anthill, and finally the pearl, which we have already discussed.

In combining these various subplots, Shibusawa successfully creates a unified utopia of his fantasy. Without all them, the story of Prince Takaoka’s journey will only be limited to an encyclopedic listing of the grotesque and strange. The subplots help to tie the novel together and make it consistent. They appear throughout the novel and to link the pieces of the exotic stories together. Furthermore, they reflect specific aspects of Shibusawa’s personal interests. All in all, they create the atmosphere of the
erotic and mysterious; and they make visual Shibusawa’s ideal utopia, a fantasy world unfettered by the constraints of time and space.

Kusuko

Kusuko is the symbol of an unknown but attractive world in the novel. Prince Takaoka’s journey to India is a search for the mysterious and unknown driven by the motive of his curiosity. The recurring pattern of Kusuko and her description of India determines the mood of the novel and work as a thread to connect the whole story.

Fujiwara no Kusuko (? ~ 810) was an actual historical figure in Japanese history. She was famous because for her prohibited love affair with the Crown Prince Ate no Miko, who was her son-in-low and later became Emperor Heizei. Another remarkable affair was Kusuko no hen. In 809, Kusuko tried to restore the dethroned emperor Heizei, but failed and committed suicide. Her life is a colorful one, filled with intrigue, eroticism, and mystery, elements that are ideally suited to Shibusawa’s aesthetic.

The novel emphasizes Kusuko’s mysterious youth and beauty, as well as her identity as a specialist of medical potions and poisons. There are two distinct images of Kusuko: the terrifying and the fascinating. In the beginning of the novel,

Shibusawa uses historical information to describe her as follows:

しかし薬子には年齢がないのごとくで、旧にかわらず、あやしいまで艶なる容色をいまに保っている。それは江戸の薬物学や房中術にすぎる薬盡があり、ひそかに丹ののんで若返りの秘法を行っているのではないかというもっぱらの噂であった。。。薬子とは、本来は一般名詞で、女中における毒害役の側近のことであるが、これが従者の名前になったところに、おそらく薬子

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However, it seems that Kusuko never grows older; she keeps her incredibly voluptuous looks as before. As her name Kusuko (child of medicine) suggests, she was thoroughly schooled in medicine and the secret erotic arts of the bed chamber, both of which came from China. She imbibes secret medicines and cultivates herself to restore her youth..."Kusuko" as a regular noun also signifies the intimate attendant of the Imperial Court, the person who acted as a taster of the food for poison. When used as a person’s name, this indicates the person must have some connection with the original meaning of taster. It was under Emperor Heizei when Daidōruijūhō,17 a 100 volume encyclopedia of medical herbs and poisons, was compiled. Few people know the study of medication and poison was indispensable in the fight for power during this period. Kusuko is a name symbolic of an era (p.22).

The story of the relation between Prince Takaoka and Kusuko is fictional, however.

Prince Takaoka first went numb with delight on hearing the name “India” when he was seven or eight. It was none other than Kusuko, his father’s favorite

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17 The oldest medical book compiled by Abeno Masao and Izumo Hirosada, accomplished in 808.
concubine who whispered the name, like an aphrodisiac, in his ear every
night...Kusuko suddenly stood up, brought some shiny thing from the closet
close to her pillow, threw it into the dark yard, and chanted: “There! Fly away to
India.” ... The figure of Kusuko on that night, a feminine figure standing on
matting, bathed in the moonlight, and throwing a little shining thing towards the
yard, like a shadow picture, was burnt into Takaoka’s memory and never faded.
Since Prince Takaoka never knew what the little shining thing was, the image in
his mind gave it a mysterious light forever. With the passage of time, it became
polished like jewelry (p.21-25).

The image of India, and the bewitching night with Kusuko, are lodged in Prince
Takaoka’s mind forever. Moreover, his experience with Kusuko endows Prince
Takaoka’s journey with terrifying but fascinating, eroticism and mystery.

This mood is expanded upon during the journey. On one hand, Shibusawa
describes the Prince’s nostalgia for Kusuko. The Prince continually revisits the sweet
memory of his childhood that Kusuko represents, and he imitates Kusuko’s action of
throwing a stone towards India several times—such as when he sees the mysterious
emerald with a bird inside embedded in an anthill. It reminds him of the object that
Kusuko once threw in the direction of India. His nostalgia for Kusuko overcomes
boundaries of time and space, and it gives the story an ethereal atmosphere.

親王は誘惑とたたかった。いっぽうでは、鳥が石の中から飛び立つのが見た
たいという気持ちもないわけではなかった。しかし他方では、鳥を石の中に封
じこめたまま、ふたたび甘美な過去の時間にひたってみたいという気持ち
も強くあった。すなわち石を日本へ投げて時間を逆転させれば、懐かしい
葉子に会えるのではないかという方が一の期待である (p.42).

Prince Takaoka fought with the temptation. On one hand, he wanted to see the
bird fly out from the stone. On the other hand, he wanted to shut the bird in the
stone, and indulge in the sweet time of the past. If he threw the stone back to
Japan and reversed the flow of time, there was the chance he could once again meet Kusuko, whom he yearned to see again (p.42).

Prince Takaoka held the stone tightly, suddenly he held his hand high over his head and made a motion as if to throw it far away. He repeated this action several times, and intoned “fly away to India” (p.187).

On the other hand, as a specialist in poisons and the manipulator behind the Kusuko Disturbance, Kusuko is also a powerful and terrifying woman. This aspect of her personality is described in several of the unusual nightmares that Prince Takaoka sees. In one of them, Kusuko is trying to kill his father Emperor Heizei. In another, she speaks to him in a sarcastic tone and compels Prince Takaoka to choose between avoiding death or dying with the beautiful pearl. Via these scenes, Shibusawa creates an unsettled atmosphere in the novel. In short, by describing these two aspects of Kusuko, he creates a dark and mysterious beauty and sets the basic mood for the novel.

In addition, the story of Kusuko determines how the plot of the novel will develop. It works as a main thread, and Shibusawa indicates that other characters such as Princess Patariya Patata, Akimaru, and Harumaru are all reincarnations of Kusuko. By associating the images of other characters with the image of Kusuko, the stories about these characters are connected.
Petrifications and minerals

As stated in the introduction, Shibusawa began to write this novel when he knew he would die soon. Facing his own death, he wanted to create a fantasy not bound by the constraints of time and history. He had always dreamed of it, and to create this world, he tried to visualize the themes that always interested him—namely, minerals and petrifaction of the body. As a result, minerals and petrifaction are important motifs in the novel.

Petrifaction, which makes the existence of the human body immortal, in Shibusawa’s view, is an ideal way to achieve the goal of escaping the inevitable grip of death. Thus, we find Shibusawa enthusiastically engaged in creating stories about petrifaction in the novel. Princess Patariya Patata is turned into a mummy after she gives a birth to a child, and Chinkaran are the mummified bodies of the King of Shinran’s concubines. As a matter of fact, the characters in the novel praise and look forward to mummification. Princess Patariya Patata is fascinated by the idea of keeping her beauty in the prime of her youth and wishes to be the youngest of the mummified princesses. In the kingdom in Shinran, Chikaran are regarded as the most beautiful women. What Shibusawa is emphasizing here is that, with mummification, beauty lasts forever.

Shibusawa also visualized other types of mummification. There are the Mitsujin in the desert, as well as the Monk Kūkai’s petrified body after he achieves enlightenment. All of these descriptions help to reinforce Shibusawa’s attitude toward

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death: petrifaction to achieve immortality means, enjoying an existence without purpose and gaining freedom from the constraints of time and space.

Paralleling the image of petrifaction are the images he describes about minerals: There is the stone that Kusuko throws towards India, the emerald embedded in an anthill, and the pearl swallowed by Prince Takaoka that foreshadows his death. These minerals substances appear several times and give the novel an imagistic unity.

Although the pearl in the novel is the symbol of beauty, at the same time, it is a sign of sickness in the case of an oyster, and it is the cause of Prince Takaoka’s death. Using the image of pearl, Shibusawa argues for a deep and abiding relationship between beauty, sickness and death. These images are related to Shibusawa’s ideal shadowy aesthetic: he consistently argues for the absolute priority of sensation and beauty, and he believes beauty is rooted and deeply connected with darkness and death.

Shibusawa’s Ideal of a Purposeless Existence and Child-like Play

The sequences in which the episodes in the novel unfold are not necessarily systematic. Shibusawa intentionally broke with the chronological and linear ordering of time, history, and space to display his encyclopedic knowledge, his active imagination, and to shock the readers. His underlying intent is to illustrate the pleasures of a purposeless existence and child-like amusement in play.

When asked why he wants to go to India, Prince Takaoka’s answer is:
There was only one goal, to search for the Buddhist teaching. This is the reason I became a monk when only twenty. During the following forty years, I have been obsessed by the desire to go to India. However, Prince Takaoka felt embarrassed to state this clearly. Moreover, he had come to have doubt about the real reason he wanted to go to India. Was his motivation truly to search for the Buddhist teaching? He realized that his ambition was not that grandiose. What was really driving him to India was merely the curiosity that had been cultivated in him since childhood. Wasn’t this the true reason? (p.75-6).

Thus we find that the motivation of Prince Takaoka’s journey to the Holy Land of India is not a search for Buddha’s teaching but “curiosity towards an unknown world.” This curiosity about unknown worlds has its roots in Shibusawa’s previous concept of the virtue of purposeless leisure or play. Shibusawa later emphasizes and clarifies the idea:

親王はにかを求めて、ひたすらに足をうごかしていた。にかを求めているのか、にかをさがしているのか、自分でもよくわからないようなところがあった。そしてつつらつら考えてみると、自分の一生はどうやら、このなにかを求めて足を動かしていることの連続のような気がしないでもなかっただ。どこまで行ったから終わるのか。にかを見つけたら最後の満足をうるのか。しかしそう思いながらも、その一方では、自分の求めているものの、さがしているものはすべて、あらかじめ分かっているような気がするのも事実であった。はなが見つかっても、少しも驚きはしなかったも勿論気持ちが自分にはあった (p.113).
Prince Takaoka was searching for something, and all his actions were directed to that end. However, he did not know what he was searching for. And when he reflected on it, he realized that his whole life was a continuous search for something. He wondered at what point it would stop, what kind of thing would finally satisfy him. However, at the same time, he felt that he knew what he was searching for, knew what he would find ahead of time. He decided that he would not be astonished by anything he discovered (p.113).

Shibusawa argued there may not be a clear purpose in life, a goal that is considered and meaningful. However, if one starts by “moving his feet” and enjoy the journey or the search, one might find a goal and realize the meaning of life. Moreover, the path of life does not lead straight to a final goal; playing around is also essential. In playing around, one may find something interesting and thereby realize the personal meaning of one’s life.

Shibusawa incorporates this child-like play into this novel in several regards: creation of an exotic world replete with its own encyclopedia, play with geometric images, and minerals. He also includes obsessions with petrification, anachronistic experiences and dreams within dreams. This motif is played out, for example, in the journey of the main character Prince Takaoka to India. It is, first and foremost, not a straightforward journey. Moreover, many experiences on the journey are not directly related to the final goal of reaching India. Instead Prince Takaoka always takes an interest in the bizarre things he encounters, and he takes every opportunity to embrace the unknown. To a great extent his journey is a pure entertainment and child-like play.

In addition, Shibusawa tries to involve his reading audience in this child-like play by setting puzzles for the reader. The most interesting instances are the titles that he
gives to the chapters. All the titles consist of two Chinese characters, but they are characters that are rarely used. Readers are supposed to figure out the meaning of these two-characters titles for themselves as they read the novel. The titles are: 儒艮 (Jugon), 蘭房 (Ranbō), 猿園 (Bakuen), 蜜人 (Mitsujin), and 頻伽 (Binga). For instance, 儒艮 or Jugon is the name for the dugong mammal from Malaysia. However, in the novel, it is also linked to the imagery of ningyo or mermaid, which appears in the Wamyōshō, the earliest dictionary of the Japanese language (903-930). According to this ancient dictionary, jugon is a sea creature with a human-like head and fish-like body. While reading this chapter, the reader is challenged to solve the puzzle of the meaning of the Chinese characters 儒艮 and then figure out what the image of dugong is via the characters. As the story develops, readers experience the bizarre scene of 儒艮 along with Prince Takaoka, and they figure out that 儒艮 is an imaginary creature that Shibusawa creates by combining images of the dugong and mermaid.

This is the strategy that Shibusawa uses to make readers join in the play while reading the novel. All the titles of the chapters are puzzles that need to be solved. By solving these puzzles, readers also feel the spirit of child-like amusement and play, which is the spirit Shibusawa championed.

The second example is the case of the “honey-men” or 蜜人 (Mitsujin). The “honey-man” are a combination of a mummy and the undecomposed bodies of Buddhist monks. If readers know the history of mummy poaching, which is a favorite
topic of mass media, and now the topic has been adopted into novels and the screens, they may share in the fun of Prince Takaoka’s adventure to the desert to poach Mitsujin.¹⁸

In sum, Shibusawa wanted his readers to be active participants and experience his child-like amusement while reading the novel. He used Chinese characters, which were unfamiliar to readers, and set up a series of riddles. The chapter titles that Shibusawa created are not merely products of his imagination. Rather he based them on historical fact, folklore and literary associations, and he gives clues based on his presumptions concerning what readers would already know. As the story develops, readers build up these images little by little. Sometimes the images betray their assumptions and surprise them, and sometimes they are a perfect match. In this way, Shibusawa fascinates his readers with exotic stories and intelligent games, and stimulates them to read on.

**Style**

*Chronicle of Prince Takaoka’s Journey Overseas* is interesting not only because it is part of Shibusawa’s fantasy world but also because of the unique style Shibusawa uses to create it. As we know, Shibusawa was an essayist, and this novel is the first long novel he wrote. As an essayist and short story writer, he had the ability to write

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¹⁸ Since the 12th century, mummies were widely thought as a cure-all in Europe, and this belief lasted for centuries. It is said that the French King Francis I always wore a small packet of mummy to remedy any emergency. Mummy poaching became a profitable trade, and when the ancient mummies became hard to get, the poachers embalmed the recently dead and sold them as ancient. This historical story has been filmed and recomposed in novels such as *The Mummy’s Foot* (1840) by French writer Theophile Gautier (1811-1872). Studies down in this field are works such as *The Mummy in Fact, Fiction and Film* (2002) by Susan D. Cowie & Tom Johnson.
both fiction and nonfiction, but with this novel, he created his own specific way of
telling a long story. In this section I will analyze the style of this novel from two
aspects: one, the function of the narrator; and, two, the arrangement of plots, scenes
and episodes.

First, the function of the narrator. Because Shibusawa intends to break with the
spatiotemporal order, and to show off his knowledge and intentionally shock his
audience, he chooses a mode of narrative that gives the narrator maximum freedom in
presenting the story. In this novel, the narrator acts as omniscient and omnipresent
narrator. At the same time, he frequently jumps into the story and communicates
directly with his reader. The following is an example: “Let us now change the scene
and allow ourselves to try stepping directly in the dream of the Prince along with
Princess Patariya Patata” (p.188). Examples like this abound in the novel. As an
omnipresent narrator, the narrator often uses phrases like “Let us make it clear that…”
or “let us make the assumption that …” to speak directly to the reader, thereby setting
up a context that draws sympathy or consent from the reader. He also speaks in a way
that moves beyond the usual definition of omniscience. His knowledge is free ranging,
and he liberally introduces facts that defy the historical limits of the plot. For
example,

親王の時代からおよそ一千年をへて、そのころスマトラを探検していたイ
ギリス東インド会社の切れものトマス・スタンフォード・ラッフルズ卿が、
この世界最大の花をたまたま発見して、これにラフレシアという名をつけ
たことは今日よく知られていようが、もとより、親王も安楽も円覚も、そ
ういう後世の事情にはからきし知ってほどの人間だったから、この化け物の
ような花を見ても、びんとくるものはなにもなかった(p.171).

It is well known that about one thousand years later, Thomas Stanford Raffles, an
able man from the British East India Company, found the largest flower in the
world on his adventure in Sumatra, and he named it Rafflesia. Of course, Prince
Takaoka, as well as Antei and Enkaku, knew nothing about this future event.
When they saw this strange flower, they had no clue what it was (p.171).
Or in the following passage, the narrator uses a secondary character to express his own ideas and speak as omniscient. While this makes this story seem odd, it also makes it interesting. The secondary character Enkaku criticizes the anachronistic existence of the anteater, for example, by making an anachronism of himself.

みこはなにも御存じないから、平気でそんな無責任なことをおっしゃいます。それなら、わたしもあえてアナクロニズムの非を犯す覚悟で申しあげますが、そもそも大膵食いという生き物は、いまから約六百年後、コロンブスの船が行き着いた新大陸とやらで始めて発見されるべき生き物です。そんな生き物が、どうして現在ここにいるのですか。いまここに存在していること自体が時間的にも空間的にも背理ではありませんぬか。考えてもごらんなさい。みこ(p.38).

I shall risk anachronic error and tell you the truth, dear Prince. The large anteater would not be discovered until six hundred years later, when Columbus first arrived in American. Dear Prince, why does this animal appear here and now? Its existence here violates the physical laws of time and space. Prince, please reconsider what you are saying (p.38).

By making the narrator supra-omnipresent and omniscient, Shibusawa places no restrictions on what is presented: There is narrator telling the story as an omniscient being. There is the main character’s monologue. There is the narrator using characters to express his ideas. There is direct conversation with the readers. This freedom of description gives the novel an ironic, odd, even funny tone. The sudden change of perspective makes a strong impression on the reader, thereby fascinating him or her.

In addition to the main story line, the novel has several subplots and independent episodes, and they help to create an exotic atmosphere and show off Shibusawa’s encyclopedic knowledge. Various scenes are left unevenly developed. Shibusawa uses
linking, alternation, and multiplication to arrange all of these pieces. The two main
subplots about Kusuko and minerals play the most important role, however.

Shibusawa is fascinated by the beauty of dark Eros, mystery and exoticism, and
by an ever lasting utopia not bound by the constraints of time and space. In this novel
he deliberately combines these ideas. The subplot about Kusuko represents the beauty
of dark Eros, mystery, and exoticism, while the subplots concerning mineral images
represent the immortal utopia of death and beauty. These two subplots are represented
as parallel, and their alternation throughout the novel gives the journey a two-layered
structure. Also, Shibusawa uses these two subplots to link all the chapters together. On
the one hand, the image of Kusuko connects to nostalgia; on the other hand, it
connects to curiosity about the unknown world and the future. With the help of this
subplot, the narrative freely flashes back and forward. It makes the jumping of scenes
from one to another seem more plausible or acceptable to the reader and maintains the
continuity of the work. Mineral images function in the same way to link the story
together. Finally Shibusawa compounds the images of these two subplots by the scene
of Prince Takaoka’s dreamily recalling Kusuko throwing the stone to India on a
moonlit night when he was seven years old. This memory appears at the beginning,
middle and end of the story and makes the whole continuous. In sum, there are many
plots, scenes, and episodes in this novel which jump frequently from one to another
and are unevenly developed, but Shibusawa uses the subplots about Kusuko and the
minerals as threads to keep the whole story in continuity.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Shibusawa understood better than anyone else that the future of mass entertainment lay not with realism but with a fascination for the erotic, exotic, and imaginary. His interests and works precisely match the present state of Japanese literature.

In an information-oriented society, after the collapse of belief in realism, a new generation is intent on grasping sensuous images when creating literary works. At the same time, individuals are searching for their own life styles based on their own sensibilities and tastes. As Shibusawa’s work prefigured, today there is a new freedom of expression, of mixing high and low styles, and a collapse of the barriers between belle letters and pop culture, popular function and serious function, and between high culture and subculture.

Shibusawa’s works predicted this state of cultural affairs. He always created images, used visible figures to portray abstract thought, expressed his mental state through sensation, and fixed his spirit by physical images.

Shibusawa enclosed himself in a personal interior world of fantasy, mystery and eroticism. He interpreted literature and art solely according to his own subjective
criteria and used his imagination to build up a utopia based on his own interests.

Unlike those who live in contemporary society, those whose tastes and sensibilities are bound and prescribed by the mass media, Shibusawa was in the avant-garde. He lived at a time when the information-oriented society was undeveloped in Japan. With his encyclopedic knowledge, he was able to introduce, create and predict the direction of individuals’ interests into the future.

Moreover, Shibusawa’s work seems so contemporary to us because he mixed so many genres, topics and subject material. If “pastiche” is the defining feature of the “postmodern,” then his work was postmodern ahead of its time. As was true of his novelistic creation, Prince Takaoka, Shibusawa had a vigorous curiosity about the unknown. His works cover various genres: essay, novel, and translation. The subjects of his works extend to fields beyond literature, to botany, zoology, mythology, cultural anthropology, and psychoanalysis. However, Shibusawa never saw himself as a scholar, nor did he look on his works as academic works. The keynote of his creation is child-like wonder and play. Therefore, although based on his encyclopedic knowledge, his works describe a world unfamiliar to the reader, and yet one that is extremely attractive to the reader as entertainment. In a word, Shibusawa was prescient and far ahead of his time.

Because Shibusawa is an intellectual who has not been studied or introduced in countries outside Japan, I have tried in this study to provide a general outline of Shibusawa’s life and work. Aspects of his work that require more specific research that was beyond the scope of this study include his use of Freud’s theory of
psychoanalysis, Jung's theory of the archetype, and theories of cultural anthropology.

Also not dealt with at length in this study is Shibusawa's contributions as a translator of French literature. Future studies of Shibusawa should explore these aspects his work as well as clarify his relation with other writers of his time who had similar interests. Such future studies would place Shibusawa in the broader context of the cultural upheavals of the sixties and seventies.
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