AEROPLANES, BODHISATTVAS, AND BOYS:
FRAGMENTS FROM THE MODERNIST PROSE OF INAGAKI TARIUHO

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

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1994

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To Jason
and
My Parents
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Dr. William Jefferson Tyler for his guidance and kind encouragement. His rich knowledge of Western modernism, Japanese modernism, literature from Ariwara no Narihira to André Gide, and social events in the 20th century world, inspired me to think of Japanese literature as not having an isolated or a "unique" existence, but is related to the world.

I am also grateful to Dr. Thomas Kasulis for his suggestions from the philosophical and sociological viewpoints. His opinions about the relationship between Taruho's literature and Japan's dynamic change from the 1920s to the 1990s opened my eyes and let me rethink Taruho's position in Japanese society.

To my husband Jason, I thank you for your warm encouragement and support.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Inagaki Taruho (1900-1977) is a Japanese prose writer whose works have consistently defied ready description and classification. From the time of his debut in 1922 to his death in 1977 — and in the years that have followed — he has been referred to as a "unique," or even "heretical," figure. Such expressions are often used to describe writers who have yet to find their place within the schema of modern Japanese literature, and they may be no more than the "buzzwords" of critics and journalists. In Taruho's case, however, they take on special significance. One of the functions of this thesis will be to introduce Inagaki to a broader audience and to make clear what has set him apart within the world of Japanese letters. At the same time, we will also attempt to place him within the context of literary movements in 20th century Japanese literature.

What, then, sets Taruho apart?

First, his works are not novels in the conventional sense of the word. Inagaki referred to them as "objects," making use of the Japanese corruption of the French term
"objet d'art" to refer to a series of discrete, largely self-contained and often abstract images. He chose to let his works be fragments of his imagination rather than integrated stories. A single work often consists of strongly visualized images that come in rapid succession, unfolding before the reader's eyes not unlike the individual frames of a roll of film. The effect is often dizzying and disorienting. Since, however, a tendency toward composition and linkage of discrete images is a characteristic shared by writers of haiku, or Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892-1927) and Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972) in their "prose poems," we shall have to return to a more precise definition of Taruho's imagery later on. Meanwhile, what is most obviously unique about Taruho's images is his frequent use of objects and ideas drawn from the science and technology of the 20th century.

For example, the writer Takeda Taijun (1912-1976) praised the futuristic quality of Taruho's works in his essay Uchūteki naru mono ("Something Cosmic"). Taijun finds Taruho's stories so avant-garde as to leave him feeling dizzy — a quality that he discusses as "miraiteki memai" (literally, the "whirl, or dizziness, of the future"). He writes as follows:

(How I would like to see one of our favorite literary critics comment on the futuristic spin that Inagaki gives us in his novels! For example, I'd like to see Hanada Kiyoteru give it a try in one of his
essays.) In *Uchū-ron nyūmon* ("Beginner’s Intro to the Cosmos"), which Inagaki wrote during World War II, he perfected a very interesting poetic work that is the equal of Poe’s *Eureka.* In fact, the reason that I undertook to write this essay - an essay that I’m really too inadequate to attempt - is because I came into contact with *Uita makinikarisu* ("Vita Machinicus"). It is one of Inagaki’s early works that had to be the etude for "Beginner’s Intro to the Cosmos." It is an amazing spiritual medium that leads our world to the next....

A second factor in Inagaki’s uniqueness has been the way in which he set himself apart from the literary fads and fashions of his day and his uncompromising refusal to modify his style and ideas in order to gain a wider audience. As we shall show presently, his initial works derive their creative impulse from the modernist movements of Symbolism, Dadaism, and Futurism that began in Europe and swept Japan in the 1920s and 30s. As times changed, however, and Taruho lost a place to publish his experimental works during the reactionary years of the war, nonetheless, he remained true to the spirit of modernist writing. It was for this posture of independence and unbroken commitment that Itō Sei (1905-1969), the dean of Japanese novelists and critics in the 1950-60s, admired Inagaki although he was not on good terms personally with Inagaki. In the essay *Itagaki-san to Nishigaki-san* ("Mr. Itagaki and Mr. Nishigaki"), Itō recalls the time when Taruho worked in isolation.

I was impressed by him. He seemed to have nothing to his name. Still, he wore those fashionable pince-nez glasses of his, and that was a trademark which no
one could take from him. He held dogmatically to his own position, standing against the mainstream of Japanese literature which went on ignoring him, or against Japanese society, the world, and even the cosmos. One should be like him. I doubted whether I could hold my own ego like he did if I were in the same situation."

Later, when in 1968 the Shinchōsha Publishing Company established a prize for contemporary Japanese writers (Nihon Bungaku taishō), and Itō was a member of the selection committee, he joined the novelists Mishima Yukio (1925-1970), Niwa Fumio (1904- ), and the critic Nakamura Mitsuo (1911-1988) in recommending Inagaki as the first recipient of the prize. The prize was conferred for Inagaki’s essay Shōnen ai no bigaku ("Aesthetics of Pedophilia"). It was to become the only such prize Inagaki was to receive in his literary career.

Third, Inagaki’s uniqueness also lies in his unabashed breaking of taboos. He was an openly avowed "writer of pedophilia" (shōnen ai no sakka) as he called himself, and in his essays he dealt with the topics of homosexuality and pedophilia as a philosophical and artistic phenomenon. This is especially true in his latter works. Japanese literature has a long-standing tradition of dealing openly with homosexual and homoerotic themes, but Inagaki was the first in the twentieth century to elevate the subject to what might be called a metaphysical plane. Moreover, he did so as a time when, under the influence of western morality,
homosexual themes had began to disappear from Japanese literature. Clearly Mishima, who published the startling Kamen no kohohaku (Confessions of a Mask, 1947), was aware of and appreciated Inagaki’s outspokenness on a social issue that became more "taboo" in the postwar years. In a conversation with Shibusawa Tatsuhiko (1928-1987), a scholar of French literature, that foreshadows his celebrated suicide, Mishima goes on to say that only Inagaki would understand him.

...I may do something foolish in my life. And people all over Japan may make fun of me and laugh. It is well within the realm of probability, and I am not sure it is something political or private. But I believe I have such an element inside me. If I do such a thing, and even if all Japanese laugh, I am very certain that Mr. Inagaki will understand me. It may be just my imagination, but I think Mr. Inagaki is the only writer who knows the secret that a man keeps.'

Six months later, Mishima committed suicide in the Ichigaya branch of the Japanese Self Defence Forces, just as he intimated. Mishima was devoted to Taroho because Taroho did not hesitate to break a social taboo out of a belief that homosexuality was tied to aestheticism and is an important part of art that transcends time or national origin.
Notes

1. Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) had given a lecture in New York in 1848 and then published it as *Eureka* in the same year. In *Eureka*, Poe expressed his philosophical idea about the universe and God by using the Newton's and other scientists' theories.


CHAPTER II
THE LIFE OF INAGAKI TARUHO (1900-1920)

Inagaki Taruho was born in Osaka in 1900 and died in Kyoto in 1977. Repeatedly he wrote that he was born at the beginning of the twentieth century, the century of modern technology. For example, he states in the essay Mirai-ha e no apurochi ("Approaches to Futurism") as follows:

I was born at the turn of the century. It was the year when the Wright brothers took their Chanute style airplane to the sandy plain in Kitty Hawk, and when the first airship by Count Zeppelin cast its slender but cylindrical shadow over Lake Constance. Moreover, at the end of that year, meaning two weeks before I was born, the quantum constant found by Max Planck was published. This discovery opened the door to the nuclear generation.¹

Taruho's early interests in Western technology were encouraged by his family. Both his grandfather and father were dentists, although originally the grandfather had been the leader of a theatrical company and a magician. When Taruho's grandfather changed professions after the Meiji Restoration, he became a dentist. Of course, he had never studied dentistry in school. He was skillful with his hands, and he soon learned how to make dentures and false teeth. He was fascinated by the sight of modern machines,
and he made kaleidoscopes or mechanical toys for Taruho to play with. Perhaps a touch of the magical and the mechanical that characterized the grandfather's transformation as a man living in the new and modern times of the Meiji era was to rub off on Taruho.

Taruho describes his father much like his grandfather. His father worked with the grandfather in the practice of dentistry, and he married an heiress. He too liked modern technology, and Inagaki suggests that, if both the grandfather and father had had access to higher education, surely they would have pursued more creative careers and been successful in such fields as aviation or the film industry. Taruho's father frequently took his son to see movies, airplanes, and exhibitions of mechanical inventions when the boy was little. Taruho's experience of seeing modern technology with his father, who explained about the machines, was to influence his literature enormously. In 1911, when Taruho was eleven years old, his father took him to Suma to see a demonstration flight by the American pilot Atwater. Taruho saw an airplane for the first time, and he was deeply impressed by the sight of the beautiful American plane. Two years later, his father took him to a Japanese exhibition of inventions held in Osaka in order to show him the famous wreck of Takeishi Kōha's airplane, Japan's first aerial crash. Standing next to the mangled aircraft,
Taruho said he could still detect the strong odor of burnt rubber. Later he was to link in his mind the smell of rubber with the spilling of blood and tragic endings. He writes the following impression:

...[t]he smell of the rubber used on the wing moved me. At that time, I noticed that anything - not only the airplane but also automobiles, motorcycles, or bicycles - had the smell of rubber, and it made me presume a bloody result.³

The linkage of images of early, modern vehicles and of death as represented by the destroyed airplane appears in his works frequently. Early model aeroplanes surface again and again in his different works - both in the form of his fascination with the romance of flying in an unbounded sky and in the shadow of peril and death that surrounded the early experiments in flying aircraft.

Although Taruho often recalls his childhood in his essays, he seldom refers to the psychological dimensions of his relationship with his family. He describes his father through the activities they shared or by means of different kinds of equipment his father owned. For example, he writes:

My father may well have been a charlatan. At any rate, he was a "progressive" Meiji gentleman born in 1870. He was the type of man who wore ebonite cuff links made in the shape his initials. He made them himself using an the steam of an electric heating unit, which he used everyday in his dental practice.⁴
References to his mother, and to his older sister by ten years, occur noticeably less often, however. Taruho did not appear to want to write about his mother and sister, who are presented as ordinary, average Japanese women who lacked the "haikara" ("high collar" style or fashion) of his father and grandfather. He devoted only one essay, Orokanaru haha no ki ("An Account of My Foolish Mother"), to his mother's memory. In it he describes her as honest but not very intelligent. This depiction of his mother is, of course, something of a departure in Japan where writers habitually attach almost mythic significance to the role that mothers play in producing successful sons.

Taruho's aesthetic, as seen in his later work A-kankaku to V-kankaku ("The A-feeling and V-feeling") that men are imaginative, romantic, and ethereal, whereas woman are more grounded and devoted themselves to pedestrian and prosaic concerns, is a notion that appears to have been established early in his childhood through his impressions of his grandfather, father, mother, and sister. It is also a longstanding typification of the sexes in Japanese culture, and one to which, as we shall see, Taruho will later subscribe.

From the age fourteen to nineteen, Taruho went to Kansai Gakuin Middle School in Kobe. Designated as a port city since the start of the Meiji period, Kobe was one of
Japan's most "cosmopolitan" towns, and Taruho was fascinated by it. Although he was born in Osaka, the family moved to Akashi when he was seven years old. Still, Osaka and Akashi were cities of merchants, and by comparison, Kobe was a far more sophisticated place. Taruho was inspired by the sights and sounds in this "international" port, and many of his important works are set in Kobe. For example, what is considered by critics to be his early major works, Issen ichibyō monogatari (One Thousand and One Second Tales) published in 1923, and Hoshi o uru mise ("A Shop that Sells Stars") also published in the same year, both take the streets of Kobe as their setting.

The subculture of the private middle school at Kansai Gakuin was also to have a profound effect on Taruho. Kansai Gakuin was a Methodist school in which half of the teaching staff were foreigners. Despite its sectarian affiliation, the atmosphere at the school was liberal, and the students had a chance to read the latest Western novels in translation. Among Taruho's fellow students was Kon Tōkō (1898-1977), who was later to belong to the shinkankaku-ha (Neo-Perceptionist Group) of writers, and who was a year older than Taruho. Taruho did not know Tōkō as a friend, but he read the articles that he wrote and published in the school newspaper. Taruho was often surprised by Kon's affected style of writing which he would later identify as
characteristic of Kon’s early works as a shinkankaku-ha writer. Subsequently, Kon would go on to a somewhat idiosyncratic career, first, as a writer of modernist literature, and in the post-war years, as a regional writer who chose to write about Osaka and its people in the novels.

It was during the years of Kansai Gakuin Middle School that Taruho first became aware of homosexual love, which was to become one of the aesthetic concerns of his literary career. At the time, homosexual relations among middle school and higher school students were not considered odd or immoral. The role of homosexuality as a form of sexual and/or platonic infatuation, and of male bonding between upper and lower classmates, has been described elsewhere in such works as Mori Ōgai’s (1862-1922) Uita Sekusuarisu (Vita Sexualis, 1909), or in Mishima Yukio’s depiction of student life at Gakushūin Academy in Confessions of a Mask (1949). The scholar Donald Roden explains in Schooldays in Imperial Japan, moreover, that homosexuality among male students before the World War II was closely related to a notion that older students were to take care of or control younger students. He sees homosexuality as a means of political domination or sexual corraling rather than genuine love. According to Roden, higher schools had dormitories, and students were allowed a high degree of self-governance. Older, "hard-line" (kōha) students could even force
homosexual attentions on lower classmen, especially freshmen, in the name of the teaching them the "spirit" (seishin) of the higher school. Dating women, or even sending and receiving love letters from them, was prohibited and looked down upon as the behavior of "soft" (nanpa) males. Older students, who were appointed special inspectors, exercised the right to read each student's letters and diary or to inspect his personal belongings. Moreover, students who dressed too fashionably, or who expressed an interest in establishing friendships with women in a liberal or western manner were often subjected to the sanction of "lynching" or "pommeling" (tekken seisai) by the hard-liner students.

Taruho's concept of homosexual love differed from that of the hard-liners. His advocacy of homosexuality is not based on social or political conservatism, or on school and dorm politics. Rather it arises from his views on psychology, philosophy, and aesthetics. For example, he writes of the memory of his love for one boy at Kansai Gakuin in the autobiographical work Hanamegane ("Pince-nez Glasses"), published in 1924. This short story concerns a boy for whom Taruho entertained an affection from the third to the fifth grade of middle school. Although the protagonist "I" experienced unrequited love for another boy
at the time, his deepest affections lay with a younger man named K.Y. Taruho writes:

He [K.Y.] got off at the next station, and I watched him with fascination. Because his hair had been shaved back around the ears, and because of the white collar, the well-creased trousers, the polished shoes... everything about him was just perfect.... Moreover, I was fascinated by his face with its slender chin. His face was so white. It was like that of a foreign student in the Canadian school that was located behind our school and that was surrounded by poplar trees. K.Y. had rose-pink lips. In addition, he looked as if he wore pince-nez glasses because of the strange feeling of tension that centered on his brow at the point between the long lashes of his eyes."

Taruho describes K.Y. as a fashionable young boy who also looks very sensitive. Indeed, K.Y. is called "Mr. Chic" (Haikara, literary "high collar") by his classmates at school. Moreover, by drawing a comparison between K.Y. and a Western student at the Canadian school, Taruho superimposes on K.Y. the image of a foreign or highly westernized face. He was especially charmed by boys that appeared in European novels or films such as the German play The Awakening of Spring written by Frank Wedekind.\(^8\) Wedekind wrote of both platonic and physical love among teenagers, and the story is a compilation of episodes that delve into the lives of different boys and girls. For example, Melchior is a high-achieving, precocious student. He declares that he does not believe in God and that people make love only out of sexual desire. Finally, he rapes his childhood friend Wendla, who is an innocent girl of
fourteen. She becomes pregnant, and she dies as a result of the abortion given to her. Meanwhile, Moritz, who is also a childhood companion of Melchior, goes to the same Gymnasium. He is a melancholic daydreamer. He is always anxious about his studies, girls, romantic love, and the day when he will make love to a woman. He feels that he does not fit in the world to which others belong. Finally, he shoots himself because he believes he has failed his school examination. His head is blown off by the gun and is nowhere to be found. Taruho was deeply fascinated by the "tragic" Moritz and even took to imitating him at school. In the "Essay - Vita Machinicus" and in the short story "Pince-nez Glasses," he writes he felt so miserable as a result of his one-sided love affair for the boy in his school that, as he wandered in the woods behind Kansai Gakuin, he imagined himself as Moritz contemplating suicide." What is important here is the aura of tragedy, romanticism, and hypersensitivity with which Taruho endows his fantasies and that contrasts so sharply with the "seishin-shugi," or the hard-line spirit of rigorous dorm life and lynching, that characterized a more traditional view of male and/or homosexual relations in the Meiji period. Indeed, Taruho imbues his fantasies with many of the romantic properties of western notions of heterosexual romance. As the above demonstrates, Taruho’s highly
aesthetic perspective on homosexuality and pedophilia was formed in his schooldays. Moreover, it is based on his admiration for Western art and culture rather than the traditions of the Japanese middle and higher schools.

Taruho graduated from Kansai Gakuin in March, 1919 whereupon he went to Tokyo to study what was at the time the new art of how to drive an automobile. His school grades had not been good enough to get him into higher school; therefore, he needed to look for some kind of training that would lead to a job. After obtaining his driver’s license in June 1919, he went back to Akashi to join a group of friends who planned to build their own private biplane in Kobe. However, the group split into two factions over the issue of ownership of the plane. Taruho was disillusioned by the infighting, and as a result, he gave up his dream of flying. For the next three years, he stayed in Akashi and hung idly about Kobe without any definite future plans.
Notes

1. Inagaki Taruho, "Mirai-ha e no apurōchi," Inagaki Taruho taizen, vol.1 (Tokyo: Gendaishichōsha, 1969), 312. All material quoted from complete works entitled Inagaki Taruho taizen 6 vols. will be noted as ITT.

2. Takeishi Kōha (1880-1913) was one of the Japan’s first pilots, and its first victim of an airplane accident. He spent more than ten years in the United States studying how to be a pilot. Tragically, he was killed in his first demonstration flight in Japan.


5. Cf. Tayama Katai’s The Quilt (Futon) mentions the fact that "Christian schools were all open-minded when it came to literature," in contrast to schools directly controlled by the Monbushō (the Ministry of Education). (The Quilt and Other Stories, trans. Kenneth Henshall. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1981, p.41.)

6. Donald Roden, Schooldays in Imperial Japan - a Study in the Culture of a Student Elite. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 37, and 146-147.


CHAPTER III
TARUHO AND HIS EARLY WORKS

After spending three aimless years in Kobe, Taruho decided in 1921 to pursue an artistic career, and he went to Tokyo to meet the poet and novelist Satō Haruo (1892-1964). Satō had already published the novel *Den’en no yūutsu* (Rural Melancholy) in 1918, and he was recognized as a rising star in literary circles by the time Taruho met him. In his massive survey of modern Japanese literature, Donald Keene refers to Satō as a modernist writer, grouping him with Itō Sei, Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947), and Hori Tatsuo (1904-1953). Keene explains that Satō’s pre-war literature in particular was written under the influence of the British writer Oscar Wilde and the German psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud.¹ In describing Satō’s prose poem *Supein inu no ie* ("The House of the Spanish Dog") published in 1917, Keene writes:

"The House of the Spanish Dog" is a minor work, but even today its lyricism and exotic details appeal to readers who dislike Naturalist fiction. Satō’s style was not merely a reaction against the prevailing humorlessness of the "I novel" and other confessional outpourings, but an attempt to convey in Japanese prose the quality peculiar to the fin-de-siècle European poets. There was nothing startlingly modern either in
the language or in the literary techniques, but the combination of fantasy and poetry gave the work freshness and individuality.²

While Keene concludes that Satō’s works were not truly "modernistic" in his rather ambiguous use of the term, clearly Taruho must have sensed that Satō’s non-Naturalist, non-I-novel works represented an appealing departure from the literary norms of his times. Learning of Satō’s reputation, Taruho sent off two works entitled Taruho to tsuki (Taruho and the Moon) and Taruho to hoshi (Taruho and the Stars), and asked Satō to critique them. Although these early studies were never published, Taruho was later to develop them into One Thousand and One Second Tales. Satō responded favorably; in his second letter, he even recommended that Taruho move to Tokyo in order to devote himself to his writing. In September, Taruho went to Tokyo. He was given a place to stay in Satō’s hanare, and it was from this time that Taruho began to search for an opportunity to become a professional artist. When Taruho recalls his youth in several works, he tells us that at the time he hardly knew whether to be a painter or a writer. But he was determined to become involved in both the visual art and literary movements of the early 1920s. At first, he moved in the direction of painting, and he submitted two paintings - a water-color entitled Tsuki no sanbun-shi ("The Free Verse of the Moon") and an oil painting entitled Kūchū
sekai ("The Aerial World") - to the second Exhibition held by the Japan Futurist Society (Nihon mirai-ha kyōkai) in 1921. "The Free Verse of the Moon" won honorable mention.

The fact that he submitted his paintings to the Futurist exhibition indicates that he had been significantly affected by Futurism, an artistic movement initiated by the Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and his literary and artistic friends early in the 20th century. The critic Robert Hughes defines the characteristics of Futurism, and comments on its impact, as follows:

Futurism was the invention of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944), part lyrical genius, part organ grinder, and in later years, part Fascist demagogue.... His ideas affected the entire European Avant-garde: not only in Italy, but as far afield as Russia, where the Futurist worship of the machine and its Promethean sense of technology as the solvent of all social ills became a central issue for the Constructivists after 1913, and as near as Switzerland, where the Futurist techniques of simultaneous sound-poems, nonsense verse, confrontation, and pamphleteering were incorporated into Dada during the war.³

Taruho's childhood partiality for the airplane and the automobile imbued in him by his grandfather and father, and his adolescent fascination with beauty, had constructed the basis for his encounter with Futurism. Futurism became one of the artistic bases for his literature, and its influence on his work extended long beyond the life of the Futurist movement in Europe [which came to abrupt end through its association with fascism during World War II]. For example,
he reveals his fascination with Futurism in the essay "Approaches to Futurism," in which he quotes Marinetti. He goes on to express his view that Futurism "...will never die."

Futuristic techniques are used not only in the today’s abstract art but also in the movies and comics. Moreover, Futurism is blended even in the design of advertisements and posters.... Therefore, it is not at all true that Futurism and the Futurists, who had their first meeting in Milan fifty-six years ago, and shocked people all over the world, disappeared soon as its thunder passed. Everyday we face the way that Futurism changes style much like a person changing costume.

In his analysis of Tanizaki Jun’ichirō (1886-1965) and Kawabata Yasunari, for example, Keene suggests that many Japanese writers passed through a modernist phase before returning to more popular styles of writing such as the I-novel, or the novel form as an evocation of traditional Japanese beauty. This is the concept of Nihon e no kaiki, or "return to Japan," which is the central organizing principle of Keene’s Dawn to the West. Taruho’s career differs, however, from that of other Japanese writers in his persistent adherence to a futuristic outlook.

Taruho’s aesthetic standard is based upon his fascination with the image of the modern machine. Even before he became a writer, he was familiar with the streamlined beauty of machines through his childhood experiences with his father and grandfather. While many Japanese writers from Meiji to the early Showa periods grew up in
traditional Japanese culture and tended to revert to it when they grew older, by contrast Taruho derives his inspiration from the culture of his childhood and his early fascination with the aeroplane or the strange mechanical equipment he had seen at scientific and industrial exhibitions.

Perhaps the only traditional aspect of Taruho's "return" to things Japanese is his interest in homosexuality as described in the Japanese classics. Especially in his latter works, he often refers to Ihara Saikaku (1642-1693), who wrote of the homosexual loves of the warrior class in Nanshoku Ōkagami (The Great Mirror of Male Love, 1687), or other medieval works of literature. Moreover, his study of Japanese literature differs from that of many Japanese writers who turned to the classics in search of the beauty of femininity in Japanese literature. We shall return to this topic and Taruho's philosophy of homosexuality in Chapter Five.

Taruho's literature is also influenced by other schools of modernism such as Cubism and Dadaism. In the West, the Dadaists and Surrealists were strongly opposed to the Futurists' political support of Fascism. So that, even though these different schools shared the concept of being modern, their political attitudes differed sharply, and they became more markedly so when the Futurists headed down the road toward Fascism. In Japan, however, a mixed borrowing
of different artistic movements is not uncommon because artists are often fascinated more by the particular style or mode of expression of artistic movements, and the political message is often ignored or of little concern. In analyzing this tendency within Japanese modernist art, Miyagawa Torao, a scholar of Japanese modern art, indicates that Japanese artists who studied in Paris or Berlin randomly introduced new artistic movements from Europe. Accordingly, young people who were aware of modernism absorbed its theories in successive waves. Taro Ho belonged to this young generation that absorbed different modernistic movements in this random or uncritical fashion. Moreover, it is also important to note that emergence of Futurism, Dadaism, and Constructivism in Japan was first and foremost a phenomenon embraced and advanced by painters of oil paintings or mixed media, and secondly, by poets. In 1988, Tokyo Shimbun (Tokyo Newspaper) and the Museum of Modern Art in Kamakura, along with Seibu Museum of Tokyo, organized a retrospective exhibit on the interconnection between European Futurism and Dadaist, Surrealist, and Futurist movements taking place in Tokyo in the years just before the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923. In particular it focused on the paintings of Kambara Tai (1898- ) and Murayama Tomoyoshi (1901-1977). In January of 1923, after a brief stay in Germany, Murayama returned to Japan and started what became known as the "Mavo
Movement" or "Mavoism." In discussing "Japanese Dada and Constructivist Aspect of the Early 1920s," one of the organizers of the exhibition reviews the transitory and inchoate nature of the assimilation of European avant-gardism, and of its connotations with life style:

It is not easy to discover Dada incidents in the early 1920s in Japan. Dadaism was a highly transitory movement, and if it did not gain people's attention through incidents, there would be nothing left "cast up on the shore." There was no noisy gathering place for artists working across genres like the Cabaret Voltaire where Ball, Tzara and Janco met in Zurich or big events like the First International Dada Fair held in Berlin in 1920. In considering Japanese Dada, we must be aware from the start that all its manifestations were scattered and lacked coherence."

Taruho's first book, One Thousand and One Second Tales, was published in 1923. Unlike the popular acceptance of European avant-gardism, this book reveals the extent to which Taruho had developed a truly modernistic sensibility. While in actual fact Chokoretto ("Chocolate"), a short story published in the women's magazine Fujin kōron in 1922, was Taruho's debut work, it is not considered as a major work or representative of Taruho's literature. By comparison, One Thousand and One Second Tales is a far more sophisticated work that pays considerable attention to the issues of exotic innovations in narrative and content. According to Taruho, he found the title Issen ichibyō monogatari in a pile of Satō's unpublished works, and he took it for his first book." He does not explain why he was fascinated by
this title. However, we can guess that it is a parody of *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*. In *Arabian Nights*, one story is supposed to be told each night, but the image of "one thousand and one seconds" is that each story is to be told in a second. A "second" - instead of a "night" - clearly implies speed or rapid change. Moreover, it is used as a metaphor for machines, which from cars to films, have accelerated the speed of modern life.

Like the "parent" narrative of *Arabian Nights*, the novel is a compilation of different stories. *One Thousand and One Second Tales* consists of seventy-one stories, which Taruho called "fragments" (*furagumento*). Of course, each story is extremely short. For example, the shortest piece entitled *Jibun ni nita hito* ("The Person Who Resembled Me") consists of only one sentence of two lines in Japanese. It resembles a caption in a comic strip.

In the night when the stars and the crescent moon hang by threads, and when I walked along a narrow street where the poplar trees were planted along both sides, at the end of the street, I found a square house in which a person who resembled me lived.\textsuperscript{10}

Although each story is short, it has an independent subtitle such as "The Person Who Resembled Me," "The Episode in Which I was Deceived by the Mist," or "The Episode in Which I Hunted the Meteor." As the subtitles indicate, the moon and stars are personified: they come down from the sky, drink alcohol, fight hoodlums, or sometimes become hoodlums
armed with guns. In the company of the moon and the star is the protagonist who is identified only as "jibun" (self, I), and like scenes in the slapstick comedies of early Hollywood silent films, jibun is constantly flung aside or struck by the moon and stars. For example, in the story entitled "The Episode in Which I Fought with a Meteor," Taruho writes:

One night when I returned from the opera, my car clashed with a meteor on the street corner. "Don't get in my way!" I said. "Your driving is awful!" the meteor retorted. The meteor and I grappled with each other and rolled along the street. My silk hat was smashed.¹¹

Mimetic or onomatopoeic words, some of which are created by Taruho, are also used effectively. For example, he uses "gibon" to express the sound of opening a bottle, "sawa sawa" to express the rustle of dresses, or "pyun" to express being thrown from the restaurant. Moreover, the words are written in katakana, which is normally used to write western loanwords. Consequently, they add an exotic mood to the story and can be seen as precursors of the manga, or comic books of the last three decades.

The rapid sequencing of the stories, as well as the exoticism of Taruho's early works, may result from the influence of the slapstick comedies that starred Charley Chaplin or Larry Semon.¹² Taruho called Chaplin "the only great artist in the movies" and regarded him highly.¹³ He also favored Semon's artificial and non-humanistic movies.
Although Taruho saw a Semon movie for the first time in 1924, or one year after publishing One Thousand and One Second Tales, he remarked that Semon’s movies were remarkably similar to the literary world he had sought to create in One Thousand and One Second Tales. In the essay Rarī Simon no kaisō ("Reminiscence of Larry Semon") published in 1954, he writes:

Your [to Larry Semon] speedy and dreamy tales give me many ideas for a radically new art, which I have always had in mind and always attempted to create. You expressed your fairy tales through the aeroplane, the Ford automobile, trains, blacks, tin soldiers, starry night-patterned wall paper, fireworks, thunder, cemeteries, ghosts, and what is more, vegetables and small animals.¹⁴

From his statement, we can surmise that Taruho set out to express the same touch of slapstick in his prose, and this One Thousand and One Second Tales is probably no exception.

In the same year, he published the short story "A Shop that Sells Stars" in Chūō kōron. This story is one of the most representative works of his early literary life because it is the crystallization of his style: a mixture of real experience and fantasy. Generally speaking, Taruho’s works can be divided into three groups -- fantastic novels, semi-autobiographical novels, and essays. In some of his works, however, these categories seem to merge, and "A Shop that Sells Stars" is a good example of this intersection or integration. The first part of "A Shop that Sells Stars" is
autobiographical, and the second part, pure fantasy. In the former, Taruho writes of wandering about Kobe with his friend - taking us on a tour of the city as if he were our guide. In the second part, the first person protagonist finds the shop that sells stars. The manager whispers that the owner of the shop imported the stars from Egypt and Ethiopia. The two parts shift seamlessly from autobiography to fantasy, and there is no obvious gap between the two because of the way in which, even in the semi-autobiographical section, Taruho anticipates the shift and introduces abstract and surreal images.

The key to the shift from real experience to fantasy lies in Taruho's writing style. He describes the city as if it were a stage setting in an experimental movie.

When I reached Yamanote Avenue planted with its green leafy sycamores in rows as regular as sprockets lining both sides of a roll of film, a cool breeze blew up from the sea — a rarity in the dead calm of evening. On the tennis court next to the church, children—green kids and pink kids—skipped rope as if they were dolls that had been wound up and then let go. I could hear a waltz played on a piano. It floated on the air from a patio that was covered in ivy and that was visible through the tops of fir trees.  

Taruho tries to re-create Kobe, yet it is with a deliberately artificial touch. The tree plantings are mechanical "sprockets" on a role of film, the children on the tennis courts are hardly children at all, but like faces and figures in an abstract painting, they are more
significant as colors or shapes. Globs of color, as it were.

Moreover, sentences are written in a disconnected manner. It is as if a movie camera were taking random shots of the objects on the street. Taruho describes scenes in Kobe one after another by letting the protagonist "I" wander from the Tōa Hotel, the famous luxury hotel in Kobe before World War II, to Chinatown, then the railroad station, and finally a Western-style inn owned by the protagonist's friend.

Right in the center position, about midway up the slope, a warehouse — was it a warehouse? — or a building of some sort was under construction. It looked like a jumble of rectangles and triangles piled one on top of each other. What's more, the pink rays of the sun, piercing between the tips of the mountains, struck the jumble and turned it pink. While everywhere else was blue, this quarter alone was spotlighted like the stage in a cinerama; and beyond the shapes and shadows of this building that looked so geometrical, the red, yellow, and blue hulls and funnels of ships stood out as though they were suspended in the air.16

After this passage, the protagonist mutters to himself that he can make a Cubist painting of the scene. Clearly Taruho is trying to express the scene in the style of the Cubists and Futurists by using mathematical terms such as "rectangle" "triangle" and "geometric."

The narrative is also inspired by the German expressionist movie The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari created in 1919 and released in Japan in 1921.17 Keene indicates that
Caligari's Cabinet, "intrigued a whole generation of Japanese modernist writers."

The story is horrific and mysterious. One day a fair comes to town. Among many shows, there is a weird show held by the person called "Dr. Caligari." His show is about the somnambulist called Cesare. According to Dr. Caligari, Cesare can see anyone's future. When Alan, the good friend of the hero Francis, asks Dr. Caligari and Cesare to tell how long he will live, Cesare opens his eyes and answers that he can live until dawn. Francis tells Alan not to believe him, but as Cesare foresees, Alan is killed. Curious about two murders of his friend and of the officer who was also killed on the day when Caligari came to town, Francis spies on Dr. Caligari. While he is investigating, Cesare kidnaps Jane, whom Francis is in love with. However, the kidnapping is soon revealed; and pursued by many people, the tired Cesare dies. Meanwhile, Francis investigates Dr. Caligari and finally reaches a mental hospital. In the hospital, he finds an old book written in the eighteenth century about the original Dr. Caligari. The book recorded that the original Dr. Caligari also used a somnambulist in his murders. He also finds out that the person calling himself Caligari is, in fact, a doctor at the mental hospital. To substantiate his evidence, Francis succeeds in putting Dr. Caligari in the mental hospital. This scene
appears to be the end of the movie, but there is yet another ending. Namely, that the whole story has been a dream of Francis, a person with a mental disorder. Instead of Dr. Caligari, who is the director of the institute, it is Francis who is incarcerated in a hospital cell. With that, the movie ends.

For Taruho, the settings in the film are both fascinating as well as horrific, and Caligari’s Cabinet was to become one of his classic film favorites. As he wrote in the essay "Approaches to Futurism," a friend had told him that one corner of a street in Kobe looked exactly like a scene out of Caligari’s Cabinet.¹⁹

By transferring the visual images expressed in Cubism, Futurism, and experimental film to prose, Taruho’s creates in "A Shop that Sells Stars" an exotic and unreal world. Indeed, we can say that such works as "A Shop that Sells Stars" are far more experimental than those of the shinkankaku-ha writers, the group that is generally credited in Japan with having developed the new and avant-garde expressions of the 1920s and thus became the experimental movement after the earthquake in 1923.

The name shinkankaku-ha, or "Neo-Perceptionist Group" as the term is sometimes translated, was created by the critic Chiba Kameo (1878-1935) in November issue of the magazine Seiki in 1924. Looking in retrospect, the scholar
Hoshō Masao writes of Chiba’s analysis of the *shinkankaku-ha* as follows:

The name *shinkankaku-ha* created by Chiba did not indicate the literary characteristic of all members of *Bungei jidai*.

However, he thought that the "new sense" they brought to literature and their "vivid and free imagination" was the development of certain writers’ preference for the literary forms or techniques which had been in vogue since the middle of the Taishō period, or about five or six years earlier. This tendency to favor writing form and technique is a characteristic of the *shingiko-ha* writers....This name "*shinkankaku-ha*" is used still as the literary term, and it is also widely thought that modernist literature, or artistic literature is based on the *shinkankaku-ha*.

Hoshō points out to the *shinkankaku-ha* writers’ tendency to focus on the form and technique of writing as the origin of the group name. Furthermore, the fourteen original members of *Bungei jidai*, including Yokomitsu Riichi, Kawabata Yasunari, Kataoka Teppei (1894-1944), and Kon Tōkō, had published novels, and they were already known as young writers when they formed the *shinkankaku-ha*. Their creed was that novelists had to create new modes of expression by using a "new perception" or "new sensitivity" that is their *shinkankaku*. Nonetheless, the definition of *shinkankaku* is rather ambiguous even in the essays left by these writers. One of the opinion leaders of the group, Yokomitsu Riichi, links their literature to Western modernism, however.

I accept that Futurism, Cubism, Dadaism, Impressionism, Constructivism, and a part of Realism belong to *shinkankaku*. The object that inspires these
shinkankaku groups is, of course, vocabulary, poetical sense, and rhythm. However, not all of them qualify as shinkankaku. There are many creative writing styles seen in the degree of the complexity of the subject, the degree of disjointedness between non-technical sentences, reversal, repetition and/or acceleration of sequences.  

In 1926, Taruho became an official member of Bungei jidai. He had written the essay WC ("WC"), the subject of which is feces and the toilet, which was published in Bungei jidai in the previous year. This humorous work tells readers that, just as "Humans do things that are the most beautiful, that's the reason why they do things that are the dirtiest," and it traces the connection between the toilet and human existence metaphysically. "WC" was well received by the members of the magazine. As a result, Taruho was recommended for admission to the group, and he accepted. He does not say directly who recommended him, or how he was asked. According to his essay Shinkankaku-ha zengo ("Before and After the shinkankaku-ha," the original date is not known; its revised version was published in 1958), the reason that he accepted membership is that he felt "giri," or a sense of obligation or duty, to two people namely, Yokomitsu Riichi and Fukuoka Masuo, the president of the Kinseidō Publishing House. Taruho's first book One Thousand and One Second Tales had been published by Kinseidō, which also published Bungei jidai. Fukuoka is the first person who gave Taruho an opportunity to publish, and
no doubt Taruho felt indebted. Yokomitsu also appears to have given Taruho a chance to publish in *Bunrei jidai* and recommend him for membership. Taruho notes that, when "WC" was well received, Yokomitsu sent Taruho a letter to express his pride in his protégé.²⁵

However, there are major differences between Taruho’s works and those of the shinkankaku-ha writers. Taruho aimed to create an unrealistic, artificial world in his prose, and he rejected the idea of sketching the ordinary lives of people in his works, or at least the kinds of "nihonteki," or Japanese-style, emotions that had been the focus of many writers in this group. Of course, some shinkankaku-ha writers had aimed at new approaches to expressing reality or people’s psychology. For example, Yokomitsu, who is sometimes identified as a modernist²⁶, wrote many works based on the psychology of ordinary people, or of his own life. His well-known short story *Hae* ("A Fly"), published in 1923, is one of the most significant works to represent the "neo-perceptionist" style. The story is about six passengers riding in a carriage, the driver, the horse, and a fly. In the first scene, the fly escapes from a spider’s web and perches on the horse. Then the narrator’s eyes move to the horse, which looks at the driver. After a brief description of the horse and the driver, the passengers are introduced one after another. The first is a farming woman
in a desperate hurry because she has received a telegram that her son is critically ill. Next is a couple who seem about to elope; then, a mother and her son, and finally a middle-aged man who had made a killing in the silk business the day before. The driver, however, is not concerned with the passengers in the least. He makes them wait because he wants to buy a steamed bun which is his only, and greatest, pleasure. Finally he makes his purchase, and the coach departs. However, the driver falls asleep on the road, and the carriage, going out of control, tumbles over a cliff. Only one "passenger" remains alive, and it is the fly. As it leaves the carriage and flits in the sky, we look back at the wreckage below through the fly's eyes and feel all the more acutely and ironically the cruel indifference of fate.

There are many experimental passages in this story. In particular, three techniques are good examples of Yokomitsu's new style. First, Yokomitsu avoids describing the characters' emotions. People's feelings are revealed only through their statements in conversation. Therefore, the overall tone of the story is objective and matter-of-fact. Second - and related to the lack of description of the characters' emotions - the fly and the horse are depicted as equally important as the human beings in the story. The fly is especially significant as it is the only "witness" to the accident in the final scene. The narrative
voice is that of the fly - a radical experiment even in the contemporary experimental literature of the time. Third is the experimental way in which Yokomitsu describes each scene in the story. For example, note how he describes the sunlight, and the way it shines on the driver’s back.

Escaping from under the eaves of the building, the sunlight fell upon the driver’s leg. It began to move up his side and mounted his stooped shoulders. His back was bent like a great mound of luggage.  

In spite of his experimentation in narrative style, even in "A Fly," Yokomitsu’s subject material remains based, of course, on the reality of people’s lives. By contrast, while Taruho’s subjects and modes of expression may be filtered through everyday experience, invariably he lifts reality to the level of the metaphysical or metafictional. Thus, a scholar such as Senuma Shigeki comments that "Inagaki Taruho is too much of a shinkankaku-ha writer to be in the mainstream of the shinkankaku-ha." As Senuma observes, Taruho’s avant-garde writing went beyond what any of the shinkankaku-ha writers attempted. It comes as no surprise that, as Bungei jidai went into decline, he gradually lost a place for publishing his works.

The shinkankaku coterie broke up in 1927 because some of its members joined the proletarian literature movement. The remainder went back to Bungei shunjū, or started their own new literary movements and small magazines.  

"Other
than his brief membership in Bungei jidai, Taruho never joined any major literary movement again. He was not interested in proletarian literature. He was non-political, and the subject and style of proletarian literature were too far removed from his fantastic and avant-garde interests. Furthermore, he had criticized the chief editor of Bungei shunju, Kikuchi Kan (1888-1948) and his "lowbrow" literature openly; thus, he could not join Bungei shunju either.30 As a result, from 1929 to 1945, Taruho published only one or two works a year.
Notes


2. Keene, *Dawn to the West*, 634-635.


11. Ibid., 11.

12. Larry Semon was a movie comedian popular in the 1920s. The movie critic James Neibaur writes in his book *Movie Comedians - the Complete Guide*, "Semon’s comedies were slapstick endeavors with a faster pace, bigger gags, and thus, wilder proceedings." (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, Inc., 1986, 16) Semon’s popularity declined as soon as other comedians such as Chaplin or Buster Keaton emerged on the silent screen.


American slapstick movies had been imported since the beginning of the Taishō period. According to the critic Tanaka Jun’ichirō, Chaplin’s movie which made the strongest impression on the Japanese audiences was "Mabel’s Strange Predicament" (*Mēberu no konnan*), a typical slapstick comedy,
released in January, 1915. After the success of this movie, Chaplin’s movies were released one after another in Japan. (Nihon eiga hattatsu-shi, vol.1, Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha, 1980, 262-263.)


15.Inagaki, Hoshi o uru mise, ITT, vol.1, 58.

16.Ibid., 59.


18. Keene, Dawn to the West, 641.


20.Bungei jidai was the coterie magazine published by the shinkankaku-ha writers. It was published from 1924 to 1927.


The term shingikō-ha (Neo-Technician Group) is used to indicate writers who elaborated on their writing techniques as well as the subject of the novel. Writers such as Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Satomi Ton (1888-1883), and Kume Masao (1891-1952) opposed the theory of non-technical, non-decorative writing style insisted upon by the Naturalist writers. However, the name shingikō-ha was used to express a certain tendency of any of the rising writers in Taishō period. Therefore, the writers considered as the shingikō-ha did not particularly act as a group, publishing, for example, a coterie magazine like the shinkankaku-ha or the shirakaba-ha writers.


25.Ibid., 413-414.


29. Bungei shunju is one the most established of Japanese magazines. It began publishing in 1923 and continues to this day. The Shinkankaku-ha was formed by young writers who published their novels mainly in Bungei shunju.

30. Kikuchi Kan started as an intellectual writer and then turned to popular literature. He was also the editor-in-chief of Bungei shunju. He gave young novelists many chances to publish their works, but in Taruho's view, Kikuchi practiced favoritism.
CHAPTER IV

ALCOHOLISM, POVERTY,

AND THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOVEL MIROKU

Taruho returned to his hometown of Akashi in 1931 in order to attend the funerals of his grandfather and grandmother who passed away within a few weeks of each other. He went back to Tokyo the same year, only to return to Akashi in 1932 to live there, and in Kobe, until 1935. Although he does not explain in his works why he returned to home, we can probably assume that he had lost a place to publish his works, and as a result, he was too poor to continue living in Tokyo.

Since the late 1920s, the mood in Japanese society had grown increasingly more reactionary. The military became involved in politics after the Manchurian Incident and the "National Emergency" of 1931. Although proletarian writers had formed literary groups such as NAPF (Japanese Proletarian Artists’ Foundation) and Rōgei (Rō no geijutsuka renmei, Foundation of Workers and Farmers as Artists), and they resisted the conservative policies of the government, they were suppressed by arrest and torture. In 1933,
Kobayashi Takiji (1903-1933), one of the most famous of the proletarian writers, was tortured to death by the "thought police." As a result of the severe crackdown, proletarian literary groups were banned by 1934, and the government succeeded in establishing control over the media, from magazines to radio, by the middle of the 1930s. Increasingly the government allowed publishers to publish novels only of an apolitical nature, or those which supported Japanese military policy.

As the above makes clear, the current trend in Japanese literature was moving in a direction that was a far cry from Taruho's modernist or modernist style of literature. For example, he compiled some of his short essays into a single work, "Essay - Vita Machinicus" once he was back in Akashi. Yet this essay, which Takeda Taijun was later to find so stimulating, was not published until 1948. At the same time, Taruho also suffered from a personal problem, namely alcoholism; and he could not concentrate on writing. He wrote that he was very aware of the problem, yet he also confessed that he could not stop drinking—it was only by drinking that he could escape from anxiety and fear. The autobiographical novel Hakuchūken (Daydreams), published in 1948, is an indication of the extent of his depression and paranoia. He writes that the protagonist "I" (watashi) suffered from aural hallucinations in which
the leaves of the trees on the street talked to him and laughed at him.

"... You [they said to the protagonist] are thrown away; moreover, you are now an alcoholic. Recently, you cannot write even a postcard or read even one line of a newspaper article, can you? Even if someone tries to help you, we bet it will be too late.... We don't know what will happen to you, a fellow now ignored by the people whom you used to ignore. Anyway, we can tell you this. This sadness will return again and again. And something more dreadful will cast its shadow over you."

Nevertheless, by the next day, I was able to forget temporarily this threat because of the business caused by my father's death and the cold sake that I kept drinking by sneaking into the kitchen during the funeral.²

Taruho describes a situation in which he is the outsider in literary circles and in which he felt great loneliness at being ignored by publishers. During his "Akashi Years," he was able to publish only one or two works, and these were in the magazine Shinseinen (New Young Men).³

In 1934, his father died, and Taruho and his mother were left alone. Selling the father's equipment from the dental practice, Taruho opened a second-hand clothing store in the place where his father had operated a clinic. He had no head for business, of course; soon he went bankrupt and closed the shop.

In 1935, Taruho went to Tokyo again. After staying at a friend's home for five months, he moved to Yokodera-chō. Yokodera-chō was located near the Shinchō publishing house,
and Narazaki Tsutomu (1901-1978), the editor-in-chief of the magazine Shinchō, was the only person who bought Taruho’s works after Taruho came back to Tokyo. However, Narazaki’s patronage seems to have arisen more out of a desire to get rid of Taruho, who constantly pestered him, rather than out of admiration for Taruho’s works. Narazaki bought, but did not publish, them.

Narazaki at Shinchō bought about one work a year, and it was the only dependable source of income I had. By the way, in order to catch him, one had to expect that it would take about ten days. An editor like him [Narazaki] could have cared less about a writer and drunk who had fallen on hard times, even if I did hang around the neighborhood. Or to put it another way, like the girls who waitressed at the Iizuka Sakaba ("Pub Iizuka"), he probably could not stand the smell of such a stinker.⁴

As his memoirs indicate, Taruho could sell his works only once a year, and he was nearly destitute. Furthermore, his alcoholism became worse in Tokyo because of the fact that the place where he lived, Yokodera-chō, was next to Kagurazaka, a part of Tokyo famous as an all-night town. The "Pub Iizuka" was a bar especially patronized by writers and that became famous for its clientele which included Umezaki Haruo (1915-1965), Tsuji Jun (1884-1944), or Takeda Rintarō (1904-1946). After going without food for two or three days, Taruho would allowed himself to be taken to the Pub Iizuka by his friends. He could eat there, and he chose
to spend his friend’s money for copious amounts of unrefined sake (doburoku).

It was, given these circumstances, that in 1940, he published the autobiographical novel Miroku (Maitreyya) in Shinchō. The protagonist is named Émile (Emiru in Japanese), and his life is patterned after Taruho’s own life. In the first part entitled Shinchū no hōdan ("The Brass Bullet"), Émile attends a private middle school in Kobe. He loves to see Western movies and read Western novels. He can never forget the opening scene of a film entitled The Brass Bullet, in which a bullet flies through the sky above a city that appears to be constructed of paper.5 He also admires the American stunt pilot Art Smith, whose biography had been translated into Japanese.6 Actually, it is not only Émile but also his friends who are imaginative students fascinated by modern Western art and modern technology such as the airplane. He and his friends write poems and read each other’s works. They talk about film, artistic movements, and scientific theories which influenced modernism, especially Futurism.

After graduating from middle school, Émile sent his works to the rising writer "H.S.," who is none other than Satō Haruo, in Tokyo, and he asks him to look at them. H.S. replies and invites Émile to come to Tokyo. At the end of the first chapter, we are told that Part One has been a
reconstruction of Émile's memories of his early days in Kobe.

The second chapter is entitled Bohan no yakata ("The House Next to the Cemetery"). Here, Émile lives in a part of Tokyo where the famous writer of the Meiji period Ozaki Kōyō (1867-1905) once lived - and where the most famous actress of the late Meiji and early Taishō periods, Matsui Sumako (1886-1919), hanged herself. Unlike these famous artists, Émile is ignored by literary circles and publishers. Lacking any income, he has already sold everything he owns--from his futon down to his toothbrush. He can afford to eat only once in two or three days. In spite of his poverty and hunger, however, he cannot stop drinking. Furthermore, he is now tormented by alcohol-induced nightmares even in the daytime.

The end of the story is strangely optimistic, however. Émile recalls a statement made by his friend K.I, a portrait of the writer Ishikawa Kiyoshi or Jun (1899-1987). Ishikawa has told Émile about the dark, confused nature of society and the savior Fugen (Samantabhadra Bodhisattva), and Émile imagines that he himself can become a reincarnation of another bodhisattva, Miroku (Maitreya), who waits for more than five billion years for the end of the Mappō, or the age of the last days, in order to save people who do not attain Buddhahood. He accepts himself for what
he is, and he sees a dream in which he wraps himself in the
curtain of his room and sits down on a lotus leaf in a
manner not unlike Maitreya.

The novel is divided into two chapters, and originally,
only the second chapter was published as Maitreya in 1940.
When Taruho published the novel in book form in 1946, he
added the first chapter. As a result, the tone of the two
parts of the work is quite different.

The first chapter entitled "The Brass Bullet" is
fantastic. For example, Taruho does not establish any
boundary between the real surroundings of Émile and a scene
from the movie The Brass Bullet, which Émile watches. As a
result, Émile appears to exist inside the pavilion in the
amusement park. At the beginning of the story, we are told:

Émile could not forget the opening titles of an
adventure sequel. Such as when he looked at the crowd
passing in front of a bright store window, it was as if
they were the black shadows in a Dadaist painting. Or
when he sat down under the hand straps on the last
street car, and his tie, blown by the summer night
breeze, flapped against his face. He could hardly
forget the titles of the movie, or the fragrance of
"Violet" perfume as it wafted about his neck.

It looked like a night view of a city made of
paper. There was the mist over the tower buildings,
and each window of the towers was lit; moreover, five
or six stars above the mist were shining. Into this
scene of the city, a bullet which looked like a cannon
ball appeared. The bullet swam like a fish in the air
for a while, and then putting its tip to one point in
the sky, it wrote letters from left to right — yes, it
spelled out "The Brass Bullet." (The bullet stopped at
the dot for the period)."
Clearly this introductory paragraph is about a city which, although not identified by its real name, is Kobe. The second paragraph proceeds to a description of the first scene of the movie, The Brass Bullet. While these two paragraphs refer to different scenes, of the actual city and of the movie, the tone and construction of the description makes it seem as if both of them are the same scene in the movie. Consequently, the first sentence of the second paragraph may indicate either a view of Kobe or of the opening shot from the movie.

The critic Shirakawa Masayoshi calls the first chapter "a surrealistic novel" and the second chapter "autobiographical." As he indicates, the second chapter is a far darker and more chaotic depiction of Taruho's real life circa 1940. Émille remains a dreamy character, but here his dreams might well be called alcoholic-induced nightmares or delirium tremens.

Émille thought that when he reached the point where there was no need to stop drinking, he would be liberated from alcohol. Émille believed this was so. Otherwise, he had to confess that all of his efforts to quit drinking had been meaningless.... As punishment for his arrogance, the "Devil" had appeared since New Year's Day.... [a]nd he had dragged him about bodily. Émille had had to pray, calling upon the name of Amida Buddha or the Holy Mother, as he writhed in agony.... He wanted to scream and run outside, but his body was too weak because he had not eaten anything solid for several days. His body had gone limp. He did not ever have the strength to sit up and drink a glass of water. It was impossible for him to lie still, however. Alongside his pillow, a tiny red devil was dancing, his shape wrapped in flames of fire."
Just as the protagonist "watashi," who suffers from delirium tremens in Daydreams, had believed that the tree leaves were making fun of him, Emile feels that devil really does exist and is dancing by his pillow. We know, moreover, that this episode is true because of Taruho’s own experience: not only does he tells us so in Daydreams, but also the writer Uno Kōji (1891-1961) writes of how he was a witness to Taruho’s tormented behavior at a party held in 1940.

It was at the time when Inagaki’s abuse of alcohol and nicotine was at its most horrific. Pointing to the empty tatami, Inagaki said that he saw countless ants walking on it. Furthermore, his hand, as it pointed to the floor, was trembling uncontrollably.10

The second chapter of Maitreya is filled with talk of depression and, at the same time, self-affirmation that starvation and alcoholism are good as "ascetic" practices. For instance, when Emile has a dream of eating food after one of his two-or-three day fasts, he thinks that the dream of eating food is the most miserable dream he has ever had. Yet Taruho also adds that Emile then experiences a great feeling; it is as if he had seen a big, empty, and new paradise.11 So that, while Emile is driven by fear and loneliness, and is hardly confident about his single-minded pursuit of alcohol, nonetheless, the passage suggests an underlying self-conceit or affirmation. It is this self-affirmation that is revealed to the fullest extent in the very last scene of Maitreya, in which Emile comes to know of
the existence of Maitreya, the Buddha of the Second Coming, and that he discovers this bodhisattva as being within himself.

The scholar of Indian Studies Matsuyama Shuntarō points out that, when he wrote Maitreya, Taruho was inspired by three different incidents which were directly or indirectly related to Taruho's perception of Maitreya in the late 1930s. First, when Taruho saw the picture of the Maitreya statue in the magazine Kogito [the title derives from "cogito, ergo sum" by the French philosopher Descartes], he was deeply impressed by its beauty. As Matsuyama indicates, Taruho mentions in the essay Tosotsu jōshō ("Going up to Nirvana," 1949) that this statue inspired him, and he wrote Maitreya. It was a Chinese statue made of gold and copper and which was created in the third century. Taruho was fascinated by its ample curves, and he writes that the curve of the statue was very modernistic. He also touches upon the mysterious beauty of this Maitreya statue in Maitreya.

Matsuyama also mentions that Taruho suddenly thought of the word "saint" when he took a bath. This episode is also introduced in Maitreya. Taruho writes that Émile was struck by the word "saint," and he understood that people who suffered or who were having difficulty in society like him could be considered "saints." Moreover, Taruho
reproduces this same episode as the experience of "I" in *Daydreams*. After "I" thought of the word "saint," he decides to study about saints, although Taruho does not indicate in either work that the saint he has in mind is Maitreya. Yet it appears that Taruho had began to link the word "saint" to Maitreya.

Finally, as Matsuyama indicates, it is important to note Ishikawa Jun’s novel of 1936, *Fugen* (The *Bodhisattva*, or *Samantabhadra*) as the source which inspired Taruho’s *Maitreya*. In *Maitreya*, Ishikawa is in fact introduced by the initials of his childhood name, K.I. (Kiyoshi Ishikawa), or simply, I. It is the statement that K.I. makes and that awakens Émile to the existence of Maitreya.

It was what the red-faced I. had said last night at the *oden* restaurant in Ginza. This I., the author of *Fugen*, preached about the limits to everything in the world, and he gave us an example about the speed of light as explained by Einstein. And when he argued that, because "existence" is something that is always elusive and hard to define, we are invariably forced back to considering it in terms of "phenomena," he appeared to be concluding that even the most metaphysical things must necessarily be rooted in physical phenomena. That's why even the bodhisattva who has taken leave of his world, and who has already gone off to a distant place [above the clouds], must, as a matter of course, return to the real world." Did that mean then that the bodhisattva who wears earrings and a diadem, and who has been depicted across the centuries in copper prints, will be coming around in the 20th century too? Émile tried to think so. Well, then,... what was keeping his bodhisattva?"

"The bodhisattva who wears earrings and a diadem and who has been depicted across the centuries in copper prints" is, of
course, the Maitreyā that Taruho saw in *Kogito*. Moreover, although Taruho never mentions per se that he was inspired by Ishikawa’s *The Bodhisattva*, this paragraph indicates that bodhisattva is clearly the subject of Ishikawa’s novel, and Maitreyā serves for Taruho in much the same way that Samantabhadra functions in Ishikawa’s *Fugen*. Doubtless Taruho was fascinated with Ishikawa’s concept of the bodhisattva in terms of 20th-century phenomenology, and of his use of it as an analogy (mitate) in the novel. Ishikawa’s novel was the obvious source of inspiration for Taruho in writing *Maitreyā*, and he emphasizes the concept of the bodhisattva. Just as Ishikawa had used Buddhist imagery as a form of analogy in his novel.¹⁸

Ishikawa published *The Bodhisattva* in 1936, four years before Taruho published *Maitreyā*, and he won the Akutagawa prize for the novel the following year. The protagonist "watashi" ("I") is an impoverished novelist who lives in downtown Tokyo. He has a dream in which he will write about Joan of Arc and her chronicler Christine de Pizan, but his novel seems never to approach completion. He also has a dream of a young woman Yukari, who is the sister of the protagonist’s friend Iori Bunzō and who has been involved in the left-wing political underground for ten years. Although "I" has not seen her for ten years, he remains unfailingly devoted to his memory of Yukari and his love for her.
Ishikawa builds layer upon layer of analogies for "dust and flowers" - Japan in the 1930s and France in the fifteenth century - and the dream of divine intervention through Joan of Arc's Asian counterpart, the bodhisattva.

Samantabhadra is the bodhisattva who remains in this dirty, mortal world in order to save people even though he/she could embrace the nirvana of extinction into nothingness and live "above the clouds." But, to bring enlightenment to others, Samantabhadra changes form and lives among ordinary people. Sometimes he becomes a person who has so contemptible a job as prostitution. By contrast, Maitreya is the bodhisattva who waits for the very end of the last days to save people.

The scholar Stanley Weinstein explains about Maitreya and people's faith in him as follows:

A bodhisattva now in the Tusita (J: Tosotsu) heaven who will, millions of years hence, descend to this world to attain Buddhahood and lead its inhabitants to enlightenment. According to the Maitreya scriptures, those who declare their faith in Maitreya through worship, meditation, and invocation of this name will, after their death in this world, be reborn in the Tusita heaven where they can behold Maitreya, hear him preach the Buddhist law, (dharma), and enjoy the pleasure of his heavenly realm...."¹⁹

Maitreya is a bodhisattva, or a being that has achieved awakening. He is also identified as the "Mirai-butsu" ("Future Buddha"). Although Taruho seems to write of Maitreya because he was inspired by Ishikawa's The
Bodhisattva, his metaphorical use of Maitreya is very different.

One can speculate that there are two reasons why Taruho chose Maitreya as his analogy. We need to recall that early in the novel, Taruho has Émile say several times that he was fascinated by the concept of "oshimai" or "saishū" ("the end"), whether he is speaking of the last train home at night or of decadence. Hence, one of the important topos of the novel is the image of "the end." However, Taruho’s image of "the end" does not mean a dead end. For example, in Taruho, airplanes, machines, stars, the cosmos, and even scientific terms are used as metaphors for something that exists or transports one beyond the limitations of human life or human imagination. In this work, Maitreya performs the role of pointing to this transcendent concept. Generally speaking, science and religion, or machines and religion, are not seen as being compatible or similar. However, for Taruho, both the airplane and Maitreya impress him with equal force. Second, through Maitreya, Taruho affirms his existence in a world in which he is totally ignored. Taruho spent almost a decade without a stable job or a fixed address. As Taruho has Émile say, he is incapable of changing his circumstances. Taruho abandons the idea that his impoverished state and chronic alcoholism can be altered by any act of his own will. His only
solution is to affirm the importance of himself by answering that he will be saved in the future.

Maitreya went virtually unnoticed at the time, ignored like so many of Taruho's works, and Taruho continued to live in dire poverty. However, his circumstances improved temporarily as a result of being drafted in 1944. Since he was already 43 years old, he was not sent to the front lines. Instead, he was ordered to work in an automobile factory in Yokohama. He had to go to the factory everyday, but at least his meals were guaranteed. Moreover, the manager of the factory was a fan of Taruho's works, and he gave Taruho easy desk work to do. Since in addition, there was no longer any equipment for such work, Taruho ended up sitting in front of the desk all day doing nothing.

By April 1945, Inagaki's apartment in Yokodera-chō had burned as a result of an air raid. After that attack, he could not find a permanent place to live. From 1945 to 1950, the year when Taruho left Tokyo and started living in Kyoto, he moved to more than ten places in the Tokyo area — never once paying rent.

After World War II and the return of a liberal, democratic mood to Japan, publishing companies began to pay attention to Taruho once more. Like writers whose works had been banned - such as Nagai Kafū (1879-1959), Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, or Ishikawa Jun - Taruho too started publishing.
Maitreya appeared in book form in 1946. The following year Taruho published four works in magazines and one book, Beginner’s Intro to the Cosmos. Still, his income was inadequate to make ends meet. Furthermore, most of his limited income went for alcohol.

In 1947, Taruho was introduced to Shinohara Shiyo, his future wife, by Date Norio (1920-1961), the owner of the Yuriika (Eureka) Publishing Company. At the time Taruho was suffering from a serious case of nyctalopia, a condition in which one loses the ability to see in the dark, he felt that he could not bare to live in Tokyo any more. In Tokyo tonsōkyoku ("Tokyo Fugue"), Taruho recalls that when Shiyo invited Taruho to Kyoto, he decided to leave Tokyo and never come back. He moved his base back to Kansai and Kyoto, and this move was the beginning of the most productive period in his life.
Notes

1. The psychologist Howard Blane explains in his book *The Personality of the Alcoholic* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968) that dependent wishes, usually meaning to want to be dependent on one's siblings or partner, are the crucial factors in alcoholism. He adds that anger and depression are also important factors in causing alcohol abuse. These hypotheses may well apply to Taruho's case. As his literary base in the modernist movement and/or in the shinkankaku-ha eroded, and society became reactionary and eventually ultranationalistic, Taruho could not find a new major literary group to which he could belong. His anger, depression, and search for self-affirmation can be seen in many works which were written from the early 1930s to the early 1950s - such as *Miroku*.


3. *Shinseinen*, published from 1920 to 1950, was an important magazine for modernist writers. At first, the magazine introduced foreign mysteries and detective stories. However, in 1927, Yokonimo Seishi (1902-1981), the editor-in-chief and a writer of horror and detective stories, changed the style of the magazine to modernist. Under his editorial policy, for example, the modernist writer Yumeno Kyūsaku (1889-1936) had his first major magazine debut, publication of his novel *Ayakashi no ko* (*A Strange Drum*) in 1926. Edogawa Ranpo (1894-1965), who wrote mysteries and detective stories under the influence of Edgar Allan Poe and Oscar Wilde, also published his first work in *Shinseinen*. *Shinseinen* did not escape the censorship of the Japanese government, however. After 1938, the tone of the magazine changed, and the magazine published works which glorified Japanese militarism.

4. Inagaki, "*Waga iori wa miyako no tatsumi,*** Tokyo tonsōkyoku, 110-111.

5. *The Brass Bullet* is an American action film created in 1918. The movie consists of 18 sequels, and each episode was released one after another. For example, the first episode entitled "A Flying Start" was copyrighted in July 17, in 1918, and the final episode entitled "The Amazing Confession" was copyrighted in November 21, 1918. The series was released in Japan in 1919.

6. Art Smith was the American pilot who came to Japan for an aerial demonstration in 1916. Taruho went to the Hanshin Racetrack outside of Kobe to see this demonstration.


11. Inagaki, Miroku, 199.

12. Kogito (Cogito) is a magazine which was published by the writers who were influenced by German Romanticism. It was published from 1932 to 1944.


17. Inagaki, Miroku, 323.


It is believed that at the end of "Mappō" ("The Age of Decadence), Maitreya will appear in the world to save all the people who will not have been saved by Shakyamuni. It is also believed that "the Age of Decadence" will come 5,670,000,000 years later after Shakyamuni entered nirvana. Until that time comes, Maitreya sits and meditates upon the future. Hence, his pose in Buddhist iconography is as a contemplative figure.

20. When Taruho met Date, Date was a student of Kyoto University. Later, he became the owner of the Yuriika Publishing Company. It was Taruho who christened the company with the new name of "Eureka." Yuriika published many of Taruho’s works. For example, it published the complete collection of Taruho’s works through volume seven. As a result of Date’s death, however, the remaining volumes went unpublished.
CHAPTER V
TARUHO’S AESTHETICISM OF PEDOPHILIA

In 1950, at the age of 49, Taruho married Shinohara Shiyo in Kyoto. In "Tokyo Fugue" (1964), Taruho discusses the reason for his marriage. According to Taruho, he decided to marry because Shinohara was a nun of the Honganji-ha of the Jodo Buddhism; therefore, he thought that he could avoid "marriage hell," a phrase that he had borrowed from the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche’s, by entering into an "unsecular" arrangement. Moreover, since Shiyo was working for Kyoto prefecture as a public official, he was released at least from the pressure to sell his works to keep body and soul alive. He was still unable to overcome his abuse of alcohol, but his life became stable enough to energize him in his writing.

Thus, in 1950, Taruho began to revise his works, publishing them in the magazine Sakka, and this arrangement lasted for two decades.¹ The writer Hagiwara Sachiko (1952- ) explains why Taruho started revising and republishing his works in a note appended to Taruho’s collected letters.² According to Hagiwara, Taruho wanted

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to compile his old works in published form for his readers. She does not explain in detail, but it can be thought that Taruho wanted to re-publish his old works, many of which were scattered throughout so many and obscure different magazines. Moreover, he wanted them to appear in one magazine instead of waiting to be published in the form of a zenshū (Complete Works). He was attracting new readers starting in the late 1940s and the early 1950s, but it was unlikely that they had had a chance to read many of his works. In the process of his re-publishing effort, Taruho revised more than two hundred of his works. The sole exceptions are One Thousand and One Second Tales and "Essay - Vita Machinicus."

In fact, Taruho revised his works not only in Sakka but also at any occasion he had a chance to re-publish them. For example, his "A shop that Sells Stars" had been revised several times before it was compiled in Inagaki Taruho taizen (The Complete Inagaki Taruho, 1969), a zenshū which is generally considered to contain the final, definitive version of Taruho’s numerous rewritings. The changes in the initial autobiographical section are relatively few, and they consist of minor variations in vocabulary or different expressions used in the same context. However, the ending of the story is very different. In the early version, the protagonist watashi does not believe that the shop sells
stars, and he calls the manager a liar. Upset at being called a liar, the manager punches the protagonist. This ending becomes a noisy farce - a type of scene that is commonly found in Taruho's early works. In the revised version, however, the protagonist listens quietly to the manager's explanation about stars, and he recommends to the manager good places to capture stars. The original "A Shop that Sells Stars" is far more humorous and vivid, especially as a reflection of Taruho's youth and the slapstick style reminiscent of American film comedians such as Chaplin and Semon. By contrast, the revised version is more mysterious and fantastic. In spite of Taruho's announced intention to improve his works, it is difficult to conclude that the revised versions are always or necessarily better than the originals. Still, it seems that he was trying to present the best of his early works whenever he re-published them. At the same time, Taruho began to create many new works. Small publishers, as well as major literary magazines such as Gunzō and Bungakkai, also began to publish his new works.

In 1954, Taruho published the essay A-kankaku to V-kankaku ("The A-Feeling and the V-feeling") in Gunzō. This essay is about homosexuality and pedophilia as his aesthetic ideal. For Taruho, homosexuality and pedophilia had always been important literary subjects. For example, as mentioned before, one of Taruho's earliest works to refer to
homosexual love was "Pince-nez Glasses," published in 1924, in which Taruho recalled his love for a younger student in Kansai Gakuin Middle School. He also wrote the short story Choichoi nikki ("Off and On Diary") in 1925. In this short story, Taruho writes in detail of the love and the physical desire of the protagonist watashi for the boy Kyōkichi.

When we sat down on the carpet in the public hall, Kyōkichi looked askance at me. As soon as the lights were turned off, I clasped his hand. Kyōkichi said, "You are perverse, aren’t you?"

Watashi waits for Kyōkichi behind his house; he searches for Kyōkichi by the sea; and he gets astride of Kyōkichi at home. The story finishes with the sentence, "I woke up from a dream" and tells the reader that everything has been just a dream.

Unlike the early stories in which the protagonist’s infatuations are presented in fictional or semi-autobiographical fashion, in "The A-feeling and the V-feeling," Taruho explains directly to the audience his theory of the aesthetics of his predilection for pedophilia. As a result, he cites many literary figures ranging from Euripides to Ihara Saikaku, and covers a wide range of "objet" associated with the posterior: from the elegant muscular derrière of the zebra to a fascination with underwear or motorcycle saddles.
"The A-feeling and the V-feeling" begins with a reference to his early essay *chōkō-dō kappa dangi* ("Chōkō-dō’s Discourse on kappa") published in 1953. *Chōkō-dō* is one of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke’s pen names, and in this earlier work Taruho recalls Akutagawa and a conversation he had with this great writer. Of course, Akutagawa’s association with Taruho had been brief because of Akutagawa’s suicide in 1927. Yet Akutagawa evaluated Taruho’s literature highly during Taruho’s *shinkankaku-ha* years, and Taruho appreciated Akutagawa’s support of his career. For example, the critic Hirano Ken mentions how he had read the article about the comments that established writers made in the *gohyōkai*, or evaluation sessions, of new novels sponsored by *Shinchō* magazine. When the writers turned to a critique of Taruho’s "A Shop that Sells Stars," only Akutagawa defended Taruho’s literature. Hirano writes:

I am not sure that my memory is correct, but when "A Shop that Sells Stars" was discussed in the writers’ session, Tokuda Shūsei (1871-1943), Kikuchi Kan, and some other writers attending said, "After reading it, I thought I had wasted my time," or "I was upset when I read it." Moreover, as if it was the end of the matter, Kume Masao made fun [of Taruho] and said, "Private Inagaki did not get promoted after all, did he?" Among those present, the person who defended "A Shop that Sells Stars" was Akutagawa Ryūnosuke. After listening to Kikuchi Kan’s remark that, "I don’t understand what [Taruho] wanted to present in the work," Akutagawa said, "Well, it’s all about feeling. The story is filled with a light-colored, lovable nonsense.""
Taruho sent his books to Akutagawa, and Akutagawa always encouraged Taruho with his replies. Finally, Taruho met Akutagawa in April 1927, three months before Akutagawa committed suicide. In this conversation with Akutagawa about pornographic prints (shunga) from the Edo period, Taruho was told by Akutagawa, "You must write about why the beautiful boy fascinates you forever." Inspired by Akutagawa's statement, Taruho appears to have been promoted to write "Chōkō-dō’s Discourse on kappa." He writes about Akutagawa in the first half of the essay. In the second, he explains his philosophy of pedophilia. It is this latter part that he later developed into the far more famous essay, "The A-feeling and the V-feeling."

After referring to his conversation with Akutagawa, or "Chōkō-dō" [Hall of Lucid, Beautiful River] Taruho introduces other literary works that deal with homosexual materials, such as Mishima Yukio’s Kinjiki (Forbidden Colors), and Jean Genet’s Journal du Voleur (The Thief’s Journal) in order to indicate that the authors of these works are, like himself, fascinated by the human derrière. For instance, Taruho describes the episode from Forbidden Colors in which a young ballet dancer takes out four eggs from his derrière." He also mentions Genet’s statement in which Genet was fascinated by such modern vehicles as the motorcycle because he loved the feeling that came to him
when he mounted the saddle of such vehicles, and the saddle pressed against his buttocks. According to Taruho, the attention directed toward the derrière by these writers derives from what he calls "A-Feeling."

Although he never explains explicitly what "A-feeling" and "V-feeling" are, from his examples it is clear that the A of "A-feeling" comes from anal, the V of "V-feeling" from vagina, and a third, "P-feeling," from penis. Yet, these terms do not simply refer to the parts of the anatomy but also to their metaphysical essence. Through his countless references to "V-feeling," Taruho reveals that the "V" is a metaphor for an adult female and her style of sensitivity, and that "P-feeling" applies to the notion of being an adult male and his style of sensitivity. Moreover, according to Taruho, as a general rule "V-feeling" and "P-feeling" can be equated with heterosexuality and work only as the "machine" of the reproduction. In contrast, "A-feeling" is related to his definition of true intelligence and art."

Taruho’s view that homosexuality is superior to heterosexuality is an idea not uncommon in premodern Japanese culture. A homosexual relationship between a young boy and an adult male, usually well-educated, had been widely accepted in traditional Japanese culture. For example, there is an episode of manly love recorded in Uji shūi monogatari (A Collection of Uji Tales), compiled in the
early 13th century and considered one of the most important works of *setsuwa*, or popular narrative literature. One day, the Ichijō Archbishop is fascinated by a young acrobat in a traveling show. The archbishop virtually forces the boy to stay behind at the temple and become a monk. In the last scene, Archbishop takes off the boy’s clothes and leads the boy to his room."

This is a humorous story which makes fun of the monk’s lasciviousness, and is a reflection of the Rabelaisian treatment of heterosexual and homosexual love in *setsuwa* literature in general. Homosexual love between a boy and a monk is a fairly common subject in *setsuwa* literature in medieval Japan. Iwata Jun’ichi (1900-1945), the first person in 20th century to systematically study and collect materials on the history of homosexual practices in Japan wrote his book *Honchō nanshoku kō* (*Thoughts on Pederasty in Our Kingdom*). He states in the book that although there are references in *Ise monogatari* (*The Tale of Ise*) etc. to "uruwashiki tomo" ("beautiful friends") in non-Buddhist texts, popular myth has long associated the introduction of the practice of male homosexuality into Japan with Kūkai, the founder of the Shingon Buddhism in Japan in the 9th century. According to Iwata’s edited and translated version of *Thoughts on Pederasty in Our Kingdom* in *The Love of Samurai*:
He [Kūkai] returned from China in the first year of the Daidō era (AD 806), at the beginning of the Heian period, and it was precisely this—a Chinese custom—that he is said to have introduced with the Shingon teachings. It soon became fashionable among certain monks, was then adopted by notable laymen, and finally spread among the people."

Iwata brings forward the counterargument by citing still older references to homosexuality in the *Shoku Nihongi*, (Japanese Chronicles Continued) written in 797.

Whatever the origins of homosexuality in Japan, the Kūkai legend speaks of the fact that male love was practiced among Buddhist monks. Monks were strictly prohibited from heterosexual relationships; but relations with boys in the temples called "chigo" were permitted.

In the Edo period, homosexual love became popular among the warrior and townsmen classes of society. The boys who were loved were called wakashū, and they included both professional prostitutes and the sons of upper-class warriors. The adult who initiates a relationship with a wakashū is called nenja. Homosexual relationship was called shūdō (an abbreviation of wakashūdō), and as the characters suggest, it has its theoretical origins in the stoic training in moral rules and ascetic training of a monk. For instance, Ihara Saikaku, the writer of the ukiyo zōshi genre often wrote of wakashū and shūdō. His *Nanshoku ōkagami* (The Great Mirror of Male Love, 1687) is a compilation of stories of wakashū and nenja, and of kabuki actors who were loved by
rich townsmen. In particular Saikaku wrote many episodes in which the *wakashū* dies in order to carry out his promise of love for the *nenja*. Take for instance the example of two warriors, Tamanosuke and Senzaemon, who promise to love each other forever in *The Great Mirror of Male Love*. One day Tamanosuke, the boy who is loved by a *daimyō* (a feudal lord), becomes sick. Hearing Tamanosuke’s serious illness, Senzaemon, a lower-class warrior who loves Tamanosuke secretly but passionately, has visited Tamanosuke’s house three times a day in order to inquire after Tamanosuke’s health for six months. After recovering from his illness, Tamanosuke notices that Senzaemon worried about him. Tamanosuke asks Senzaemon to be his lover, and they promise forever love each other. However, soon their relationship is revealed, and they are arrested because Tamanosuke is his lord’s most loving boy. Both Tamanosuke and Senzaemon have decided to die, and they ask their lord to allow them to commit *seppuku*. However, the master releases them. To show their gratitude and loyalty, Tamanosuke and Senzaemon decide that they won’t see each other until Tamanosuke becomes 25 years old and that until then, they will work hard for their lord.10

The scholar Teruoka Yasutaka explains that *shūdō* is based on the concept of *giri*, and *giri* means "good manners, honesty, bravery, modesty, unselfishness, self-control,"
filial piety, repayment of obligations, and mercy, and especially they [homosexuals] must not be afraid of death for love."¹¹ A more dispassionate view might consider the love described in the story of Tamanosuke and Senzaemon as a reflection of the high priority placed upon loyalty in Tokugawa neo-Confucian morality.

The aura of stoicism that surrounds homosexual love is intimately related to the romanticism of suffering and dying for love. Consequently homosexuality in Japan has not been treated traditionally as immoral. Rather it has been admired for its purity, and unquestionably Taruho's philosophy in praise of homosexuality derives from this traditional attitude toward male love. Therefore, Taruho does not hesitate in insisting upon the aesthetic quality of homosexuality, and he does so without feelings of immorality or shame.

Consequently, Taruho's attitude toward homosexuality differs from that of modern novelists in the West and Japan. The scholar Claude J. Summers wraps up the historic situation of homosexuals in one sentence:

Identification as a homosexual is frequently accompanied or preceded by feelings of guilt and shame and by a sense of (often quite justified) paranoia, for to be homosexual in most modern societies is to be set apart and stigmatized.¹²

In cultures based on Christianity, homosexuality has been regarded as sin or a crime. Oscar Wilde's imprisonment
because of his homosexual relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas is perhaps the most famous case in modern British letters, for example.

Another example is the case of the French author André Gide. He could only imply homosexuality in his novels—such as the Michel’s fascination with the Arab boys in L’Immoraliste (The Immoralist, 1902) or the love between Olivier and his uncle Eduoard in Les Faux-Monnayeurs (The Counterfeiters, 1926). When in 1911 he wrote Corydon, in which he justified homosexuality by referring to Greek myth, the book had to be printed privately in an edition of only eleven copies, and it could not be published in ordinary book form until 1924 because of legal prohibitions. The scholar Patrick Pollard tells the story in which Gide’s old friend Jacques Maritain, "a Catholic apologist, asked Gide to suspend the publication of Corydon." As Maritain warned, Gide was severely criticized by the Catholic Church for publishing Corydon.

In Japan, Mishima Yukio is one of the most famous novelists to deal with homosexual themes. Nevertheless, although he valued Taruho’s literature greatly, Mishima did not openly advocate homosexual love like Taruho, who dares to call himself "a writer of pedophilia" in his own books. For example, in his novel Confessions of a Mask (1949), Mishima discusses the topics of narcissism and homosexuality
in the context of love between male friends in middle school and of indifference to women. However, as the title itself implies, the novel could be a complete masked "fiction."

Taruho’s works do not indicate this kind of psychological or social hesitation. Perhaps one reason for his open attitude toward homosexuality is that he was not as well-known as Mishima, and Taruho did not need to be concerned with the social impact of his publications or of his reputation as a writer. There is, perhaps however, a more important reason, and it is that Taruho’s attitude and philosophy about homosexuality correlates with the Japanese premodern tradition in which homosexuality is seen as sophisticated style of love.

This is not to deny, on the other hand, that his artistic aestheticism had not also been influenced by the German novel *Awakening of Spring* and other Western works of art since the time when Taruho was in middle school. This influence is seen in his idealized vision of boys as expressed in "The A-feeling and V-feeling," as well as in his novels, and these boys possesses characteristics that set them apart from traditional Japanese boys. For example, Taruho insists that the ideal boy should be allowed to associate with haikara (westernized, or fashionable) fashion such as western-style hats, underwears, socks, and laced boots.
These boys as objects of his pedophilia are also related to the essence of Taruho’s eroticism. Taruho describes his ideal boy who has A-kankaku as if he were a doll. For instance, in the episode of the laced boots; he writes:

For example, if he [boy] now sits down on the door frame and fastens his laced boots, what does he think? He thinks that he does not want to wear the boots to go out. The feeling of regret of wearing the boots switches the concern about himself who puts his toes into the shoes and who realizes they fit perfectly. After wearing the new shoes of which bottoms are made glossy, what does he want to do? Does he want to be on the beautiful linoleum-covered floor or the flat asphalt? Does he want to play some role with making a sound to walk on the stage? Does he want to step on the carpet? Or does he want to put his foot on the clutch of a spotless car by sitting at the driver’s seat? No, he wants to be treated roughly.¹⁴

This Taruho’s ideal boy is quite different from a real boy. For instance, it is difficult to guess the A-kankaku boy’s age. We are told he is old enough to drive a car, yet the image of him is of a very tender youth.

...[i]n the middle of running under the bunting, he wants to fall down, raising a small cloud of dust — moreover, he does not stand up immediately but looks strange as though he were fainting or something — and he wants to be held in the arms of his teacher smelling of cigarettes and, provoking his friends’ envy and yearning, he wants to be carried to the medical tent.¹⁵

Taruho’s A-kankaku boy is somehow artificial, and lives only in the imagination. The critic Noguchi Takehiko identifies this Taruho’s quality of aestheticism as meka-erosisizumu
(mechanical-eroticism, or eros in the machine). Noguchi creates this term in order to explain the image of Maitreya superimposed on the first scene of the western movie The Brass Bullet, but its concept can also apply to Taruho's A-kankaku. Just as Taruho had once described that the children in "A Shop that Sells Stars" as "dolls that had been wound up and then let go." We find that his depiction of the boy is artificially erotic.

Furthermore, Taruho's creation of his A-kankaku boy appears to be an extension of his own narcissism. Actually he states that narcissism is the key of homosexuality because a homosexual tries to find the image of himself in the face of his lover, just as though he were looking into a mirror. For Taruho, the person who treats the boy roughly is himself, and the boy who is treated roughly is also him. Thus, his A-kankaku boy returns to himself as a metaphor.

Despite Taruho's detailed and concrete descriptions such as boots and underwear, or the many episodes introduced from literary works, "The A-feeling and the V-feeling" is by contrast extremely metaphysical.

In 1957, Taruho's first zenshū (complete works) began to appear from the Yuriika Publisher, but after the death of the owner of the Yuriika, Date Norio, the zenshū was abandoned with the publication of volume seven. Taruho had
to wait until 1969 to publish his complete works.

After the zenshū was abandoned, Taruho concentrated on revising his works in Sakka until he started writing the novel Sanmoto Gorōzaemon tadaima taisan tsukamatsuru (Sanmoto Gorōzaemon is Running Away Now, 1968), a work much admired by Mishima Yukio. The story is written entirely in katakana and kanji, or the popular writing style of the Edo or the early Meiji period. Taruho is working in a premodern writing style because he chooses to base the work on Inao mononoke roku (The Record of Monsters in Inao) written by Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843) in the late Edo period. Sanmoto is the story about the young boy Heitarō and his encounter with a strange monster that called Sanmoto Gorōzaemon. One day, Heitarō touches an old mound about which there exists an old legend. According to the legend, anyone touching the mound will be molested by evil spirits. Just as tradition foretold, Heitarō is attacked by monsters for a month, but he rather enjoys their coming. Finally Sanmoto, the highest ranking monster, appears, and much impressed by Heitarō’s bravery, gives a small mallet. He explains that whenever Heitarō is in danger and uses the mallet, Sanmoto will appear to help him. After Sanmoto leaves, Heitarō feels sad, and he wants to tell Sanmoto to come back again.

Taruho’s Sanmoto is valued highly by the critics such as Noguchi and Horikiri Naoto. For example, quoting Mishima
Yukio's admirable statement — i.e., "Taruho developed beautifully the simple horror story into a philosophical love story and thereby created his own literary world," Noguchi compares Taruho's sensual imagination and aestheticism to that of Tanizaki.20

Mishima, whose essay Shōsetsu to wa nani ka ("What the novel is," 1968-1970) is quoted by Noguchi, was surely one of the most enthusiastic readers of this, and other works by Taruho. According to Mishima, literature should be the art by which language creates reality and illusion, and Sanmoto is an example par excellence. He explains that Taruho blended realism and nonsense, which are mutual opposites. In addition, Mishima indicates that Taruho urges his readers to empathize with Heitarō's emotion, and to use their imaginations, in order to enjoy this bit of fictional nonsense.

His arguments about the narrative techniques notwithstanding, what strikes Mishima is Taruho's hidden theme. Mishima argues that Taruho writes of monsters and Heitarō's encounter with them as a metaphor for adolescence. Unlike the adults in the village, only the boy Heitarō can enjoy meeting the monster, and he even feels sad when Sanmoto leaves. Taruho is creating an allegory that chronicles the boy's sensitivity that will be lost in the process of his growing up. At the end, Taruho refers to Heitarō saying
matter-of-factly that he became a warrior called Inao Takedayū. This brief mention implies that Heitarō grew up and became an ordinary man. Taruho is not, of course, interested in such adults.

In 1969, Taruho received the Nihon bungaku taishō ("Grand Prize for Japanese Literature") for his essay "Aesthetics of Pedophilia," which as mentioned before, is the only major literary prize that Taruho ever won. In "Aesthetics of Pedophilia" can be called an expansion upon the ideas in "A-feeling and V-feeling." Many literary works cited in the "Aesthetics of Pedophilia," such as Saikaku’s The Great Mirror of Male Love and Jean Genet’s Journal du Voleur, are also recycled from "The A-feeling and the V-feeling." And, just as Nibuya Takashi, a scholar of Japanese art history, calls "The A-feeling and the V-feeling" Taruho’s "manifesto," "Aesthetics of Pedophilia" lacks the strong impact of "The A-feeling and the V-feeling." It is rather like an encyclopedia of Taruho’s readings on homosexuality and pedophilia. To buttress his theory that homosexuality, especially pedophilia, is the true source of inspiration of all art, he cites countless literary and art works. In addition, Taruho elaborates on the difference between Japanese and Western homosexuality as he implied in "The A-feeling and the V-Feeling." According to Taruho, Western homosexuality focuses on physical
eroticism and does not possess the sensitivity found in the homosexual liaison described in classical Japanese literature. It is interesting that even Taruho, who devoted himself to Futurism or Western art movements through his literary career, looks to Nihon e no kaiki, or a "return to Japan" in the field of homosexual literature.

After winning the prize, Taruho's works continued to grow in popularity in the 1970s. His literature was particularly loved by young readers. Hirano remarks on the greater of Taruho's popularity from the end of the 1960s. He is surprised that popular magazines such as Chūō kōron or Shūkan Bungei shunju should not only publish Taruho's works but also feature him in articles. As Hirano recalls, for example, Taruho's marked productivity: Taruho published three books in 1970, one in 1971, and five in 1972. Inagaki Taruho taizen (The Complete Inagaki Taruho), his first zenshū was published in 1969, and then new zenshū were published in 1974 and 1975. His vigor of his pen was stopped only by his wife's death in 1975. Taruho produced no new works after her death, and in 1977, one day before his 77th birthday, he died from colon cancer.
Notes

1. **Sakka** is a coterie magazine that started in 1948. The owner and editor-in-chief of **Sakka** is Kotani Tsuyoshi, who is also a medical doctor in Nagoya. The magazine publishes mainly works of writers living in the Chubu region of Aichi or Mie prefectures. Since Kotani is a fan of Taruho, he asked Taruho to write for his magazine in the early 1950s. This was the beginning of their long literary relationship.


   Taruho also indicates this incident in his essay "Essay - Vita Machinicus" (ITT, vol.4, 529.) His record of the actual conversation is a little different from that of Hirano Ken, but both Taruho and Hirano point out that only Akutagawa supported Taruho’s novel.


7. Ibid., 24.


15. Ibid., 15.


17. Inagaki, "Hoshi o uru mise" *ITT,* vol. 1, 58.


19. The term "metaphysical" is used in the sense of "metafictional," or "keijijōgakuteki" in Japanese.


21. In 1959, Taruho had received the *Sakka* Prize, which was made by the magazine *Sakka.*

22. Nibuya Takashi, "Rin’ne to yūgen" *Yuriika.* 195.


CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

As analyzed in the former chapters, Taruho’s literary life can be divided into three periods. First, he was recognized as a shinkankaku-ha writer in the 1920s. His early works were a mixture of fantasy and autobiography, and their characteristics were, as Akutagawa commented "light-colored, lovable nonsense," being optimistic and fantastic in tone and style. In addition, Taruho’s modern sense in which he used scientific terms as metaphors, and in which he choose the airplane or the modern city as the subject of the novels, was sometimes fresh for readers who had grown dissatisfied with the naturalist novel and I-novels. Even though his literature represented by One Thousand and One Second Tales and "A Shop that Sells Stars" was criticized by established writers such as Kikuchi Kan or Kume Masao, his works fascinated young audiences. His works were also thought of highly by young writers, in particular the shinkankaku-ha writers such as Yokomitsu. As a result, Taruho accepted an offer to join the shinkankaku-ha group in 1926.
The second period of Taruho’s career was, by contrast, a difficult time. The *shinkankaku-ha* dissolved the year after he joined *Bunrei jidai* magazine, and he lost a place in which he could belong in literary circles. Moreover, the mood in Japan grew ultraconservative and militaristic; as a result, Taruho’s modernistic literature became increasingly out of the touch with the times. From the early 1930s to the early 1950s, his works were ignored by literary circles, and Taruho was extremely poor and could not sell his works. Furthermore, the situation was acerbated by his abuse of alcohol. Even in the depths of extreme poverty, however, he kept working, and some of the works which were regarded highly after World War II date from this period. For example, *Maitreya*, one of the most important of his works, was created in this period. Taruho’s despair and self-affirmation are expressed in the rich metaphor of Maitreya, the Future Buddha.

The third period of Taruho’s career belongs to the early 1950s and after. It was the time when Taruho moved to Kyoto and married Shinohara Shiyo. He regained his health, and in the democratic mood of the time, people began to pay attention to his works once again. Taruho revised his old works and created many new ones. Moreover, it was in this period that he wrote unabashedly on the subject of homosexuality and pedophilia, a topic which dominates his
output in this third period. For instance, his works such as the essay, "The A-feeling and the V-feeling," or the novel Sanmoto Gorōzaemon Is Running Away Now are filled with his metaphysical and aesthetic treatment of the topic. The crystallized beauty of his writing was admired, once again, by young audiences as well as established writers such as Mishima Yukio and Takeda Taijun.

Surveying his literature, we find that his literature shares certain distinguishing characteristics even though the range of his works is from fantasies to essays. Just as he called his works "objet d'art" and "fragments," his works consist of many visualized images, and the descriptions of those images are largely discrete. In his use of discrete objects, Taruho's writing style seems most similar to that of composers of haiku, or writers of "prose poems" such as Akutagawa and Kawabata. Nonetheless, Taruho used countless scientific and technological terms for his images.

Doubtless the matter of his choice of his imagery is related to the reason why many of his works are autobiographical. Since Taruho was not interested in the lives of ordinary people as the subject of his novels, he needed a more appropriate person as the model for his characters. For him, the person whose head is filled with the modern and the abstract was himself, and perhaps some
of his friends. His extremely self-referential writing may be a result of his imagery.

Taruho's refusal to reproduce everyday life in plain vocabulary is extreme even among the shinkankaku-ha writers. As Senuma comments, Taruho was too shinkankaku to be shinkankaku-ha; his literature does not truly belong to the shinkankaku-ha. It is difficult to categorize his works in the standard of Japanese literature, however, Taruho is a modernist writer in the context of modernism as a world-wide phenomenon. The critic Irving Howe indicates the essence of modernism in literature, and his definition applies to Taruho directly.

The view of the matter suggests that the crucial factor in the style of a literary movement or period is some sort of inspiring "vision," a new way of looking upon the world and man's existence; and while such a "vision" will no doubt lead to radical innovations in form and language. There is by no means a direct or invariable correlation.... A writer imbued with the spirit of modernism will be predisposed toward experiment, if only because he needs to make visibly dramatic his break from tradition."

In the 1980s and the 1990s, Japan's so-called postmodern period, Taruho's popularity has continued to grow. As a matter of fact, his imaginary world constructed out of words is now even used in commercial television films. The creator of the famous "jintan" commercial was influenced by Taruho; he portrays streetcars, the moon, and the stars which Taruho describes in One Thousand and One
Second Tales and "A Shop that Sells Stars."

Although Taruho's literature is regarded highly in the postmodern period, this does not mean that Taruho's works are necessarily postmodern. For example, the scholar Fredric Jameson points out that postmodern art contains nostalgia, and Taruho's literature seems to apply to the concept of nostalgia in postmodernism.² Many readers feel nostalgia at reading Taruho's works, for example, in the descriptions of Kobe and its "high collar" characters in the 1910s and 1920s - people who belong to the stage of late capitalism but who cannot be found any more now. However, we need to remember that Taruho did not intend to express nostalgia in his works. The early model airplanes and his image of flying in the air were utterly new and modern when Taruho wrote of them. As this paper argues as its central thesis, it is more appropriate to think of Inagaki Taruho as a modernist writer, and as belonging to a modernist movement that emerged in Japan in the 1920s and early 1930s. Although there are elements in his works - the highly self-referential material indicative of naturalism and/or postmodernism - we would err in considering Taruho anything less than a modernist. A more through definition of Japanese modernism in general and of Taruho's modernist style in particular still awaits a more complete study of the new literary trends of Japan in the 1930s. But that is
a topic for another day, and a considerably more ambitious thesis.
Notes


APPENDIX
A SHOP THAT SELLS STARS

When the sun went down behind the tips of the mountains, it was a beautiful evening that came to town in this seaport city. I changed into a dress shirt, and I tied on a violet bow tie which I had bought the other day. And out I went.

When I reached Yamamoto Avenue planted with its green leafy sycamores in rows as regular as sprockets lining both sides of a roll of film, a cool breeze blew up from the sea -- a rarity in the dead calm of evening. On the tennis court next to the church, children--green kids and pink kids--skipped rope as if they were dolls that had been wound up and then let go. I could hear a waltz played on a piano. It floated on the air from a patio that was covered in ivy and that was visible through the tops of fir trees.

"That's right," I recalled, reaching into my right-hand pocket.

"I'll try it again."

My fingers fished out a cigarette from my pack of "ABC Cigarettes."
However had he done it? I don’t know, but my friend, T, could pull a cigarette from a pack of cigarettes in his pocket in a matter of seconds. The other day, when we were out walking through Minatogawa, I bought two packs of "Star Cigarettes" and gave one to him. How the hell had he done it! The cigar was in his mouth before I knew it. I checked his pocket, but there was the only one pack that I had given him. Plus, only one cigarette was missing, and the silver foil was back in place as if the pack had never been opened.

"You’re better than that American magician named Carter. Why don’t you team up with him and make some money?" I said to T, pointing to the entrance of the Juraku Hall where Carter was performing.

If he practiced a bit more, T could probably go into a store and slip things into his pocket without buying them. At any rate, our ole "Dr. T" replied that magic was just a matter of practice or something like that. No sooner had I noticed T put his hand in his pocket again than he pulled out another cigarette. This time it had a wax tip that served as a holder.

Of course, even I could learn a little of T’s technique. I let my thumb and the ring finger stretch the package from the sides; meanwhile, my middle finger gave the bottom of the pack a tap, and my thumb jumped over to hold open the lid of the package. I put my forefinger to work
helping the thumb peel back the silver foil, and together they got hold of the tip of a cigarette. Still, it took the longest time for me to get the cigarette out of the pack. The edge of the cigarette box got smashed, and the silver foil was bent out of shape.

"Hmm..., if I did it this way perhaps...." I mused to myself. I slipped a gold-tipped cigarette, which I had taken out to smoke, into my breast pocket, and I let my fingers dig into the right pocket again. But this time, not only did it take me more time, but also the cigarette got bent out of shape. I tried again, but it was a total loss.

By that time I had already reached the Tor Hotel.

I realized that all the cigarettes would get bent and twisted if I continued the way I had tried until now. I stopped practicing, and lighting one of the cigarettes that had come through unscathed. I turned at the corner and headed down a wide slope. Along the street were a barber shop, a flower store, a church, a neighborhood hotel, a tailor, a shop that had set out woodblock prints and embroidery work to sell, and a ladies' hat shop. A cream-colored Hudson came up the slope making a rhythmical sound. An Alpaca suit on its way home from the Kobe trading firm was walking up the hill. The helmet and stout body of an old gentleman wrapped in a white linen suit passed by leaving in the air the scent of a fine cigar. A mother with
a sailor suit in tow — she let the child dangle at the end of one hand and was tucking up her skirt with the other — hurried on the way home. A group of shorts — little boys dressed in short pants and were chewing their gum — was talking about the movies. An Indian man wearing a blue turban also stood out in the crowd. — At the foot of the hill, the silhouettes of automobiles and trains, and of the people in the crowd, created a tapestry of a port town at dusk. All the colors of foreign lands and peoples mixed and transversed in odd combinations. Right in the center position, about midway up the slope, a warehouse — was it a warehouse? — or a building of some sort was under construction. It looked like a jumble of rectangles and triangles piled on top of each other. What’s more, the pink rays of the sun, piercing between the tips of the mountains, struck the jumble and turned it pink. While everywhere else was blue, this quarter alone was spotlighted like the stage in a Cinerama; and beyond the shapes and shadows of this building that looked so geometrical, red, yellow, and blue hulls and funnels of ships stood out as though they were suspended in the air.

"I can make a cubist painting of it, my friends."

I thought to myself as I went down the slope.
That was when that I noticed a bright shop window on the right side of the street. I went up to take a look at it.

On the other side of the glass, women’s parasols looking like butterflies were set out like flowers in a garden. The reflections of the gas street-lights flowed like a stream of water across the window. They were different from the evening light on the street, and together the gaslight and parasols evoked a different dreamy world. It was as though one were looking at the window in an aquarium. I walked toward the store window.

Yet, before I could reach its bluish exterior, my attention was drawn to something else. There were people swarming over the alley in the Chinese Quarter, a few doors before the parasol shop. I let my feet turn in the direction of the crowd.

At the foot of a brick warehouse was a crowd standing in semi-circle. There was a girl wearing red satin shoes on her bound feet, a sailor whose eyes glowed like globes of green glass, a group of bare-footed children. Seated in their midst was a Chinese man wearing a suit of dingy yellow clothes and a hat crowned with a red wool ball. He sat cross-legged on the ground and had three dishes placed out on a faded red blanket.

"Ichi, ni, san!" He counted out loud to the crowd and
uncovered three plates. Underneath each dish was a pile of small black beans.

"Shazam!"

He put all the beans under one plate and turned the plates back over. "Ichí, ni, san...."

Off came the center plate. There was nothing there. Then, after a long pause he lifted the plates to the right and left, and there, under each plate, were two neat piles of four beans each. Next, he took out a tin basin and banged on it. Then he whisked away a piece of calico fabric from the top of something placed by his side. There was a crock under the calico cloth, and out of it the magician pulled out a baby snake. It was no thicker than a pencil. He grabbed it in his right hand and showed the people that the snake was alive. The snake made a short, squeaking sound, although it may well have been that the man produced the sound from a whistle hidden in his pocket or somewhere. Next, he took the snake and stuck its head up one of his nostrils. Gradually he forced the snake inside, and then he reached down inside his mouth and pulled out the head of the snake from his throat. The snake had made its way down inside — from the man’s nose to his mouth. As the snake’s tail continued to wiggle in the air, the magician hooked it around the side of his ear. He took off his hat and held out it to the crowd. He urged the people to give him money,
saying in a weird, high-pitched voice, and in broken Japanese,

"At the risk of my life. At the risk of my life."

"Hey!" Somebody shoved me on the shoulder. When I turned around, I saw a man standing behind me. He was wearing a fancy pink shirt that had stripes.

"Hey, it’s you...."

"What’s the matter with you, standing there and gaping like an idiot?"

"Oh, it’s ‘At the risk of my life.’"

"What?"

N leaned over to take a look. He saw the man with his dirty hat stretched out to the crowd, repeating, "At the risk of my life. At the risk of my life." He saw the head of the snake protruding from the man’s mouth.

"Ah ha, I get it! This is ‘At the risk of his life’ for sure."

N fished a coin from his pants pocket and tossed it into the man’s hat.

N and I turned our steps in the direction of one of the main avenues in town and headed in the direction of the railroad tracks.

"I read your story the other day. -- It’s a good one. What fun it must be to write nonsense and be able to earn pocket money from it! There was even a fellow who read it
and asked if there had actually been such an incident in Kobe."

N kept up a steady stream of chatter as we walked along. He stopped and asked,

"I bet you haven’t had dinner yet, have you?"

"Do you mean you’re going to buy me dinner?"

"You can’t beat our place. I don’t know what you want to do, but you’ll get better food at my place than at any restaurant you go to. I guarantee it."

We headed back along the same street we had come. When we stepped into the same alley as before, it was already getting dark. The snake charmer was closing up shop, putting his fabric and tin pan back into his bag.

"At the risk of my life!" said N, calling out to the snake charmer.

"At the risk of my life. At the risk of my life," came the retort from the snake charmer. And as if to explain, he pantomimed the gesture of eating rice from a bowl.

"It is when passing through a neighborhood like this that he imagines that a black shadow suddenly jumps on him and he is packed into a box before he knows it. The box is tied up tight and quietly lowered to the bottom of a well. He feels there is an underground passage that leads from the bottom of the well to a pier at the waterfront of the
harbor..." I said cryptically to N.

As we walked along the narrow alley in the Chinese quarter with its bumpy, uneven stones, we could see "lucky" red stickers were plastered on the walls of buildings and sides of smoked pork hung from the eaves. Puddles of water mirrored the light bulbs that were stretched across the front of the shops.

"Who? Who said that?"

"Why, M, of course. You know, the boy that you like in grammar school."

N chuckled. "That's just the sort of thing he'd say. But it would be absolutely pointless to 'shanghai' a boy like him. You probably can't put him to work, and he is too old now to serve as one's pet. But more important than that.... Wasn't it funny what happened at our front desk the other day? Did you hear about it?"

"Um, I saw it in the paper."

"No matter what they say, the man was one hell of a big fellow. At first, he sang songs in a well-behaved manner. There was a good accordion player too, and he was playing such-and-such a Spanish song on the accordion. Wow! What a sight it was to see! But when we turned off the outside lights and tried to close up shop, the big fellow insisted upon staying. He threw chairs. He threw bottles. He threw plates. He snatched his friend's accordion and threw it
around too. Whatever his friends did to stop him had no effect at all! Suddenly he started saying things no one could understand and came crashing toward my old man and me. That was when my father turned a gun on him. Would you believe it? He stuck his hands in the air like he was an electric toy. Before I knew what was happening, all the guys who were trying to hold this buster down — and I mean they were all big boys too — had their hands up in the air too. I burst out laughing. We make it our policy not to let in strangers like him, but once you open a restaurant, you just can’t turn people away without a reason."

He talked as if he were an old hand at the restaurant business.

"You’re something else, aren’t you?" I said interrupting him.

"What do you mean?"

"Here’s our little boy N who was still wet behind the ears, and almost overnight he is now the manager of the front desk at a first class hotel uptown in the Bluff."

"What are you talking about? If that’s how you treat me, let me straighten you out. Don’t you remember the harmonica and the pale red handkerchief it was wrapped in? You haven’t forgotten them, have you?"

"OK! OK! You win." I stopped him in a hurry. To draw attention away from what N was going to say, I took out
the package of "ABC Cigarettes" I mentioned before.

"This cigarette is like the horse-drawn carriage that belongs to Dr. Caligari." N pulled a bent cigarette from the package.

That's when I decided to introduce T's fast trick.

"Ha ha ha! Very funny! What an idler T is! Are you telling me that T carries the cigarette with him everywhere? And that he handles this way...?"

N put the cigarette pack into his pocket and took out a cigarette. However, not only was he slower, he was also more clumsy than I.

"Here's the trick. Watch it carefully now."

Lighting the cigarette in his mouth with a wooden match, N said,

"T boasts that there is only one mystery in all Kobe, and it is his trick of producing a cigarette from a pack. But there's really nothing to it. I've seen through his little secret: he doesn't actually take a cigarette out of the package. Damn it! I am certain that there is no other way. If a person could really do a trick like that, no one could even be short of pocket money. Something is wrong with anyone who takes him seriously. By nature he is a clumsy lout. He has been fiddling around with the mandolin for half a year, but he still can't play even one song
decently. If it were me,... I'd have it mastered in half a day."

We came to Naka-yamate Street.

The rubies of the car tail-lights faded into the thickening dusk as a car turned at the corner across the way.

"Is this a Turkish cigarette? It smells like trash."

N blew the smoke of the gold-tipped cigarette into the air.

"But I like it," he said, "Somehow or other it smells like superfine deluxe soda with nothing added. What's more, it reminds me of a minaret or a dome that reaches high into the sky — a sky so blue it looks like it was painted that way. Or you could replace them with the red slope of a pyramid, and it'd still be the same."

"You're probably right, but did you ever think there was nirvana in the smell of car exhaust?"

"Uh huh, because exhaust gas is decadent too. I think the smell of car exhaust, and the 'Twostep Zaragoza' played by the orchestra at the opening of the movie in the Asahi Hall, have something in common."

So said N, and he whistled a passage of the quick march, that goes by the name of "The Pathos of the Twentieth Century." Then he asked,

"You agree, don't you?"
"I find your opinions a little dreamy...."

"Say what you like, but isn’t all aestheticism nothing more than sentimentalism? Of course, there are all different kinds of sentimentalism."

"They say ‘Jako’ is marketed for ladies."

"‘Jako?’ Oh, you mean ‘Jako’ cigarettes? They’re for city ladies. I bet you like ‘Sultans,’ with the moon printed on the package, don’t you?"

"‘Isis’ is cheap but elegant."

We turned at the intersection where a Franklin car had already turned, and we entered the small hotel located behind the Ikuta Woods. N opened the door that was at the end of the hall. He took me to the thick-walled room next to the kitchen from where you could hear the sizzling sound of food being cooked. He turned on the overhead gaslight. It came on with a "pop."

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Around seven o’clock as I sported a Manila cigar in my mouth, I went to K. He was going to open a gramophone store in the neighborhood.

The door swung open. The work on the store was ninety-percent done, and the place smelled of fresh paint and
varnish. An overhead light cast its light on the floor, but not a soul was around. When I went up the stairs, K stretched out on the floor, smoking a cigarette in the middle of the new tatami room from which the sliding doors had been removed. He had built around himself a fortress of records, phonograph machines, and posters. He looked safe within its walls.

"I have something here that you might like."

He got up slowly and put the "Lion Chase" on the record player.

"Deep is the night in the Abyssinian Heights where the stardust burns bright...."

When the stylus stopped at the end of the record, I said,

"...If they were going to go to the trouble of letting us hear the roar of a lion in the background, why didn’t they add the sound of two or three guns being fired?"

The next song was "The Fairy Land," recorded with the tinkle of a bell in the background. This song made me feel as if I were getting aboard a horse-drawn carriage that was decorated with flowers. I was with the princess of a fairy tale, and we were going over a hill and dale. At the next song was "Gaslight Sonata," which I couldn’t figure out at all.
By then it was past eight. I wanted to hurry home and write down a fantasy which had suddenly come to mind when I was walking down the slope at dusk and had seen the store window of the parasol shop. If I missed the chance to write it down, I thought the story would become one of the many "unwritten stories" locked inside my head. I stood up and excused myself in a great hurry.

It was rush hour as I passed through the crowded streets and came to a three-way intersection. I thought about taking a streetcar, but somehow the sky was still light and cheerful. I was in too good of a mood. Walking would be best. I walked west on the southside of the street. There were only a few people about. There were old Western-style houses with shrubbery along both sides. The gas-lights, which were also standing in rows alongside this wide road at twilight, were a perfect match for this especially quiet neighborhood.

"Well then... how shall I develop the plot?"

I tried working out the story in my head.

"Am I just going to dash everything off without a thought for plot?"

Even though I tried to concentrate on the story, I couldn't help looking around. Why? Because it was a custom-made summer night at the Kobe Bluff. Moreover, there was a strange mood around tonight such as never before, and
I felt a sort of indescribable "fantasie" in the air. It seemed to spread through the air like light mist. I felt as though something like a big beautiful dream had gotten aboard either - a car with big rolling eyes that glared at me, and that came into sight and then disappeared down a crossroads that stretched far into the distance. Or was it a bright "Bogie" streetcar which made a big, low sound as it rolled? There were iron poles standing in a row between the two sets of train tracks. Each pole had a matching set of lights, and the pairs of lights a strings. It was as though there were two dotted lines drawn in the air. The lines of light made a sharp turn and suddenly disappeared over the hill. I felt as if I was walking in an expressionist town such as I had seen in a movie.

I felt exactly as though I had entered into a city that one sees in a spooky movie. Was I dreaming? Or had my fantasy simply gotten away from me? -- The city at night had a steep slope you could only look one way, and that was up. It was a spiraling street that you did not know where it ended. Moreover, it was a street that you suddenly realized was too clogged to get through. And it was another avenue about as wide as a baseball ground. The brightly lit streetcar ran along, winding its way through these streets just like that a "magic lantern" that revolves. It was a brand new, big Bogie streetcar, and how clearly I remember
the car ceiling that was like a mirror, and how clean the windows were!

But there were only five or six passengers beside myself. All of them were dressed well, but to a man they were staring at the floor as if they were lost in their private thoughts. The dazzling over lights on the streetcar casted their bright light on the rows of empty, black velvet seats. The streetcar roared along at full speed and did not stop at any station. I sat down near the motorman and stared in surprise at the changing scene of the city through the big, front window. It was a street where the gaslights on the poles also ran in two bright lines as on Yamanote Avenue, where the gaslights lined the both sides of the street. Yet, there was not a soul on the street. Then I noticed that the lines of lights, which looked as though they would go on forever, made an acute turn and disappeared over the hill into the distance. And the place where the lines bent was coming any second. Just as I thought, "It's here!," my body felt as if it had been left hanging in the air, and the streetcar slid down the hill as though it were going over a cliff.... The dotted line of the gaslights that I saw through the window shot pass looking as if there were moving in a straight line, but then, the railroad track began to incline at a forty-degree angle. The narrow streetcar spun round and round like a drill moving at top
speed among small houses that were packed together so tightly that it was hard to believe. I was afraid that the streetcar would shave off the walls of the houses.... Suddenly brightly lit show windows and the crowd of people standing in front of them passed the window of the streetcar, but I could hardly ascertain what they were. With that, the streetcar was back on a quiet, lonely street made lively by gaslights. And this time, it climbed up the hill with its astonishingly sharp incline without the least moment of hesitation. I could tell because all of the gaslights leaned one way going up the slope. In that moment, and at the place, the line of the gaslights suddenly made a sharp turn and shot into view again. The streetcar made a degree 90° turn, and with one jump, went crashing through the air....

"If only I could get on the streetcar coming from behind...," I thought to myself.

"Then there would be black velvet seats on the train. And isn’t there a slope like a water chute over there where the green signal is flashing? And surely the expressionist city exists at the bottom of the slope."

I instinctively quickened my step. Just as I tried to cross the street, on the other side of the street, I saw a strange window that glowed with a blue light. What a night! How many times had I encountered the color blue tonight?
What a strange karma!?! I approached the window, wondering what I would find this time. What do you think? The inside of the window was filled with confetti that glowed!

The confetti came in different sizes. Some were as big as a large jewel; others, no bigger than a bon-bon candy. The colors were countless -- red, purple, green, yellow, as well as their intermediate shades. The confetti were set out on a glass showcase that had three shelves, and each piece shone as if it were competing with the other. On the back wall, there was a color-print poster. In the poster, five or six people wearing white turbans and Arabian robes were using long poles that had sacks attached at the end to rake up the bits of stardust hanging above their heads. I thought that it looked very refined, and I noticed there were words printed in white on the sky strewn with stars that were like rubies, emeralds, topazes, and diamonds.

Do you want to suspect
this for moonshine?
Sorry, Egyptian Government
declares this is as innocent.

— I needed to stop and ask what it meant.

When I entered the shop, I saw that a toy train on a railroad track and a windmill had been set out on a glass
display case under a gas light. The clerk who was standing with his face turned away from me was flustered to see a customer who suddenly walked in and said, "May I help you, sir?"

"What in the world is this?"
I pointed to the confetti in the showcase.

"Just a moment, please." A young, pale, effeminate man answered in a slightly strained and high-pitched voice. He took one of the small boxes which were piled up in a pyramid from the shelf behind him. When he tore open the cellophane wrapper that he had taken from the box, one slightly blue piece of confetti rolled out into the palm of his hand. He picked it up and pointed to the train on the round set of railroad track.

"I’ll put it into the funnel of the train and show you. Look!"

At the moment, the train whistled cutely and then started to move.

"There’s no trick or anything to it. Plus, there is no electricity involved because the train is running on glass. Oops, here it comes!"

Using both hands, the clerk caught the train which had gradually accelerated and was about to jump off the track. He took the piece of confetti from the funnel and handed it to me. It was much heavier than I had anticipated. It
emitted arrows of light from its center, and like an alexandrite, the rays of light changed color depending upon the angle that one looked at it.

"Unfortunately I don’t have one of them here now...", the clerk added, "I mean, musical instruments. But if, for example, you drop the confetti in the hole of a mandolin or a guitar, the instrument will play by itself. Oh yes, what else can it do? Please guess from what I’ve shown you. As you can see, there’s no wind-up key to the train. Why, there’s not even a special device for the train whistle. But, the whistle went off, didn’t it? Don’t you think that’s mysterious?"

"It is also possible to eat this, sir. Let me show you. When you put it in a cocktail, the taste and the appearance get quite sophisticated. It outclasses cherries, raisins, or apricots any day. It’s a bit luxurious, but when you turn it into a powder and roll it up into a cigarette, the cigarette gives off cold blue and white sparks. It really is a unique cigarette, yes, one of a kind just right for summer time. In addition, if you put it in a flask, heat up it by a spirit lamp or something like that, and then breathe its vapor little by little, you will be intoxicated as if you smoked opium. The dream-like feeling is truly refreshing, but there is absolutely no danger of addiction. I hear that with this people can understand even
very difficult books on philosophy immediately. It is strange, but the taste and fragrance of the red ones are like strawberry; the blue ones, like peppermint; the green ones, like something I can’t remember; and the yellow ones, like lemon. Of course, it’s not quite the same as the original flavors. Yet, once you get used to the fragrance and taste, you can never give it up. That’s how powerful a fascination holds."

"And—," I was impatient to ask, "What on earth is this?"

"This is a star."

"A star?"

"You mean to say, ‘a star in the sky?,’ don’t you?" said the man, pointing to the ceiling.

"What you ask makes perfect sense. At first, we didn’t believe it either. Even now, I can say we still doubt it as you do. Nonetheless, we have to believe it is a star because it was collected by the very same method shown in the poster in the store window, and the Egyptian government certifies it as true. There was a Captain Lee, who was famous as a pilot in the last war. Believe or not, this Captain Lee was in a bar in Cairo where he happened to overhear a strange story that was being told by Arab men who were sitting next to him. In order to verify the truth of what they said, he hired one of the Arabs and visited the
miraculous place somewhere in highlands of Ethiopia. As a result, he witnessed with his own eyes exactly the same scene drawn in the poster. — Of course, there was a saying that Allah only allowed people from that district to collect stars. Because of that and Mr. Lee, who went to the village, these stars were spotlighted by the light of the civilized world for the first time. Well, if that’s the case I wonder why people don’t know about it? Surely my question is not unreasonable, is it? I hear that an old person controls gathering of stars at the same place, and it is considered to be the place closest to heaven. It is hard to get hold of any stars without flattering this old man whose name is Hassam Erabus. — Our shop happens to be owned by a German cotton merchant, and rumor has it among people in the same business, that given these circumstances, it is very rare to be able to collect the number of stars that you see here in our store. Of course, even though I explain all this, I wonder whether customers really believe me.... But no, more than that, in spite of the fact that I am in charge of this shop, even I haven’t the least idea how my boss manages to collect these things, or how much he wants to sell them for, or even how he wants to run this shop in the future. This train is one of toys we’ve carried before, but it was only yesterday that I found out the train whistled, and that its wheels went round, when I dropped a
star in the funnel. You’d think that the toy windmill would work according to the same principle, but I still can’t figure out where to insert the star. If I knew, I’m quite sure the windmill, or anything of that matter, would go around all right. And if I used a lot of stars, why, even a real train or a real windmill might move. If we stuffed stars in our pockets, our jackets, down both sides, and into our pants, Who knows, it just might be possible for humans to ascend into the air!

By the way, too many people over there are taking too many stars, and the heavens get lonely. That’s why they say that only the stars left in the far-off distance in the sky are twinkling now."

"I see! — But people find good sites one after another, don’t they?"

"You say good sites?"

"Yes, like, the Andes, or the Pamirs, or the Kunlun Mountains, and Mt. Fuji."
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