RECONSTRUCTION OF CHILDHOOD IN NAKA KANSUKE’S *GIN NO SAJI*

A Thesis
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ABSTRACT

At the turn of the century, due to the modernization and the change of social systems, the concept of “childhood” was discovered and modernized in Japan. By the second decade of the 20th century, this concept of “childhood” was developed into dōshin shugi (Principle of ‘Child’s Heart’) in which the child was idealized as embodying purity, goodness, and innocence that adults were perceived to have lost a long time ago. Concurrent with this development, at the end of the Meiji and the beginning of the Taishō period, a number of major authors wrote evocations of their own childhood, namely tsuioku shōsetsu (literary evocations of childhood.) One of the first and the finest works of the genre is Gin no saji (The Silver Spoon, 1913, 1915) written by Naka Kansuke (1885-1965.) The work continues to strongly influence recoveries of the past, objects of nostalgia, and autobiographical writing about childhood in the world of modern Japanese literature as well as children’s literature in Japan.

This study will argue that literary evocations of childhood both helped to create and were a product of the modern concept of the child, and will demonstrate how the new concept of “childhood” manifests itself in terms of the author and the literary form of Gin no saji. The study will also show the influence the work has on later works. A special focus is on literary techniques Kansuke employed in recovering childhood in Gin no saji
- geographical specificity, use of extraliterary language, and depiction through social customs and manners.

The appendix of this study is the original translation of Kansuke’s essay, “Hanasaka jii” (The Old Man Who Makes Flowers Bloom, 1951.) This essay presents darker memories of Kansuke’s childhood, that were not recorded in Gin no saji.
Dedicated to my parents
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Taishô idea of childhood is key to an understanding of modern Japanese literature and the modernization of Japanese culture as a whole. Naka Kansuke’s fictional description in *Gin no saji* (The Silver Spoon, 1913, 1915) of his own childhood during the Meiji period served as a pioneering conceptualization of the meaning of modern childhood, especially as it pertained to the process of childhood as it is remembered by adults. This study will attempt to outline the meaning of childhood as expressed by Naka Kansuke in *Gin no saji* and to show the lasting influence his work had on not only the formulation of childhood in autobiographical fiction but also subsequently the construction of childhood for children by adults in the Taishô period. “A childhood remembered” is essential to the conceptualization of children as a whole.

Distinguishing Childhood from Adulthood

Satô Michimasa, a scholar of children’s literature in Japan, writes as follows in *Nihon jidô bungaku no seiritsu josetsu*:

The discovery of childhood is the prerequisite for children’s literature to emerge. That is the case present and past, East and West.
We have no doubt about the existence of a child. A child does not merely belong to adults. A child is widely recognized as an independent being who has an individual personality and is complex and sophisticated in his or her own right. The child is not merely a simple creature who feels and responds as an inferior "little adults." As this is such an obvious premise in the present time, it is hard to believe that, even until recently, the idea of the child did not exist. However, this was the case, and therefore, in those days when "the child" did not exist, children's literature could not be produced.¹

If children's literature requires a concept of childhood, literary evocations of childhood help generate that concept. Although it is common sense these days that children are different from adults, the concept of childhood was not discovered until the modern period. I argue here that literary evocations of childhood both helped to create and were a product of the modern concept of the child at the end of the Meiji period.

The French historian, Philippe Aries, argues that the idea of childhood did not exist in medieval society in Europe. In his book, *Centuries of Childhood*, he delineates the process of distinguishing children from adults through an examination of the history of art, children's dress, games and pastimes, and school systems. In medieval society, people were not aware of a particular nature that distinguished children from adults. Therefore, children belonged to adult society as soon as they could survive without the constant care of their parents. It was at the beginning of modern times, in the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, when the concept of childhood was discovered. Aries claims that the discovery of the concept of childhood occurs simultaneous to a revival of an interest in education that was merged with the religious reforms. He writes:

These reformers, these moralists, whose influence on school and family [...] fought passionately against the anarchy (or what henceforth struck them as the anarchy) of medieval society, where the Church, despite its repugnance, had long ago resigned itself to it and urged the faithful to seek salvation far from this pagan world, in some monastic retreat. A positive moralization of society was
taking place [...] This was how these champions of a moral order were led to recognize the importance of education.

Henceforth it was recognized that the child was not ready for life, and that he had to be subjected to a special treatment, a sort of quarantine, before he was allowed to join the adults.

This new concern about education would gradually install itself in the heart of society and transform it from top to bottom. [...] The care expended on children inspired new feelings, a new emotional attitude, to which the iconography of the seventeenth century gave brilliant and insistent expressions.³

According to Aries, it was with the establishment of the educational system that the child was discovered and removed from adult society in family and school.

Just as in medieval European society, Karatani Kôjin claims by quoting Yanagita Kunio’s research that the concept of childhood did not exist in pre-Meiji period in Japan. He says, “Grouping of children by age in the compulsory education system of modern Japan signified the uprooting of children, as abstract and homogeneous entities, from the productive relations, social classes, and communities that had previously been their concrete contexts.” Karatani continues:

The military was an organ of “education.” [...] If the factory is a school and the military a school, the modern school system itself may be seen as a factory. [...] The modern nation state itself is an educational apparatus that produces “the human being.”

The children’s magazine first appeared in Japan in the 1890s as a supplement to education in the schools, or “for the sake of schoolchildren.” Again, any critique of the content of these magazines must be preceded by an awareness that the school system had already created the new “human being” or “schoolchild” for whom these magazines were produced.³

Karatani claims that the concept of childhood emerged through institutional modernization, specifically compulsory education and the draft system. With this process of distinguishing children from adults, the first children’s literature appeared.

Torigoe Shin, a scholar of children’s literature, points out in Jidô bungaku three external factors that allowed children’s literature to emerge in the Meiji period. They
include, one, the advancements in printing technology that made it possible to print large volumes of books; two, the establishment of a capitalist economy that allowed people to profit from children’s literature; and three, the establishment of the modern school system. Japan opened up its gate to the world and began to develop as a modern nation in the Meiji period. The first two policies that the Meiji new government put into effect were the draft and compulsory education. After 1877, Confucian ideas of education, that appeared as reaction to Westernization, began to influence the education system. As described in the Imperial Rescript on Education (Kyōiku chokugo) that took effect in 1878, the goal of the education system was to raise children who would strengthen the Empire of Japan. Children’s literature was used as a supplement to education. Consequently, many children’s stories had strong ethical or moral content.

Researchers of children’s literature appear to agree that the first children’s story in Japan was Iwaya Sazanami’s Koganemaru (1891.) In addition to writing Koganemaru, Iwaya made many other contributions to children’s literature. He produced collections of folk tales for children such as Nihon mukashibanashi (1894-1896), Nihon otogibanashi (1896-1899), Sekai otogibanashi (1899-1908), and Sekai otogibanashi bunko (1908-1915.)

Although Iwaya’s Koganemaru is considered the first story created for children in Japan, it was not “modern” in terms of its content. It is a story about a vendetta. It is didactic, and the plot affirms the morality of the feudal era. Although Japan took its first steps toward modernization in the Meiji period, children’s literature was still mired in feudal values. Although the concept of childhood emerged in the Meiji period, children were still raised in a feudalistic and militaristic society.
Critics seem to agree that Ogawa Mimei, who published his first collection of children’s stories, *Akai Fune* (Red Ship), in 1910, is considered the person who initiated “modern” children’s literature in Japan. It is said that Mimei is the first children’s literature writer who noticed that, the modernization of the society notwithstanding, children were still locked in the customs and morals of feudalistic society. He published *Midori gami* (Green Hair), his second collection of short stories, in 1908. In the preface of *Midori gami*, he writes, “I would like to be a child forever. Even if I cannot stay as a child, I would like to keep the beautiful feelings and young imagination of a child forever.” At the end of the Meiji period, Mimei already thought of childhood as something he would yearn for. Also in his essay “Shin-Romantishizumu no tentô (The Conversion of New Romanticism),” he writes:

The beautiful world that we yearn for as the world of the imagination is the ideal world that we had in our heart when we were children. Nature grants every child a pure spirit, no matter how deprived the child’s upbringing is.

The art of a child’s heart is shared by both adults and children. We should be affirmed that literature that has a child as protagonist is indeed literature, a literature which connects reality with the imagination.

Until recently, children’s literature was created for the purpose of teaching children. Therefore, it was didactic by nature. However, the new children’s literature now emerging is a literature in search of the child’s heart. It is a special form of prose literature. It need not describe a child’s life, but it should be true to the child’s heart. It should purify and make beautiful. In so far as this new children’s literature conforms with the spirit of art and the principles of social reform, it should be considered a sort of romanticism.

Mimei clearly states that a child’s heart is pure, and with this pure heart we can see things correctly. The idea of children being innocent and pure became prominent in the late 1910s.

In the late 1910s and the early 1920s, the ideas of democracy, liberalism and humanism emerged. These later were summed up under the slogan “Taishô democracy.”
At about the same time, child-centered education, which respected a child’s individuality and creativity, was advocated. With this movement, the slogan “discovery of child’s heart” came into circulation. Different from the concept of childhood found in the Meiji period, this new concept discovered the child as “individual,” not merely a creature who belonged to a family or a society. In this process, the child was idealized as embodying purity, goodness, and innocence that adults were perceived to have lost a long ago.

There was a remarkable rise in literature for children at about this time. Numerous magazines were inaugurated to help meet the demand for adult-authored children’s stories. The most famous one is Akai tori (Red Bird), published by Suzuki Miekichi in 1918. Before the first edition of Akai tori was published, Suzuki explained the purpose of his publication:

One needs to only look at the covers of most periodicals for children, and one knows one cannot allow children to read the stories inside. These books and magazines are filled with vulgarity – utility, sensationalism, and bizarre content – and are also poorly written. I am disgusted when I think that these affect our children’s character, taste, and their writing.

The purpose of the publication of Akai tori was to improve the quality of children’s literature over the existing children’s literature, namely, the otogibanashi literature created by Iwaya Sazanami and his associates. Suzuki solicited poetry, songs, and stories for children from the leading writers of the day such as Izumi Kyôka, Tokuda Shûsei, Kitahara Hakushû, Nogami Yaeko, Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, Arishima Takeo, Shimazaki Tôson, Ogawa Mimei and Uno Kôji.

The literary scholar Namekawa Michio argues that the newly discovered “child’s heart” created two currents in Japanese literature. One was to create works that portrayed the “child’s heart.” The other was for writers to introspectively reconstruct the “child’s
heart” that existed within the adult. In the quest for the forgotten “child’s heart” in the adult, some writers began exploring their own childhood through recording their own childhood memories. Indeed, as is argued here, the discovery of the “child’s heart” is antecedent to, or concomitant with, the recovery of childhood in autobiographical fiction for adults. This is the genre known as tsuioku shōsetsu or tsuikai shōsetsu (novels of remembrance).

Regarding writers’ interest in writing evocations of their own childhood stories, Kami Shōichirō, a scholar of children’s literature, offers an interesting theory. He claims that the evocation of childhood in the late Meiji period and early Taishō period is closely related to the “collapse of the self” when personal values were thrown into question. According to Kami, the individual searches for a “place” of permanence and stability in time of social transformation. For a number of writers this “place” was the evocation of their own childhood or their hometowns and their childhood memories when they lived in their hometowns. In a certain sense, then, modern children’s fiction and modern autobiographical fiction are born of the same historic impulse: the need to recover memories. As Richard Torrance has noted, what is commonly termed the “I-novel” is, in fact, several genres that were conceived in the late Meiji period – the jōchi shōsetsu or novels of the love crazed, seishun bungaku or literature of fervent youth, and most notably for our purposes, the tsuioku shōsetsu or literary evocations of childhood.

Inspired probably by works in the genre of tsuioku shōsetsu, some famous writers began to write their own childhood evocations for children. Works such as Arishima Takeo’s Hitofusa no budō (One bunch of grapes, 1920), Shimazaki Tōson’s Furusato
(The Hometown, 1920), and Chiba Shôzô’s Tora-chan nikki (The Diary of Tora-chan, 1926) were written for children based on the writers’ childhood experiences.

In terms of tsuioku shôsetsu, Minakami Takitarô’s Yamanote no ko (A Child of Yamanote, 1911) is generally thought to be the first work in the genre. Uno Kôji has written an evocation of his own childhood, Seijirô yume miru ko (Seijiro the Child who Dreams, 1912), that was inspired by Minakami’s novel. However, the finest work of the genre, one that continues to strongly influence recoveries of the past, objects of nostalgia, and autobiographical writing about childhood is Naka Kansuke’s Gin no saji (The Silver Spoon, 1913, 1915.) Without a doubt, Gin no saji is a rich and varied “place” for the recovery of childhood in the Meiji period. This study will explore the relation between remembrance and the concept of childhood in the late Meiji/early Taishô period.

In Chapter 2, the facts of Naka Kansuke’s life will be outlined in order to determine to what extent Gin no saji is autobiographical. Chapter 3 will take up the work itself, discussing the reconstruction of childhood in Gin no saji. The study will offer its conclusions in Chapter 4. The study will conclude with the translation of one of Naka Kansuke’s essay “Hanasaka Jii (The Old Man Who Makes Flowers Bloom)”, which seems to depict the “darker” side of Naka Kansuke’s childhood memories that are not recorded in Gin no saji.
CHAPTER 2

THE WRITER AND THE WORK

In this section, I will examine first how closely the incidents in the novel *Gin no saji* correspond to Naka Kansuke’s life. Second, I will briefly explore Naka Kansuke’s motivations for writing the novel, and how this “odd” work was published. Third, Kansuke’s subsequent life will be described insofar as it sheds light on *Gin no saji*.

The Work and Real Life

One day prior to *Gin no saji* being serialized in 1913, there was an announcement for the forthcoming novel in *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*. In it, Kansuke writes, “It was when I was sixteen or seventeen that I thought of writing my childhood memories. [...] I don’t know what it means to leave behind footprints of my accomplishments in life, but I feel extremely nostalgic at the realization that even someone like myself can leave tracks of his innocence during childhood.”¹² In the essay “Mitsubachi,” he writes of his memories of his sister-in-law. He says that the room “where the protagonist of *Gin no saji* used to chat and play [with his friend]”¹³ was exactly the same as the room that his sister-in-law used. This indicates that *Gin no saji* is an autobiographical work. However, later in life, he qualified this statement to the effect that *Gin no saji* “gave color to his old
memories,” that it was “a sort of autobiographical novel” or “a tsuioku (recollection of memories) of lies and truth.” Kansuke appears to suggest that *Gin no saji* is not an entirely true story after all. Is *Gin no saji* an autobiographical novel? In order to determine whether it should be read as autobiographical, I will examine whether the major characters, incidents and places in the novel correspond to Kansuke’s life.

Naka Kansuke was born in 1885 in Tokyo. His father, Naka Kanya, was the retainer of the former feudal lord of Imao clan in Mino province (modern Gifu prefecture), but he moved to Tokyo with his lord after the Meiji Restoration. In 1871, his income was thirteen (13) *koku*. Kanya later became a steward of his lord, who became a baron. Kanya’s name is also listed in *The Directory of Company Presidents in Japan* (1894) as the president of a nickel and aluminum company. Although Lord Takenokoshi, the lord of the Imao clan, and his retainers experienced hardship early in the Meiji Restoration, the company Kansuke’s father headed must have been successful. By the mid-Meiji period, Kanya and his family were living in comfortable circumstances not shared by the vast majority of the people living in Tokyo.

Kansuke had an older brother, and two elder and younger sisters. How does this family correspond to the characters in *Gin no saji*?

- The protagonist’s (Shun-bô’s) father = Kansuke’s father, Naka Kanya

  *Gin no saji* says, “We [the family] had moved to Tokyo at the time in the retinue of our feudal lord.”

- The mother in *Gin no saji* = Kansuke’s mother, Naka Shô

  Although Kansuke’s mother gave birth to five sons, the first, the third and the fourth sons died prematurely. Kansuke was the fifth son. One of the sons died in 1884,
one year before Kansuke was born. His death corresponds to the following description in the work:

When my brother – had he lived he would have been a year older than I – died of a convulsion soon after birth, my aunt grieved over him as if he had been her own child.

Kansuke’s mother was the second daughter of Yoshizawa Han’emon in Aichi. Nothing is known about the status of Yoshiwzawa Han’emon. The mother in the work is a remote figure, and not much is mentioned about her. This remoteness seems to correspond to reality. In a clearly autobiographical essay, Kansuke writes, ‘feelings of love for my father and mother have inexplicably diminished, perhaps because of the unnatural restrictions and suppressions I suffered during my childhood.’

- The two elder sisters = Kansuke’s elder sisters, Naka Hatsu and Naka Chiyo

In Gin no saji Shun-bō, the protagonist, has two elder sisters who are about twelve or thirteen years old when Shun-bō is about five. The sisters clearly correspond to Kansuke’s two elder sisters, Naka Hatsu, born in 1878, and Naka Chiyo, born in 1880. The age difference between Shun-bō and the two sisters corresponds to that of Kansuke and his elder sisters. The two elder sisters in the novel are not central characters, but they appear in a scene at the beginning of Shun-bō’s schooldays. Since Shun-bō is so frightened in school, they come to comfort him during the break between classes. The school to which the elder sisters and Shun-bō go corresponds in all respects to Kuroda Jinjô Kôtô Shôgakkô in Koishikawa Kohinata Suidô-chô, the school Kansuke attended in Tokyo.
• The younger sisters = Kansuke’s younger sisters, Naka Sakae and Naka Yasu

Kansuke had two younger sisters, Sakae and Yasu. Although the Japanese “imôto” is vague as to plural or singular, in the first publication of *Gin no saji*, it suggests that Shun-bô has more than one younger sister. The first publication of *Gin no saji* states that the youngest sister was born when the family was living in an older house during the time a new house was under construction. Records show that the Naka family moved from Kanda to Koishikawa in July of 1889, and Yasu was born in September of that year. Therefore, Shun-bô’s youngest sister’s birthday corresponds to Kansuke’s youngest sister’s birthday. In the 1926 edition of *Gin no saji*, and thereafter, the description concerning the birth of his younger sister is deleted.

• Okuni-san = Okamoto Take

Okuni-san is the first person Shun-bô makes friends with. Therefore, she is an important character in the novel. *Gin no saji* tells us that Okuni-san lives across the street. Horibe Isao, a scholar of Japanese literature, has established that Okuni-san was Okamoto Take, a daughter of Okamoto Kansuke, a retainer of the Awa daimyô. This corresponds to the description in *Gin no saji* which states that Okuni’s father is a retainer of the Awa domain.

• My older brother = Kansuke’s older brother, Naka Kin’ichi

Kansuke’s older brother, Kin’ichi, was born in 1871. He was fourteen years older. In *Gin no saji* Part One, the protagonist’s older brother appears in one scene. The protagonist reaches the age when he has to go to school. However, he is frightened at having to be away from home. When the protagonist insists that he does not want to go to school, his older brother grabs him, throws him on the floor, and slaps his face many
times. His older brother is learning jūdō in high school. The age difference between the protagonist and his older brother corresponds to that of Kansuke and Kin’ichi. In the essays “Hanasaka jii” and “Koma no uta,” both subtitled, “Gin no saji hoi (Supplement to ‘Gin no saji,’)" Kansuke describes how he had been harshly treated by Kin’ichi. Not only the age difference but also the incident described in Gin no saji clearly indicates that Kin’ichi’s violent action towards his younger brother had basis in fact.

- Obasan (the aunt) = the older sister of Kansuke’s mother, the oldest daughter of
  Yoshizawa Han’emon

In the essay “Hanasaka jii,” Kansuke writes he has no recollection of having been loved by anyone other than people like obasan, who raised him with such tender care.\textsuperscript{32} There is no doubt that Kansuke was brought up by his obasan. Indeed, obasan in Gin no saji constitutes one of the most saintly characters ever portrayed in modern Japanese literature. Horibe Isao has established that “obasan” in Gin no saji was based on Naka Sho’s older sister. Kansuke writes in the first publication of Gin no saji that Shun-bō’s obasan is his mother’s older sister.\textsuperscript{33} In the first publication, the way the word oba is written is not consistent. It is written as 叔母 (which is used for a parent’s younger sister), 伯母 (which is used for a parent’s older sister), or in hiragana. However, after the 1926 edition of Gin no saji, the characters 伯母 (a parent’s older sister) are used consistently. Horibe further examined the dialect used by obasan in Gin no saji and discovered that it was the one spoken in Aichi prefecture.\textsuperscript{34} Kansuke’s mother and her older sister both came from Aichi. But, little – not even a name – is known about this
extraordinary woman other than what the novel tells us. Certainly, one of the reasons for
Gin no saji’s lasting relevance is its memorialization of this ordinary person.

- I (Watakushi)/Shun-bō = Naka Kansuke

   The protagonist of the work, Shun-bō, closely corresponds to Kansuke himself.

Both Shun-bō and Kansuke were born in the Year of Bird, both born in Kanda and later
moved to Koishikawa. Shun-bō’s family background, as noted above, significantly
matches Kansuke’s. Although the name of the boy is “Shun-bō” (Kansuke later removes
the character “Shun” and leave the boy’s name anonymous,) Horibe Isao points out that
one passage of the work makes no sense unless the boy’s name is Kansuke. In Chapter
40, the protagonist has a fight with his classmate:

   We had never liked each other for some reason and were always on bad terms.
   One day during our math class he drew a face with a patched eye on his slate
   board, put my name on it, and showed it to me saying, “here, here.” In
   retribution, I drew a large wooden clog with eyes and a nose and wrote, “Cross
   [eyed.]” (I, 81) 35 36

Horibe suggests that the face with an eye-patch is a caricature of Yamamoto Kansuke, a
warrior from the Warring States Period. Yamamoto Kansuke was well known to children
during the Meiji period. It makes sense that his classmate identified the face in the
drawing as “Kansuke” in order to tease Kansuke. Indeed, that is the only way the
passage is comprehensible.37

As we have seen, the central characters in the novel correspond to people in
Kansuke’s life. Next, I would like to examine whether the places and events in the novel
 correspond.

- My house in Kanda
Gin no saji states:

The place where I was born, the true Kanda of Kanda district, was notorious for continual fires and street fights and was full of drunkards and thieves. [...] More conspicuous were the entrance gates to my lord’s estate where [our] home was located, [...] 38

In the essay “Jiden (koki made),” Kansuke states that he was born in Kanda, and that the house he vaguely remembers was in his former lord’s estate. 39

- The move from Kanda to Koishikawa

In Gin no saji, the protagonist moved from Kanda to Koishikawa to improve the health of both himself and his mother. Kansuke writes in “Jiden (koki made)” that, due to the recommendation of a doctor, he and his family moved to Koishikawa Kohinatadai for the sake of his health and his mother’s. 40

- Shrines and Temples

According to the exhaustive research of Horibe Isao, there are a number of physical landmarks described in Gin no saji that have real life counterparts. For example, in Gin no saji, there is the following:

The place I liked best was the little shrine of the [Fox] God, on Izumi Street, which still stands on the banks of the Kanda River. [...] Since that time the shrine of the [Fox] God has improved in appearance and become gay. Only the willow tree, whose leaves flutter lightly in the breeze, remains unchanged. 41

The model of this shrine seems to correspond to Yanagimori Shrine near Izumi Bridge in Kanda. This shrine originally was for the Fox God (Inari) but later it combined with Fuji Sengen Shrine. The record shows that in 1896, about thirty willow trees were planted by volunteers in the area. The record also indicates that, when the trees were planted, the shrine was under renovation. 42
In the end, then, does *Gin no saji* correspond sufficiently to Naka Kansuke’s personal experience to enable us to classify it as an autobiographical novel? In almost all respects, the work corresponds closely enough to warrant reading it as autobiographical.

The Creation of *Gin no saji*

After graduating from the First Higher School, Kansuke entered the English Department of Tokyo Imperial University in 1905. Kansuke later changed his major to Japanese literature and graduated in 1909. At First Higher School and in Tokyo Imperial University, he took some English courses from Natsume Sōseki. According to Kansuke’s essay “Natsume Sensei to watakushi,” Kansuke was not fond of Sōseki’s works. Kansuke writes: At that time, I only enjoyed reading poetry and I did not even cast a look toward prose literature. Moreover, [...] I despised the jokes and humor of the work. Even the title *Wagahai wa neko de aru* (I am a Cat) was distasteful. However, Kansuke did respect Sōseki as a person. He wrote, “[Natsume Sōseki] was one of the people whom I respected and loved the most.”

In 1906, while Kansuke was still in the university, Kansuke’s father died. Then, right before Kansuke’s graduation in 1909, his older brother, Kin’ichi, was totally incapacitated by a cerebral hemorrhage. Until then, Kin’ichi had a very promising career. He studied medicine at Tokyo Imperial University and studied abroad in Germany. After returning to Japan, he took a position as professor of medicine at Fukuoka Medical College (later, Kyushu Imperial University). However, the stroke forced Kin’ichi to abandon his career. He returned home to Tokyo. As the only healthy adult male in the family, Kansuke was forced to shoulder all the family burdens and responsibilities.
There had been constant discord between Kansuke and his older brother since childhood. In addition, Kin’ichi treated Kansuke so harshly as a result of his physical incapacity that Kansuke had to move out of the house temporarily and live in the home of the parents of Kinichi’s wife. In 1910, Kansuke voluntarily joined the army, but he was discharged the following year when he became ill and was hospitalized. After being released from the hospital, he did not go home but stayed on a small uninhabited island in Lake Nojiri in Nagano prefecture. Kansuke’s family tried to persuade Kin’ichi to reconcile with Kansuke. As a condition for reconciliation, Kin’ichi insisted that Kansuke get a job and earn a stable income. This incident is explained in Kansuke’s essay “Sensei no tegami to ‘Gin no saji’ no zengo.” Kansuke denies that getting a job had never been an issue between the two brothers. He had been putting money into the household all along. He knew Kin’ichi was taking advantage of his not having a steady job as an excuse to justify his harsh behavior. Knowing all this, Kansuke still decided to earn an income, as he did not want to cause trouble for the people mediating between himself and Kin’ichi.\(^46\) Kansuke had begun writing down recollections of his childhood even before he joined the army, but it was the need to earn a stable income that made him decide to write *Gin no saji.*\(^47\)

Kansuke moved to Lake Nojiri again and wrote *Gin no saji* (later *Gin no saji zenhen* [the Silver Spoon Part 1]) from the summer to the autumn of 1912. This remembrance of childhood, then, is essentially the product of the late Meiji period, and it was written at the same time as other *tsuioku shôsetsu*: Minakami Takitarô’s *Yamanote no ko* (A Child of Yamanote, 1911) and Uno Kôji’s *Seijirô yume miru ko* (Seijiro the Child who Dreams, 1912.) In September, Kansuke completed the novel and sent the
draft to Natsume Sōseki, asking him to take a look at it. The work impressed Sōseki greatly. Through his recommendation, *Gin no saji* was serialized in *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* from April 8 to June 4 of 1913. The following year, Kansuke wrote *Tsumuji magari* (Cantankerous, later *Gin no saji kōhen* [the Silver Spoon Part 2.]) It was again received favorably by Sōseki, and it too was serialized in *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*, this time from April 17 to June 2 of 1915. Although Kansuke had published his diary-style essay *Yume nikki* (Dream Diary, later *Yume no nikki* [Diary of Dreams]) in 1912, a year before *Gin no saji* was published, Kansuke considered *Gin no saji* his first literary work.48

How Natsume Sōseki praised both *Gin no saji* and *Tsumuji magari* is described in Kansuke’s essay “Natsume Sensei to watakushi.”

I don’t remember whether it was immediately after we greeted each other, or after exchanging two or three phrases, but rather abruptly, Sensei said in his usual manner – that is without moving his lips much – “It’s good.” Sensei praised *Gin no saji* more than I expected. He said it was written in a calm manner. He said it had a good tone. I told him that my sentences sometimes sounded childish, but he seemed to think otherwise. […] He repeated again, “It’s good.”

I had not visited Sensei for a long time. During that period, I heard from others that Sensei, and Sensei alone, had been defending *Gin no saji* from all critics. I thought he might be more fond of *Gin no saji* than I was.49

How much Sōseki liked Kansuke’s *Gin no saji* is also evident from Sōseki’s correspondence. In February of 1913, Sōseki wrote the following letter to Yamamoto Matsunosuke, who worked for *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*:

The other day two people came to show me their works. Both are interesting, so, you will not regret introducing them in *Asahi Shinbun* as new writers. One of them is Naka Kansuke. The work is something like a record of his childhood from around the age eight or nine. It contains sentences of rare and elegant quality and is written in a pure writing style. I believe the work is worthy of being introduced in *Asahi Shinbun*. The story, however, does not have variations and progress like a work of popular fiction. With this, I request that you serialize Naka’s work after mine is done.50
In December of 1914, Sôseki wrote to Kansuke about his impression of *Tsumuji magari*:

> The day before yesterday and yesterday, I read your draft. It is interesting. However, since it does not have a plot as a regular novel, a person of low taste may not appreciate it. I like it very much. I enjoyed reading it because I am convalescing, and also because I am fed up with the showy things that pass for “novels” these days. I felt really good reading it. It is completely different from my work, yet it suits me perfectly.¹¹

Sôseki also quoted one of the episodes in *Tsumuji magari* in his famous lecture *Watakushi no kojinshugi* (My Individualism) given at Gakushūin University in 1914.

> I know two brothers, the younger of whom likes to stay at home reading, while the elder is fanatically devoted to fishing. The elder is disgusted with his brother’s reclusive ways, his habit of staying bottled up in the house all day long. He’s decided that his brother has turned into a world-weary misanthrope because he doesn’t go fishing, and he does all he can to drag him along. The younger brother hates the idea, but the elder loads him down with fishing gear and demands his company to the pond. The younger grits his teeth and goes along, hoping he won’t catch anything. But luck is against him: he spends the day pulling in these sickening, fat carp. And what is the upshot of all this? Does the elder’s plan work? Does his brother’s personality change for the better? No, of course not. He ends up hating fishing all the more. We might say that fishing and the elder brother’s personality are a perfect match; they fit together without the smallest gap in between. It is strictly a matter of his personality, however, and has nothing whatever to do with the brother’s.¹²

The elder brother in this episode is Kin’ichi, and the younger, Kansuke.

**Life after *Gin no saji***

As mentioned earlier, Kin’ichi promised that he would reconcile with Kansuke if Kansuke would secure a stable income. After the serialization of *Gin no saji* in *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*, however, Kin’ichi did not keep his promise. When Kansuke got sick, Kin’ichi kicked him out of the house. Kansuke stopped producing any works for seven years after writing *Tsumuji magari*. During those seven years, Kansuke lived the life of recluse, staying in temples and traveling around Japan. In 1920, he returned to Tokyo
and took over the household. In the same year, he finished writing *Deibadatta* (Devadatta) and published it in 1921. In 1922, he also published *Inu* (The Dog) in *Shisō*, a literary magazine. Both *Deibadatta* and *Inu* deal with issues totally different from *Gin no saji*. Yamamuro Shizuka, a literary critic, argues that in order to understand Naka Kansuke it is not enough to read *Gin no saji*, but it is also necessary to read *Deibadatta* and *Inu*. The protagonist of *Deibadatta*, Devadatta, appears in the Buddhist fables as a cousin and rebellious disciple of Buddha. Kansuke wrote his novel based on the fables. Devadatta and Siddhartha (the future Buddha) are both Princes of different regions. One day, in order to welcome the King from another region, Devadatta, Siddhartha and other young men participate in an exhibition game. Devadatta loses the game to Siddhartha, and Siddhartha is the winner. As the winner, Siddhartha is given the beautiful daughter of the King, Yasodhara. Siddhartha and Yasodhara get married. Devadatta becomes jealous of Siddhartha. However, soon after Yasodhara has her first child, Siddhartha leaves her, the child, and property behind to search for the Way. After Siddhartha leaves Yasodhara, Devadatta approaches her. She is lonely and depressed, and they become lovers. He realized that he first approached her not because he loved her but because he wanted to steal what Siddhartha had. However, during the seven years of his love affair with Yasodhara, he began to fall in love with her.

On the day Siddhartha returns to town, now as a Buddha, Yasodhara commits suicide. Devadatta believes that Yasodhara committed suicide because she was still in love with Siddhartha and was ashamed to be seen by him, now a Buddha. Seeking his revenge, Devadatta takes the Buddhist tonsure and joins Buddha’s group. Now that he has taken the tonsure, he has to refrain from all worldly pleasure. Devadatta’s wish now
is to be the most authoritative person in the group and earn people’s respect. He betrays Buddha and forms his own religious group. One of the sons of the King is a member in the group – Devadatta persuades him to kill the King. One of the climactic scenes in the novel is when the son accuses the King of his sins:

You gave birth to me for the satisfaction of your selfish sexual desire. […] Father, listen carefully, reproduction is more sinful than any other sins. It is in fact more sinful than stealing or killing. 54

Meanwhile, Inu is the story of a holy man who devotes himself to ascetic practices. One day, the holy man meets a humble girl who was raped and made pregnant by the chief of a bond of pagan soldiers. He is physically attracted to this humble girl. When he realizes that the girl is in love with the pagan chief who has raped her, he feels extremely jealous and rapes her. Out of fear that she will leave him, he uses magic and transforms himself and her into two dogs. The holy man, now an ugly old dog, kills the pagan chief who raped her, and enjoys having sexual relationship with the girl, who is now a female dog. When she learns that the old dog killed the pagan chief, she attacks and kills the holy man, now the ugly old dog. She is released from the holy man’s magic as soon as she kills him, and she becomes human again. However, soon after, she descends into hell.

Both Deibadatta and Inu analyze the dark nature of human beings. The irony is that a man who wrote so lovingly about childhood also writes so vehemently about violence, sex and mayhem. Moreover, he defines reproduction and sexual pleasure as the greatest sins. Kansuke writes in one of his essays, “If love affairs aim at sexual intercourse with the partner or have it as a condition, I will never have a love affair and I don’t want to have one. I would like to unify all my sexual desires under knowledge,
purify them and use them as a lamp in this dark life, use them as energy to improve my moral being.” As a matter of fact, Kansuke appears to have been attracted to asexual types. He treated little girls, Taeko and Kyoko, both daughters of his friends, with extreme affection. He writes this way of his feelings for Taeko, an eight-year-old, as follows:

I gave a long kiss on her chubby cheek. I made her quiet. No matter what I do, she does not understand my feelings for her. So, I always feel unsatisfied and impatient. But, because she does not understand my feelings, I can love her without making any difficulties. And, I never get bored with it.

Also in the same essay, he presents a conversation between himself and Taeko:

I gave her another kiss, and asked her,
“When do you do this?”
“I don’t know”
“You did it for me.”
“I know, but I don’t know how to say it.”
It seems she really does not know how to describe her feelings.
“I give you a kiss when I love you too much to hide my feelings. Do you also do it when you love me so much?”
“Yes, that’s right.”
For some reason, nobody showed up for a long time tonight. Therefore, I could love her as much as I wanted. Taeko also sat unusually quiet on my lap and chatted with me. I felt such affection for her, hugging her many times and looking at her face.
“Do you like me a lot?”
“I like you very much.”
“But you will forget me soon.”
“If I become busy with my lessons, I may forget you.”
“That’s so sad. I’ll never forget you no matter how busy I am.”

There are many descriptions similar to these in Kansuke’s diary-style essays. Although he seems to reject adult sexuality, these descriptions are sexually charged and quite strange given that he is talking to an eight-year-old girl. When Taeko lost her father when she was only thirteen, she asked Kansuke to be her surrogate father. She got married and had two daughters, but she remained one of the most important people in
Kansuke’s life until her death at the age of thirty-four. Kansuke did not get married until he was fifty-seven. By that time, his mother and Kin’ichi’s wife had already passed away. He clearly states that he wanted to get married so that he could have his wife take care of his older brother. On the morning of Kansuke’s wedding day, however, Kin’ichi passed away.

Naka Kansuke died in 1965 at the age eighty-one. By the time of his death, he had published numerous essays, collections of poems, and children’s stories and novels. His first Complete Works (Naka Kansuke zenshû) was published in twelve volumes from Kadokawa Shoten between 1960 and 1963. He received the 1964 Asahi Cultural Prize for his accomplishments and contributions in the field of literature. After his death, a second Complete Works was published in seventeen volumes from Iwanami Shoten between 1989 and 1991. As Howard Hibbett states, “Kansuke has spent his life outside the mainstream of literary activity in Japan and never attained fame commensurate with his genius as a writer.”

In 1987, Tosho, a Japanese literary journal published by Iwanami Shoten, had a special issue to celebrate the 60-year anniversary of the Iwanami publishing house. In the issue, they showed the results of the survey in which they had asked more than three hundred well-known Japanese about their three most memorable books. The top of the list was Naka Kansuke’s Gin no saji. Most praised Gin no saji for its beautiful writing style and Kansuke’s descriptions of his childhood. They said that they feel great nostalgia every time they read Gin no saji.

Childhood as it was reconstructed by Naka Kansuke in Gin no saji will be examined in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 3

RECONSTRUCTION OF CHILDHOOD IN GIN NO SAJI

Why are our earliest memories associated with a particular space, house, yard, neighborhood, or street? In modern Japanese literature, we find there is a tendency among writers to produce autobiographical fiction when they experience dislocation or loss of personal identity that arising from a sense of disjunction between their present environment and that of the past. Who am I? How did I get here? – The writer needs to “re-collect” memories in order to ground his or her present life. By and large, Naturalist writers were from rural areas, but there is little description of childhood in their Meiji-era works. Perhaps this was due to the fact that rural communities were slow to change. However, writers who wrote tsuioku shōsetsu at the end of the Meiji period such as Minakami Takitarō, Uno Kōji and Naka Kansuke tended to be born in cities. Minakami Takitarō and Naka Kansuke were born in Tokyo, and Uno Kōji was raised in Osaka. A sense of dislocation might well be felt more strongly by urban-born writers as their “urban hometowns” changed drastically during the Meiji and Taishō periods. Writing about childhood was thus an attempt to recapture and represent a stable “self.” It is not by chance that tsuioku shōsetsu were later subsumed under the category of the “I-novel.” These writers felt like strangers in their own hometowns – They felt the need to write
recollections of their childhood in order to remember where they once belonged. However, the “self” projected in these works is largely the function of a reconstruction of “place.” Recollection of memories, in other words, means reconstructing a sense of “place” through a sense of “time.” As Watsuji Tetsurō has written, Naka Kansuke was clearly the novelist in Japan who was the most accomplished at recreating a sense of childhood.

In *Gin no saji*, the children’s world is mysteriously, vividly described. Moreover, it is not the children’s world that the adults perceive, nor is it memories of childhood recalled in adult experience. It is truly a children’s world experienced by a child. (Using the words of Sōseki,) there is no other writer who can so precisely describe children’s experiences as the experience of a child.63

Kansuke does not so much conceptualize a child’s world as ground it in highly specific terms of space and time. The immersion of the reader in this world owes a great deal not only to geographical specificity but also to the fact that Naka Kansuke so completely and severely limits his narration to language appropriate to children that there is little room for the outside “adult observer to intervene.” His style excludes most Chinese cognates, loan translations and words from Western languages, as well as the erotic, intellectual, and aesthetic discourses of the times. Nonetheless, Kansuke manages to create a very beautiful and evocative literary language based largely on extraliterary language diversity: onomatopoeic and mimetic words, regional dialects, and the social dialects associated with children. Finally, related to the highly original incorporation of extraliterary language diversity into the narrative is Kansuke’s encyclopedic command of the social manners and customs of childhood. Children’s games, songs, public and private amusements for children, and stories are all described in entirely unique, psychologically penetrating ways.
In this chapter, then, I will examine these three interrelated aspects of Kansuke’s representation of childhood. First I will map the geographical outline of his “urban hometown.” Then I will describe the linguistic features as they manifest themselves in *Gin no saji*. Finally, I will discuss the social manners associated with childhood in Tokyo in the mid-Meiji period.

**Geography of an “urban hometown”:**

In reconstructing his own childhood, Kansuke recreated as well the neighborhoods, houses, and open spaces of mid-Meiji Tokyo. Indeed, social stratification is portrayed throughout the novel as largely a function of geographical location.

Kansuke and the protagonist of *Gin no saji*, Shun-bô, were both born in the Kanda section of Tokyo and then moved to the Koishikawa district a few years later. Kanda was and is still considered shitamachi, or “low city,” and Koishikawa yamanote, or “high city.” Jinnai Hidenobu, a scholar of architecture, examines the historical legacy of Tokyo as an urban space in his book *Tokyo: A Spatial Anthropology*. He describes the shitamachi and yamanote distinction in Tokyo as follows. In the Edo period, the Edo castle, or the present Imperial Palace, stood at the edge of the Musashino plateau. The east end of the castle was on the alluvial lowlands called shitamachi created from the river delta and threaded with canals. The west end of the castle was the diluvial plateau called yamanote. Social organization of Edo, or present-day Tokyo, followed its topography within the city and divided it into residential areas corresponding to the hierarchy of the period – warriors, townsmen and farmers. Based on this class
distinction, each area developed its own unique residential atmosphere and architectural forms. The residences of the warrior class were situated in yamanote where there were many rivers, valleys and the hills. Koishikawa, for example, is located on one of the seven hills in yamanote. Townsmen, on the other hand, made their residential areas in shitamachi. Both yamanote and shitamachi developed as lived-in space, the high city as a "garden city" and the low city, a "city of water."64 Although political institutions changed drastically after the Meiji Restoration, the physical structure of the city of Edo did not go through radical change in the process of Tokyo, becoming the capital city of a newly emerged Japan. The townsmen’s quarters, one of which was Kanda, continued to thrive as a business district resided in by merchants and craftsmen during the Meiji period. Estates in the old warrior districts in yamanote became vacant after their inhabitants moved out in the wake of the social upheaval caused by the institution of the new Meiji state.65 In the mid-Meiji period, when Kansuke was living in yamanote, there must have been many abandoned houses or vacant lots in the high city areas.

Kansuke describes the physical features of Kanda and its environments at the beginning of Gin no saji. Shun-bō’s house is located in the lord’s estate in Kanda. Kansuke’s house was located inside Lord Takenokoshi’s estate in Higashi Matsushita-chō, which was a part of the townsmen’s quarter in Kanda during the Edo period.66 Yamato-chō and Higashi Ryūkan-chō, which were located close to Higashi Matsushita-chō, became the center of the manufacturing and wholesale trade of cheap candies during the Meiji period.67 Just south of Higashi Matsushita-chō were the dyers’ district, Konya-chō, and the blacksmith’s district, Kaji-chō. The names of these districts, which still exist in Kanda in present-day Tokyo, indicate that residences were populated by lower-rank
people. Lord Takenokoshi and the Naka family moved to Tokyo in 1872. However, the record shows that the Higashi Matsushita-chō estate did not belong to the lord in 1874. This suggests that Lord Takenokoshi acquired his estate in the Kanda merchant’s district a few years after he moved to Tokyo. He was from the Takenokoshi family that had served for generations as the most influential retainers of the powerful Owari clan, one of the three most powerful clans in the Edo period. Why did he chose to settle in a merchants’ quarter in Tokyo? This was due to the fact that Lord Takenokoshi, of whom Kansuke’s father was a retainer, was a supporter of the Shogun and was opposed to the new Meiji government during the most violent days of the Meiji Restoration. Having identified with the losing side, Imao was excluded from the new centers of political power that came into existence with the new Meiji state. He and his retainers were at a great disadvantage in the early Meiji period. This state of decline must have led him and his retainers to establish residences in Kanda ward, a typically shitamachi area. Indeed, the first publication of *Gin no saji* describes the family’s father as being so poor during the Meiji Restoration that he had to engage in the cottage industry of selling tiles and making kite frames for sale to local shops. However, although the lord and the Naka family resided in shitamachi, their estate was still far better than the residences of their townsmen neighbors. In the first publication of *Gin no saji*, the narrator recalls the time when he played hide-and-seek with the lord’s son at the lord’s residence. He writes that, because the residence was so stately inside, he did not know where to hide himself. At the same time, the description of the neighborhood around Shun-bô’s Kanda house clearly indicates the atmosphere of the older merchants’ and craftsmen’s district:
The place I was born, the true Kanda of Kanda district [ward], was notorious for continual fires and street fights and was full of drunkards and thieves. The only buildings in the neighborhood that left an impression on my feeble mind were those of the miller’s [on] the opposite side of the road, the confectionery, the bean-curd store, the public bathhouse, and the lumber yard. More conspicuous were the entrance gates to my lord’s estate where my home was located, and the tall black fence of the doctor’s residence, diagonally opposite our house.

[I was like a monster from the Arabian Nights.] On days when the weather was fine my aunt carried me outdoors, and would try to please me by showing me places as far from home as her poor aged legs would permit. Deep in the back lane behind our house there was a store where fermented soybeans were made. Colorfully tattooed men, bands tied around their foreheads and girded with loincloths, sang while they baked the beans. These frightening men with their devilish appearance, along with the grinding noise which vibrated to the very core of my [brain], made me dislike the place. When my aunt took me to such horrible places, I would soon start to whine [and twist] my body in the direction I wanted to go. My aunt, understanding so well the feelings of the monster on her back, never failed to obey my wish (I, 9-10.)

Shun-bô is afraid of the outside world in Kanda. As described above, whenever he goes outside, he clings to obasan’s back “like a monster from the Arabian Nights.”

He was an introverted, timid child who was easily frightened by the din and bustle of downtown Tokyo. He was even terrified by the children in his Kanda neighborhood.

They are described as violent and unreasonable:

For someone like me to be born in the middle of the Kanda district [ward] was no more logical than for a water imp to be hatched in the middle of a desert. All the neighborhood children were the bullying spawn of Kandaite. [They] not only refused to take weaklings seriously, but [they] teased me harshly given half a chance. There was one bully in particular, the son of a tabi shop owner, who used to sneak up [on] my aunt. Without warning, he would slap my cheek, then dash away. Terrified by such incidents, I became more and more withdrawn (I, 13.)

The son of a tabi shop at least respects the authority of an adult, obasan. He teases Shun-bô when obasan is not paying attention. Some of the children, however, do not even recognize the authority of Shun-bô’s obasan, an aged woman. They attack Shun-bô even when he is on obasan’s back. The following is a scene at the Myôjin God festival:
Mounted on her back, my red flannel breeches visible below my pulled-up kimono, I clutched a tiny lantern in my hand. One of the mischievous boys that gathered around the barrel-shrine spotted me and flung two or three stones, shouting, “Hey! Look! He’s been swinging his lantern on a woman’s back!”

Terrified, my aunt turned abruptly to go home. In spite of her pleading, “Spare him! He isn’t strong!” two or three youths ran noisily after us and tried to pull me to the ground by the legs. Clinging to my aunt’s back, I began to cry as if I were aflame. “Please, leave us alone!” implored my aunt, trying to loosen my fierce grip on her neck as she ran homewards. We stopped to catch our breath after a while and then noticed that the special hand-lantern and one of my clogs had been lost. How precious it had been, that clog, tied with a light green cord! (I, 17-18)²²

Not only is the shitamachi atmosphere depicted, but there is also a serene scene describing the Kanda neighborhood.

The place I liked best was the little shrine of the Harvest God, on Izumi Street, which still stands on the banks of the Kanda River. Early in the morning, when no one else was there, we amused ourselves by throwing stones into the river or ringing the large, seed-like bell. […]

Watching the river one day, as I hung [onto] a wooden fence with my aunt’s restraining hand on my sash, I saw a white bird flying back and forth over the water seeking fish. Its graceful flight on long, soft, fluttering wings was truly a comforting sight for a child so sickly and so apt to feel pain. I was therefore in an unusually good mood until a peddler woman with a load of eggs and wheat-cookies on her back chanced to rest near us (I, 10-11.)²³

Jinnai Hidenobu mentions that Tokyo was famous for the beauty of the canal quays and waters before the Meiji period.²⁴ He also notes that religious space such as temples and shrines were removed from the everyday lives of townsmen in the Edo period. Instead they were built in locations which people might feel “sacred.” They might be located on top of a hill or along the water’s edge.²⁵ Although Tokyo has been transformed from a “city of water” to a “city of land” since the Meiji period with the development of the transportation, the description of Izumi-chō Inari Shrine in Gin no saji clearly tells us that the river on which edge the Shrine stood was a place of recreation and relaxation for people in the city, just as it was in the Edo period.
Two other places in his Kanda neighborhood are also mentioned. They are the former site of the famous Tenma-chô Prison of the Edo period and the Kanda Myôjin Shrine. The site of the former prison became the locations of various thriving side show booths in mid-Meiji. There was also a big festival at the Kanda Myôjin Shrine. The festival of the Sannô Gongen Shrine is also mentioned in the first publication of the novel. The Kanda Myôjin and the Sannô Gongen festivals are the great festivals of old Edo.\textsuperscript{76} The festival of Kanda Myôjin Shrine is depicted quite vividly:

Because it took place in Kanda, the festival of the God Myôjin was tremendously lively. The neighborhood youths, carrying paper lanterns decorated with the rising sun and heraldic designs of whirling circles, hung the doors with red and white flowers. Our house decorations, consisting of flowers and hanging paper lamps on the eaves, were delightful. For this occasion the stores were decorated with carved lions’ heads, the floors completely covered with rugs specially spread for his day. Two of the roughhewn heads were placed respectfully on the steps of the altar, and beside them were propped thick Japanese papers resembling pieces of sliced-off bamboo. There was also an offering of sacred wine. The gilded lion with the jeweled head-knot rolled his silver eyeballs, and the stout scarlet Korean dog glared with his golden eyes, his hackles bristling. Concerned that I might start crying upon seeing these frightening faces, my aunt aroused a friendly feeling within me for the lion, and even for the Korean dog, by using the same skills she had used with Honorable Dog and Red Ox (I, 16-17.)\textsuperscript{77}

Although Gin no saji takes place in mid-Meiji, the depictions of the neighborhood in Shun-bô’s Kanda house retain the atmosphere of Edo.

It is not clearly stated in the novel when Shun-bô moved from Kanda, a shitamachi area, to Koishikawa, a yamanote area. In real life, Kansuke moved to Koishikawa in 1889 when he was five years old. The reason for the move mentioned in the novel, and also mentioned in Kansuke’s essay, is that Shun-bô and his mother were both sickly and the family doctor recommended the family to move to a yamanote area where the air was clean.\textsuperscript{78} In 1884, Lord Takenokoshi, Takenokoshi Masaki, received the
status of baron, and Kansuke’s father became his steward. This promotion provided the
family with the economic resources to move to a more respectable neighborhood.

Kansuke describes his new neighborhood as if introducing a new world. The description
of Koishikawa district in *Gin no saji* is quite different from that of Kanda ward. Shun-bô
and his family moved from Kanda to Koishikawa by wagons. He describes the
atmosphere as it changed from Kanda to Koishikawa as follows:

In a little while we were on a road that became progressively more deserted, and
at its end we began the ascent of [a] long, red-clay [steep incline.] I had never
seen a hill before. At length we arrived at our new home, [a traditional house]
surrounded by a cedar hedge (I, 18.)

According to Jinnai Hidenobu, the neighborhood of Koishikawa was generally occupied
by shogunal samurai retainers who were charged with maintenance and upkeep of the
Shogun’s properties retainers, known as *omakanai-gumi* in the Edo period. Jinnai writes:

According to a woodblock print from the Genroku period (1688-1704) called *Edo
zukan kōmoku* (A picture outline of Edo; 1689), most of the area was still covered
by fields; a stream ran along the valley near Otowa-chô, which later became the
thriving temple-town of Gokokuji. But the part of the area where the group
residences stood along six parallel east-west streets already showed strong
evidence of city planning. It is surprising indeed to find such a splendidly
planned residential district that is set along parallel roads on land as hilly as this.
The area was enlarged by annexing adjacent farmland.

Although Kansuke’s residence was one block east of where the “six parallel east-
west streets” mentioned above were located, the atmosphere that Kansuke depicts in the
novel seems quite similar to that of the Edo period described in Jinnai’s passage.

The people in these parts lived quietly in their aged houses, all of them
surrounded by cedar hedges. Descendants perhaps of the samurais of the pre-
Restoration era, they had continued to live here. Their circumstances may have
changed. [They] had come down in the world, but their affairs had not so
deteriorated as to reduce them to poverty. They managed to live out their days in
modest peace.

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The close proximity of the few houses of this secluded area permitted the neighbors an atmosphere of intimacy; not only did they all know one another, but they were familiar with the inside of each other’s homes. Inside the cedar hedge enclosure, which had not been trimmed ever since it had begun to disintegrate, each home had some plots of earth where some fruit trees had been planted. Where there were no vegetable gardens between the houses, there were, at any rate, tea fields that served as playgrounds for children and birds. Nothing I saw—gardens, hedges, tea fields—was familiar or failed to delight me.\(^2\)

Shun-bō goes to nearby temples and festivals also in Koishikawa, but his playground is no longer limited to religious sites. Every morning, obasan makes him walk barefooted on the wild grass in the vacant land.\(^3\) He grows flowers and vegetables in his backyard. He makes his first friend, Okuni-san, in Koishikawa and plays hide-and-seek in the farmland.

Kansuke wrote the above passages in 1910 when Japan had already gone through Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars. At that time, there were no high-rise buildings in Tokyo as there are now, but Tokyo must have been quickly changing to a modern city. By recording these vanishing characteristics of Tokyo such as fairs, edgewaters, traditional houses and vacant lots in Tokyo, Kansuke successfully creates Meiji-era settings that retained the atmosphere of Edo.

Linguistic manifestation of extraliterary language diversity in Gin no saji:

Of course, the real issue in the recollection of childhood is not a problem of memory but a problem of linguistic articulation – in other words, how to portray oneself as child. Watanabe Gekisaburō states:

There are many memoirs, autobiographies and stories of recollections. However, it is rare to find a work like [Gin no saji] that preserves a child’s feelings without ruining them. No matter how one respects or feels nostalgic about one’s own experiences and feelings in childhood, it is almost impossible for an adult to talk
about his or her childhood by using the psychology of the child. I am amazed that [Naka Kansuke] was able to achieve this almost impossible task.84

How did Kansuke solve the difficulty of narration from a child’s perspective? While making no claim to treating this topic exhaustively, I suggest the following rhetorical strategies: (1) limiting information and the vocabulary and skillfully manipulating tense; (2) consciously delimiting Chinese, Western, and other foreign loan words; and (3) using an extraordinary amount of extraliterary language, such as onomatopoeic and mimetic language, as well as regional dialects. In this section, I would like to examine these linguistic features of Gin no saji.

(1) Limitation of information and the vocabulary and manipulation of tenses:

The information presented in Gin no saji is strictly limited to what is known by the protagonist; meanwhile, the narrator, who is clearly an adult, is recalling childhood experiences. Yet, the narrator is clearly constituted from multiple voices – Shun-bô when he is a young child, Shun-bô when he is an adolescent, and so on. The multiplicity of voices are provided unity by authorial identity, but this is constructed almost entirely of voices from childhood. Thus, there is no room for an adult observer in the narrative. In Chapter 2, for example, the skin disease that plagued Shun-bô is given considerable attention, but the name of the disease is not revealed. As noted above, the narrator describes the move from Kanda to Koishikawa, but he gives no economic reasons for the move, as this knowledge was beyond the purview of a child. In fact, the narrator does not say much about the status of the family – what class his family belonged to, how comfortable his family’s circumstances were, and so on. All of this is information is

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made apparent through descriptions of place. When Shun-bō was eight or nine years old, he made a trip to an ocean-side city with his parents. When he returned home, he found that his best friend, Okuni-san, had moved. The narrator only provides a vague intimation that Okuni-san moved because of her father’s job situation. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, Okuni-san’s father was a powerful retainer in the Awa domain. More information could have been added about the father’s situation to explain to readers what was happening to people in the former warrior class during the Meiji period. However, the narrator does not explain things from an adult perspective. He describes simply what he heard as a child at a given point in time.

Childhood psychology is described using the language appropriate to the age of the child. Before Shun-bō reaches school age, his psychological reactions are described in such simple language as “like,” “dislike,” “scared,” and “happy.” The reason why Shun-bō feels as he does is also given, but the reasoning too is very simple. Shun-bō “dislikes” the store near his house where soybean snacks are made because he is “scared” of the colorfully tattooed men with their devilish appearance or because of the grinding noise. On the day he moves from Kanda to Koishikawa, he is “happy” because he is riding in a wagon with obasan. Shun-bō is “scared” of a cicada because it is noisy. When he sees pictures of the poets in a bound edition of One Hundred Poems by One Hundred Poets, he “dislikes” a picture of a monk whose face is wrinkled, but he “loves” Semimarup, also a monk, because of his quaint name. No philosophical analysis or complicated reasoning is given to explain the psychology of a child.

The description of childhood psychology, however, changes gradually as Shun-bō grows older. Simple declarations of “like” or “hate” disappear. Even when the simple
term is used, the reasoning is no longer so simple. The following is the scene when Shun-bō plays with Okei-chan, the neighborhood girl to whom he is attracted:

Okei-chan was good at making faces and she always beat me at it. She could move her facial muscles at will and her face would assume all kinds of expressions: “Angry eyes, laughing eyes.” With the help of her hands she stretched or shrunk her eyes as if they were rubber. I [hated] this game, not because I always lost, but because it distressed me to see Okei-chan’s pretty face become so wretchedly distorted. At times, only the whites of her eyes showed, and at other times her mouth stretched like that of a crocodile (I, 103.)

Shun-bō does not like the game not because he does not like to see someone’s face distorted, but because he does not want to see the distorted face of “the girl” to whom he is attracted. Also, Shun-bō’s feeling for her is not depicted simply by saying “he likes her” or “he loves her.” Instead it is described in a more complicated manner:

We continued to spend our days together like this and I began to feel as though Okei-chan belonged to me like Honorable Dog and Red Ox. I responded sensitively to all happenings, lucky or unlucky, and to words, honorable or derogatory, that concerned her. I began to think of her as being pretty. How proud this made me! But at the same time my own appearance became a burden I had never dreamed of. I wished that I were a handsome fellow and attractive to Okei-chan; I wished that she would continue to be my only close friend and would go on playing with me forever. These were the thoughts that began to possess me (I, 103-104.)

This passage is written from a child’s perspective, not that of an adult observer. The following passages also illustrate how the description of the childhood psychology changes as Shun-bō grows older. Both passages depict the scenes when Shun-bō’s best friends, Okuni-san and Okei-chan, moved to another city. Shun-bō is about seven years old. He says, “Upon returning home from our trip I found that due to her father’s work, Okuni-san had moved to a distant place while we were gone. I felt lonely and desolate” (I, 81). In the next passage, Shun-bō is about ten. “I went to school early the next day
before anyone else had arrived. As I softly sat in Okei-chan’s seat, nostalgic feelings welled up in me again and I quietly hugged the desk. On this desk the mischievous Okei-chan had scratched with a pencil all sorts of things like mountain-water goblins and a hemamushi-priest” (I, 114).  

In Gin no saji, how and what Shun-bō felt is skillfully depicted by using language appropriate to the age of the child. This is why many critics say that Gin no saji depicts the world of children from the perspective of a child. It is also probably why readers feel they are living through their childhood again with Shun-bō when they read Gin no saji.

In addition to the simple, plain language that is appropriate to childhood, there is another rhetorical technique that Kansuke uses in Gin no saji that immerses readers in the world of Shun-bō. It is the mixing of the present and past tenses. When the narrator talks about things that happened in his childhood (past), he tends to tell a story with the mixture of the two tenses. The following is a lengthy passage from when Shun-bō is five or six. It is written with a mixture of the present and past tenses:

一町ほど淋しいはうへゆくと木枝の生垣をめぐらしたあき地に五六羽の鶏を飼つくて駄菓子を売つてる爺さん婆さんがあった。私ははじめて見る薬屋根や、破れた土壁や、ぎりぎり音のする潰ね釣瓶などがひどく気にいつて伯母さんとそこへ葉子を買ひにゆくのが大きな楽しみのひとつになった。爺さん婆さんが耳が遠くて呼んでもなかなか出てこない。そんな呼んでるとそのうちやつところ見出てきてあつちこつち葉子箱の蓋をあけてみせる。きんか糖、きんぎょ糖、てんもん糖、微塵棒。竹の羊羹は口にくはへると青竹の方がしてつるりと舌のうへにすべりだす。飴のかなかのおたさんは泣いたり笑ったりしているな向きに顔を見せる。青や赤の繭になったのをこつぎり噛み折つて吸つてみると鬆のなかから甘い風が出る。いちばん好きなのは肉桂棒といふのだい。それはあるへいの棒に肉桂の粉をまぶたしたで、濃厚な甘味のなかに興奮性の肉桂の匂いをする。あるひとり雨の日に私はどうしてか急に爺さん婆さんが可哀そうになり、それと同時に肉桂棒がほしくてきかないので伯母さんは私を半纏おんぶして出かけたが、あいにく肝心の肉桂棒がなかったため私はつかかりして泣いて帰つたことがあつた。「牛の乳」をおとなしくのんだり、むづからずによく遊んだりした日には御
Near an empty field about a hundred yards away from our house, there was a lot surrounded by a Rose of Sharon hedge where an old couple raised a few chickens and sold cheap sweets. I loved the thatched roof of their house and its cracked mud wall, from the first time I saw it and heard the screeching of the well bucket. It was a real delight to go there with my aunt for some candies. Being hard of hearing, the old couple did not come out immediately when called. They would at length respond to our repeated summons and, opening the various boxes, show us the candies [– Kinka-tô candy, Kingyoku-tô candy, Tenmon-tô candy, Mijinstick candy.] I held the bean-paste in my mouth as I squeezed it out of its bamboo wrapper. Ota-san’s comical wheat-jelly face cried out or laughed depending on how I squeezed the candy. I bit off the end and sucked at the blue and red striped stick as a sweet fragrance rose from the syrup inside. My favorite candy was the [cinnamon] stick. [It] was [an aruhei stick] covered with powdered cinnamon, its rich sweetness giving off a tantalizing aroma. One pouring, rainy day, feeling sorry for the old couple for no reason at all and suddenly craving a cinnamon stick, I insisted that my aunt take me to the sweet shop. She set out with me on her back under the cover of her short coat, but unfortunately there [were] no cinnamon stick[s] that day. I cried all the way home in my disappointment. On the days I drank my milk without fuss or played without being peevish, my aunt bought me a garagara toy as a reward. Mounted on my aunt’s back, I cheerfully swung the red-and-white, peach or clam-shaped garagara and broke it open as soon as we reached home. Out would fall a tiny paper drum, an aluminum flute or some other miniature object. How I treasured these things! There were other types of garagara as well, wrapped triangularly in brown leather and sealed at the corners with pictures of actors.

The first sentence is a memory of an elderly couple who sells cheap sweets. It is written from the narrator’s perspective and is written in the past tense. The second sentence is written from Shun-bô’s perspective. It too is written in the past tense as it shows a “change” (to come to like to go to the cheap sweets shop.) But then, a catalogue of cheap sweets is given in the present tense, presented from Shun-bô’s perspective. Furthermore, the sentence suddenly shifts to the past tense when it says, “My favorite
candy was the [cinnamon] stick [candy].” These are the words of the narrator talking about what sweet he liked most when he was a child. The cinnamon stick candy is described in the present tense. One event on the rainy day follows in the past tense, presented as an event in the past, but the next two sentences are written in the present tense from Shun-bô’s perspective. The second from the last sentence is also written in the present tense, but this is obviously taken from the narrator’s perspective looking from the distance at Shun-bô treasuring his toys. Finally, the chapter ends with the sentence in the past tense written from the narrator’s perspective. It is the memory of another type of cheap sweet.

As seen in the above, perspective shifts quite freely from the point-of-view of the narrator to that of Shun-bô, and vice versa. It is not strictly related to tense. In other words, there is no strict dividing line between the watakushi that indicates the narrator and the watakushi who is Shun-bô. In the same manner, there is no definite dividing line between the present and the past. As Tomioka Taeko observes, “Although Sôseki says that [Gin no saji] does not have a plot, a plot does exist. What is missing [in Gin no saji] is tense.”91 By knitting the language appropriate to the age of the child into seemingly “tenseless” sentences, Kansuke skillfully reconstructs childhood before the readers’ eyes.

(2) Avoidance of kanji and kango:

In the essay “Natsume Sensei to watakushi,” Kansuke introduces the episode in which Natsume Sôseki criticized Kansuke for using too much hiragana in Gin no saji.92 Kansuke explains that it was his policy to deliberately use hiragana. Moreover, he states
that he had strong preferences vis-à-vis kanji and he did not want to use kanji that he did not like.93

When comparing the first publication of Gin no saji of 1913 with the 1926 edition, many kanji used in the first publication have been changed and are written in hiragana in the second. Compare, for example, the first four sentences of Gin no saji in the first publication and the 1926 edition. Note the underlining in the case of the latter.

• The first publication:

私の書斎のある部屋に置かれていた本箱の上に貼ってある一冊の東洋小箱が
しまってある。箱はむろしがと雅に板の合せ目を手触りの柔らかいこと
を生かした寄木細工のもので、美しくはいった目立つ美しいものが
当てがえたのに、おさえに力なくして本箱の上に置かれた小さなこ
と、普段ふとった音のすることなどには今でも気に入りの物の一つ
にある。小箱には子安寅や権の実や小さい時ものものでほんじし
た物が一杯つめてあるのが特に一つ珍しい形の銀の小箱のことがある
ことをかつて忘れたことはない。94

• The 1926 edition:

私の書斎のある部屋に置かれていた本箱の上に貼ってある一冊の東洋小
箱がしまってある。それはコルク質の木で、板の合せ目を手触りの柔
らかいこと、普段ふとった音のすることなどには今でも気に入り
の物の一つになってある。なかには子安寅や権の実や、小さいときの
玩びであっ。こたまきした物がいつついついてあるが、そのうちに一つ珍しい
形の銀の小箱のあることをかつて忘れたことはない。95

(Translation)

In the drawer of my studio bookcase, which is full of all sorts of worthless objects, I have kept a tiny box since my childhood. It is made of a cork-like wood with a peony-flower print pasted on each corner. Perhaps it was once an imported snuffbox. Though it is not particularly beautiful, its sigh of expelled air when the cover is snapped shut, and the soft, smooth texture of its polished wood make it one of my favorite possessions [to this day.] The box is packed with cowry
shells, camellia seeds, and other minute things that were the playthings of my infancy. Of these objects I shall always remember a small, oddly shaped silver spoon.\textsuperscript{96}

It can be assumed that Kansuke unwillingly used many kanji characters in the first publication in order to please Sôseki, who took the trouble to introduce the work to Tokyo Asahi Shinbun. In the 1922 edition of Gin no saji,\textsuperscript{97} which was the first edition of the book, Kansuke writes in the preface as follows:

Gin no saji was serialized twice, part one and part two, in one newspaper about ten years ago. Regarding the okurigana, punctuation and usage of kanji – whether or not to use kanji, and what kanji to use – I originally used hiragana but I respected Natsume Sensei’s opinion, whom I troubled regarding the draft, and re-wrote many words using kanji. Now, there are many words that I would like to change. It is not because it is now published as a book, but because I would like to write words in my own way. It is also because my ideas and tastes are different from what they were ten years ago.\textsuperscript{98}

In the preface, Kansuke goes on to say that, although he wanted to change many places, due to his own carelessness he gave the draft to the publisher without revising it much.

Consequently, the 1922 edition is not much different from the novel’s first publication. The 1926 edition, however, has many changes in terms of orthography. In 1926, Kansuke had the opportunity to change things to fit his own standards.

Horibe Isao compares the number of kanji and kana (including hiragana and katakana) used in the first paragraph in each edition of Gin no saji Part One. In the first publication, there are 269 kana, 118 kanji, with kana occupying about 69 percent of the text. In the 1922 edition, the ratio is about the same. There are 274 kana, 117 kanji, with kana occupying about 70 percent of the text. However, in the 1926 edition, kana increases drastically. There are 339 kana, 80 kanji, with kana occupying about 81 percent of the text.\textsuperscript{99}
Although Kansuke did not change the lexical items themselves from the first publication to the 1926 edition, changing the way they are written from kanji to hiragana produces a certain effect. When writing, a Japanese adult is expected to use kanji if a word is commonly written in kanji. By writing words in hiragana that are commonly written in kanji, Kansuke visually creates a "children's world." I must say that Kansuke is an extremely sensitive writer who fully utilizes his senses in his writings, especially, the visual and auditory. A description in Gin no saji such as follows illustrates this sensitivity:

 [...], 蓋をするとき ばん とふっくらした音のすることなどのために今でもお気にいりの物のひとつになってる。\(^{100}\)

 [...] its sigh of expelled air when the cover is snapped shut, and the soft, smooth texture of its polished wood make it one of my favorite possessions [to this day.]\(^{101}\)

Kansuke intentionally puts one space before and after the onomatopoeic word to describe the sound of shutting a box, ばん. Visually and auditory, Kansuke emphasizes the onomatopoeia.

(3) Use of extraliterary language in Gin no saji:

Kansuke's sensitivity to sound is evident in the following words in which he criticizes Sôseki's writing style:

Especially, I really enjoyed reading Kusamakura. I remember that the part I was attracted to most was his rich vocabulary. However, I was always frustrated that, most of the time or all, Sensei [Sôseki] ignored the auditory.\(^{102}\)

Kawaji Shigeyuki, a writer, also recalls a similar conversation with Kansuke.

Kansuke: "I used to play go with Mr. Shiga [Naoya]"
Kawaji: "Who was more skillful?"
Kansuke: "Well, our skills were about the same."
Kawaji: "In old tales, great people play go. I wonder why it was not shōgi but go that they played?"
Kansuke: "Because of its sound. The snapping sound of the go stone is [more] sonorous."\(^{103}\)

Hence, the sounds of words are so crucial to Kansuke. He not only uses many onomatopoeic and mimetic words in *Gin no saji* but also creates his own onomatopoeic and mimetic words. The following underlined words are some of the examples of onomatopoeic or mimetic words created by Kansuke:

\[
\begin{align*}
taotao & \text{ to habatak}u \ (I, \ 10) \quad \text{たをたをと羽ばたく} \\
hyonhyon & \text{ haneru} \ (I, \ 12) \quad \text{ひょんひょんはねる} \\
dekodeko & \text{ no atama} \ (I, \ 17) \quad \text{でこでこの頭} \\
murimuri & \text{ shita sune} \ (I, \ 18) \quad \text{むりむりしたすね} \\
mukkura & \text{ shita takenoko} \ (I, \ 25) \quad \text{むくくらした箒} \\
hotohoto & \text{ to shitataru} \ (I, \ 43) \quad \text{ほとほととしたたる} \\
rinrin renren & \text{ naku} \ (I, \ 44) \quad \text{りんりんれんれん鳴く}
\end{align*}
\]

It is important to note the special characteristics of the onomatopoeic and mimetic words that Kansuke created. He uses many voiceless sounds. This seems intentional. For example, "pyonpyon" is the common word to describe the motion of jumping, but its voiceless counterpart, "hyonhyon" is used instead.\(^{104}\) Similarly, "potopoto" is the common onomatopoeia to describe the sound of water dropping, but its voiceless counterpart, "hotohoto" is used. Komatsu Hideo, a Japanese linguist, lists some of the impressions that distinguish voiced and voiceless sounds.
Voiceless: frail, fine, beautiful, pleasant, fluffy, light, elegant ....

Voiced: strong, coarse, dirty, unpleasant, heavy, dull, vulgar ....

Since Kansuke is such a sensitive writer who considers sound important, it might well be the case that Kansuke he created onomatopoetic or mimetic words using many voiceless sounds to give a serene, pleasant tone to his work.

Kansuke also created onomatopoetic or mimetic words by adopting a part of a word or combining two onomatopoetic or mimetic words into one. For example, “taotao” comes from the word “taoyaka” (graceful, willewy, sveite). By describing the manner a white bird is flying with a flap of the wings with the word “taotao,” readers can vividly visualize the white bird flying so gracefully. The mimetic word “murimuri” is the combination of two words “muchimuchi” and “puripuri.” “Muchimuchi” is the mimetic word to describe a body part that is well-fleshed, and “puripuri” is also used to describe a fleshy body part that is bulging. Depending upon their usage – for instance, when used to describe a body of a young girl – these words can sound erotic or rather vulgar. Kansuke successfully transmits the sensual image of well-sharpened legs of the child without falling into the danger of sounding unrefined. The mimetic word “mukkura” is also a combination of two words “mukkuri” and “fukkura.” Both “mukkuri” and “fukkura” are adjectives for plump, chubby objects. “Mukkuri” is also used for the manner of sitting up abruptly. The word “mukkura” not only makes us visualize a plump, well-rounded bamboo shoot but also tells us that the bamboo shoot just came out of the ground. The words “dekodeko” and “rinrin renren” must be a creation of Kansuke’s playing with words. “Dekodeko” is used here as “dekoboko” (a word to describe unevenness.) Since the object is a bumpy head of a stone-carved guardian dog at the gate of the shrine, the
word “dekodeko” is used as a pivot word to mean “dekoboko” and “odeko” (a child’s term for forehead) that is a part of the head. The word “rinrin” is a commonly used onomatopoeic word to depict the sound of such insects in the autumn as crickets and belling insects. “Renren” does not make sense by itself, but combining it with “rinrin” and making up the onomatopoeia “rinrin renren,” readers can hear the great orchestration of the sounds of insects in the autumn evening.

In reference to Kansuke’s playing with words, there is one more feature of the onomatopoeic or mimetic words that he uses that is worthy of mention. Kansuke sometimes uses the onomatopoeic or mimetic words with the verbs or nouns not commonly associated with them. In doing so, Kansuke uses onomatopoeic or mimetic words as a “pivot word” that describes two sounds and actions with one word, thereby creating a mysteriously sensory world. Again, the underlined words are onomatopoetic or mimetic words.

\[
\text{fukkura to shita oto} \quad (I, 3) \quad \text{ふっくらとした音}
\]

\[
\text{pokari pokari ochite iru} \quad (I, 106, 234) \quad \text{ばかりばかり落ちている}
\]

“Fukkura” means “puffy”, so usually it is used to describe the shape of an object such as o-mochi rice cake which has been heated in a grill. However, in this context, it is used to describe the sound. Nevertheless, “fukkura” does not sound strange at all even if it is used for the sound. Rather, it sounds comforting to ears, and readers can sense the soft, pleasant sound. It is almost as though the sound is as inviting as a warm rice cake. Similarly, “pokari pokari” is normally used with the verb “to float” to describe things that are floating here and there on the water. In Gin no saji, Kansuke uses “pokari pokari” to describe althea flowers on the ground that are fallen from trees. Although he
uses the stative verb to indicate “to have fallen and now is/are on the ground,” the use of “pokari pokari” enables readers to visualize althea flowers on the ground here and there, as if they were floating. These are some of the examples of onomatopoeic or mimetic words that present Kansuke’s unique sensitivity.

But how does the use of onomatopoeic or mimetic words effectively depict a child’s world? Tomioka Taeko appears to have an answer to this question.

The world that little children sense is not a world divided by the strata of times such as the past and the future, but the world of “poetry” where one sometimes suddenly pauses in eternity. There, the “sounds” and the “shapes” are sensed in extreme detail but they are not verbalized because children’s language does not belong to the strata of the times.107

Onomatopoeic or mimetic words appeal to senses. Therefore, it is possible to explain things concisely, and without a lengthy explanation, by using onomatopoeic or mimetic words. Since onomatopoeic or mimetic words address emotions rather than reason, they are often considered as feminine or childish vocabulary. The Dictionary of Iconic Expressions in Japanese explains that one reason for the omission of many onomatopoeic and mimetic words from English-Japanese bilingual dictionaries is that the words are often considered by native speakers of English to be childish, informal and of marginal lexical status.108 The novelist Mishima Yukio writes that, since onomatopoeic and mimetic words merely describe things as they are and do not allow room for abstraction, they are the vocabulary of women and children who tend to live in the emotional and concrete world.109

Onomatopoeic and mimetic words are personal, feminine, and childlike language. Using them is one of the most effective ways for Kansuke to describe how things are perceived without explanation or use of sophisticated vocabulary. By skillfully
manipulating onomatopoeic and mimetic words, he depicts the sensual world as it is perceived by a child.

In a similar way, dialects are often regarded as a more personal form of language. Kansuke effectively used dialects in *Gin no saji*. In general, we can detect two dialects at work in *Gin no saji* Part One. Many words in Edo dialect are present in the narrative, which is also written in colloquial Edo language.

The examples of the words in Edo dialect that are not commonly used or not used at all in present-day Tokyo, and their standard language equivalents in *Edo go no jiten* (Dictionary of Edo Language) are:110

- **shakuu** (I, 5)  
  --- **sukuu** (spoon up)

- **kowarashii** (I, 16)  
  --- **ikanimo osoroshii** (very scary)

- **ijibaru** (I, 30)  
  --- **iji o haru** (be obstinate, do not give in)

- **nesetsukeru** (I, 32)  
  --- **nekaschitsukeru, nemuraseru** (let someone to sleep)

- **hitokusari** (I, 35)  
  --- **hitokiri, ichidanraku** (one paragraph)

In addition to words in the Edo dialect, the colloquial Tokyo language that is still spoken in present-day Tokyo is also evident in the narrative. “Verb te iru” is often contracted to “Verb teru.” Such words like **dekiteru** (I, 3) instead of **dekiteiru, tabeteru** (I, 53) instead of **tabeteiru** can be seen throughout the story. Some nouns in the standard language are often contracted in the colloquial language. **Katappo** (I, 4) instead of **kataippó**, and **toko** (I, 6) instead of **tokoro**, are the examples of this pattern. The syllabic nasalization such as **tanbi** (I, 13) instead of **tabi, on’naji** (I, 16) instead of **onaji, shindanja nai** (I, 16) instead of **shinda no ja nai** are examples found in the narrative. Moreover, there are typical colloquial Tokyo (**shiramachi**) speech forms found in some of the dialogues spoken by
the school children. *Futte yagara* (I, 17) instead of *futte iyagara*, *kago n naka* (I, 59) instead of *kago no naka*, or a merger of syllables such as *konda* (I, 59) instead of *kondo wa*, *yowei* (I, 74) instead of *yewai*, *omoshiroka nai* (I, 76) instead of *omosiroku wa nai* are to be found in the dialogue passages. These are examples from colloquial Tokyo language that is still spoken, but some characteristics derive from Edo dialect.\(^{111}\)

The other dialect present in the work is Aichi dialect that is spoken by *obasan*. In fact, in Part One, *obasan* is the only person who speaks the dialect. The speech of Shun-bô’s mother, who is a sister of *obasan* and therefore from the same area as *obasan*, is quoted once, but she speaks standard Japanese.

Dialect in the novel works effectively to bring narrative perspective down to Shun-bô’s level, creating a double-voiced quality merging the languages of adulthood and childhood. In *Gin no saji*, the narrator is an adult. However, by using dialect and the vernacular to emphasize the orality of the narrative, Kansuke creates the illusion that it belongs to the voice of a child. Moreover, incorporation of the vanishing words of the Edo dialect has the similar effect by describing the vanishing features of urban city life of Edo as previously discussed. This is how Kansuke successfully creates the setting of Meiji Tokyo in his narrative.

*Obasan*’s dialect is Aichi dialect, a dialect of the “countryside.” The dialect itself establishes the character of *obasan*. She is a countryfied woman who cannot adapt to the modern, pragmatic world emerging during the Meiji period. In many ways, she is the personification of the anti-modern. She is generous and good-hearted: when people who pretend to be in financial trouble come to *obasan* and her husband to borrow money, the couple lends it even though they do not have enough money for food. *Obasan* is also
superstitious: once she and her deceased husband bought a couple of white mice believing that they were messengers of Daikoku-sama. She is religious: she believes that Shun-bô is the reincarnation of the deceased nephew who came back to this world from Paradise in answer to her prayer. She has the Buddha-nature and takes pity on weak creatures: when Shun-bô and obasan go to see a wrestling match between a man and an ostrich, one of the ostriches tries to steal and gobble up a worker’s lunch. The spectators laugh, but obasan is in tears. “How pitiful the ostrich is!” She protests. “It is hungry but nobody gives it food.” She also prays for insects that were attracted to the flame of the lamp and burned to death. She totally devotes herself to raising Shun-bô: whenever she goes to temples and shrines, the first thing she asks for is Shun-bô’s good health. She is also a very good storyteller, passing on traditional folk tales.

Dialect is an extremely personal language that is closely tied to the upbringing of the individual. It is an aspect of our childhood we cannot escape. Since Shun-bô was raised by obasan, her dialect was the language Shun-bô grew up with. Aichi dialect must have been more familiar to him than Edo/Tokyo colloquial speech. Kawaji Shigeyuki recounts that, when Kawaji mentioned he too spoke Aichi dialect, Kansuke’s wife told him that her husband was still good at speaking the Aichi dialect. This suggests Kansuke spoke Aichi dialect in his childhood while being raised by obasan.

Social manners and customs in Gin no saji:

Were one an anthropologist, chronicling the customs and manners of the Meiji period, he or she would most certainly have to consult Gin no saji as a most extensive catalogue of games, songs, stories, toys, and public and private amusements for children.
Some of the games, songs, and toys have disappeared, but many still remain a part of childhood culture today. Regardless of whether or not readers played the same games, sang the same songs, or heard the same stories during their childhood, the detailed depiction of the amusements for children causes readers to feel great nostalgia. In fact, Wada Atsuhiko, a scholar of Japanese literature, argues that, even if the names of the toys and candies in *Gin no saji* are unfamiliar to readers, readers can guess at them from the context and through their own personal experiences. That, according to Wada, can provide the momentum for readers to recall their own childhood memories.\textsuperscript{113}

One of the reasons the work includes such an all-encompassing, inclusive view of childhood is that the psychology of the child is effaced in favor of objective description of a child’s world. In other words, rather than provide a detailed delineation of a child’s thoughts, instead the author describes the objective features of the child’s world and allows the child’s mood to appear through description.

We see this in the scene in which Shun-bô and obasan are “playing soldiers.” It was previously stated that the only friends Shun-bô had in the world were a black clay dog and a clumsy looking red toy cow. Shun-bô “in battle” with this elderly aunt reinforces the idea that he really does not have a friend to play with. In another scene, Shun-bô and Okuni-san are playing hide-and-seek. Rather than describe Shun-bô’s fear from the standpoint of the adult narrator, the episode depicts it via the environment. When Shun-bô tries to find Okuni-san who is hiding, he is chased by noisy, ferocious geese. After he passes the geese and leaves behind this danger, suddenly a big cow sticks its big head over the fence and moos. In the backyard, there is a forest, and he finds nobody around. He would like to go back, but in order to retrace his steps, he has to pass
by the cow and the geese again. Feeling helpless, he calls out, “Are you ready? Can I come?” but he hears nothing but the echoes of his own voice. Shun-Bo’s loneliness and fear are depicted through the description of the scenery. Or again, when he must go home after having a good time playing with Okuni-san all day long, he and Okuni-san repeatedly recite to each other the phrase, “When the frogs croak, it is time to go home.” Their feeling of sorrowful parting is beautifully described through this small exchange.

Obasan tells stories in the work. Although obasan is pretty close to illiterate, nonetheless, she is knowledgeable about all sorts of things and has an abundant supply of stories. The stories told by her also objectively signify the feeling of a child from a child’s point of view. She often tells stories about a mother and child. One is the story of the child who died before being born or soon after birth. The child is tortured by the devil because he died without repaying his mother for her going through the hardship of carrying him in pregnancy. Another story is about foxes. The mother fox is skinned alive. When this happens, the mother fox calls out to her infant fox, declaring how much she loves her baby. There is also a story about a drum which is made of the hide of the mother fox. The drum keeps crying out for the child fox. Or again, when Shun-bô and obasan go to the temple, obasan talks about Buddha while looking at a scroll depicting the death of Buddha. Lady Maya, the mother of Buddha, throws a bag of medicine from the heaven, but the bag gets caught in a branch of a tree and it goes unnoticed by anyone on earth. Kansuke is delineating a child’s yearning for a mother’s love merely through his depiction of Shun-bô’s breaking into tears each time he hears one of these stories of a mother’s undying love for her child. The pathos of the child’s tears is reinforced by the narrator’s statement that even today he is saddened upon hearing such stories.
As we have seen, Naka Kansuke defines the concept of childhood in *Gin no saji* not by conceptualizing it from the perspective of adult but by constituting it through the description of social manners and customs. Critics say that Kansuke had spent his life outside the mainstream of literary activity in Japan, and that his writing style was not affected by any other writers.\textsuperscript{117} However, by examining how Kansuke defines a child’s feelings and moods through the description of scenes, we can clearly see the influence of *shaseibun* (sketch-from-life prose) in *Gin no saji*. A passage from Kansuke’s essay “Natsume Sensei to watakushi” records a conversation between Kansuke and Sōseki concerning the sketch-from-life prose movement, a movement that came into prominence in Japan at the turn of the century. Sōseki mentions one description of Kanda river with a waterfall in *Gin no saji*, and asks Kansuke whether it was literal or an embellishment. When Kansuke replies that it is a sketch-from-life, Sōseki rejects the idea. When Abe Yoshisuke, who was also present, says that the river may have looked like that way in the past, Sōseki rebukes him, “Don’t talk nonsense. I know that area quite well.” To this, Kansuke adds, “I agree that it might not look like a sketch-from-life when one sees the river now, but, the river looked exactly like that to my eyes as a child.”\textsuperscript{115} This exchange clearly indicates Kansuke’s effort to describe the scenes from his childhood objectively and realistically using the *shaseibun* technique, which called for the expression of subjective feeling through the objective description of a scene.\textsuperscript{116}

Another example of how Kansuke brings narrative perspective down to the level of the child is through his introduction of children’s toys, candies and games. Shun-bô has a bamboo basket lined with rice paper in which he has lots of toys – a black clay dog, a clumsy red cow, a set of weapons such as a sword, a long-handled halberd, a bow and
arrow, a gun, a Japanese drum, a free-reed Japanese mouth organ, a powder brush made from a rabbit’s foot, a brass mallet, and so on. The dog and the cow are Shun-bô’s only two friends in the world, and the drum and the free-reed mouth organ are prized possessions. When Shun-bô is scolded, he sits alone at the corner of his room and plays with these toys. The toys, though they can say nothing, comfort him. Their kindness makes him even sadder. As he cries, he thinks to himself, “I have this many friends, so I’m all right.” Through the description of the detailed list of toys, that includes even unconventional items such as a powder brush and a bird’s beak, and through the delineation of the child’s reasoning, Kansuke is depicting how important the toys are for the child, and how disheartened the child is when scolded by adults.

Kansuke also catalogues the candies. When he goes to a cheap candy shop, an elderly couple opens various candy boxes and different varieties of candies appear – Kinka-tô (Sugared Kumquat) candy, Kingyoku-tô candy, Tenmon-tô candy, Mijin-stick candy, etc. When he squeezes the sweet-jelly of beans out of the bamboo wrapper, the sweet jelly slips into his mouth. On a sunny day, an old peddler of millet jelly comes to sell candies on the street. The peddler makes a shiny rounded head on the tip of a wooden chopstick by pulling and turning the amber-colored thick malt syrup in the barrel. When Shun-bô puts it in his mouth and rolls it on his tongue, its rich, sweet taste spreads across his tongue and the malt syrup candy melts, becoming smaller and smaller. Without describing the child’s thought or mood, Kansuke has skillfully depicted a child’s excitement and happiness at seeing and eating candies by listing the candies and describing their taste and feel.
Likewise, a list of games and songs are provided in *Gin no saji*. Hide-and-seek, a nut game, blindman’s buff, tag, stepping on shadows, hopscotch, song of the seagull, song of the moon, and so on. The detailed description of how children play these games brings the narrative perspective down to that of a child and enables readers to recall their own childhood. A whole chapter is devoted solely to descriptions of games and songs, for example. Through such descriptions, a fun-filled childhood is depicted.

We have seen how Naka Kansuke defines childhood in *Gin no saji*. Rather than conceptualize it from the perspective of the adult, he defines it in a specific time and space using the language appropriate to children and through the description of social manners and customs set in a historical context. All these components enable the reader to recall his or her own childhood and to feel nostalgic. At the same time, by defining childhood in this way, Kansuke creates the illusion that the narrative perspective belongs to the child.

In the next chapter, I offer a conclusion of this study. I will compare *Gin no saji* with other two autobiographical works written in the Edo period. I shall also briefly discuss how *Gin no saji* relates to the “discovery of childhood.”
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In *Gin no saji*, the children’s world is mysteriously, vividly described. Moreover, it is not the children’s world that the adults perceive, nor is it memories of childhood recalled in adult experience. It is truly a children’s world experienced by a child. (Using the words of Sōseki,) there is no other writer who can so precisely describe children’s experiences as the experience of a child.¹¹⁸

Naka Kansuke skillfully depicts the world of children from the child’s perspective in *Gin no saji*, and the methods and techniques that he used were examined in Chapter Three. He establishes childhood in a specific time and space. He describes a child’s thoughts through the depiction of the scene. He also depicts the child’s world by using language appropriate to children, as well as extraliterary language that enables readers to immerse themselves into the world of children.

In order to further illustrate how the conception and representation of childhood was a product of the late Meiji period, or modern times, in conclusion, I will describe how childhood was depicted in works written prior to Meiji and before Japan went through waves of modernization. I will examine two autobiographies in this respect. They are *Oritaku shiba no ki* (Told Round a Brushwood Fire, 1716) and *Musui dokugen* (Musui’s Monologue, 1843), both written in the Edo period. *Oritaku shiba no ki* is the autobiography of Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725), the celebrated Confucian scholar and

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lecturer to the sixth Tokugawa Shogun, Tokugawa Ienobu. His book is considered to be the first autobiography written in Japan. Musui dokugen is the autobiography of Katsu Kokichi (1802-1850), a lower ranking samurai of the late Edo period. Katsu Kokichi’s son, Katsu Rintarō (later Katsu Kaishū) attained fame as a naval strategist and statesman after his father’s death.

Oritaku shiba no ki briefly touches upon Hakuseki’s childhood, but his emotions as a child – what he thought and how he felt – are not described. Take for example the following passage:

When I was a child, there used to be a picture-book called Ueno monogatari. This book illustrated such things as crowds of people flower-viewing at Kan’ei-ji. It may have been about the spring of my third year when, lying on my belly with my feet stretched out in the foot-warmer, I was looking at [this] storybook, and [I] asked for brush and paper and made a tracing. One or two of the ten characters were properly drawn, and when my mother saw it, she showed it to my father. When father’s friends came and saw it, people got to hear about it, and the tracing was handed round. When I was sixteen or seventeen, I was able to see that tracing when I went to Kazusa Province.

This is Hakuseki’s recollection when he was three. He vividly describes the way he looked at the storybook, but he does not describe how he enjoyed it, why he wanted to have brush and paper, and why he wanted to make a tracing. When the tracing was circulated among his father’s friends, he must have felt proud of himself. But, none of his feelings are described. Instead, the passage aims at showing the logical progression from brilliant child to brilliant adult. Indeed, the brilliant adult is already present in the brilliant three-year old.

The following is a description of his memories when he was nine.

When winter began, the days were short, and sometimes the sun set before I had finished my task. I then took my desk out on to a bamboo verandah, facing west, and so finished my writing. Also, when practicing calligraphy at night, I
would be overcome with sleepiness, so I secretly arranged with the man who waited on me to have him draw and set ready two buckets of water on the verandah. When I grew very drowsy, I would take off my clothes and pour first one bucket of water over me, dress again, and study. Although at first I felt awakened by the cold, after a while I became warm and sleep again, so, once more, I would pour water over myself, as before. With the help of the second lot of water, I would get through the greater part of my task. This happened during the autumn and winter of my ninth year.\textsuperscript{121}

Again, in the following passage, he depicts only what he did, not how he felt. Childhood for Hakuseki is clearly a matter of training for becoming a Confucian scholar.

When I think back over all this now, it seems to me that if, long ago when I first learned how to write at the age of three, I had had a qualified teacher, I should not have been so deficient in calligraphy; further, if, when I studied the recitation of poetry at the age of six, there had been someone under whose guidance I could have worked, I should perhaps have made a little progress in literature also. More important, if, at the age of seventeen, when I first became interested in Confucianism, I had had someone to instruct me, I should not have been as I am now.\textsuperscript{122}

For Hakuseki, childhood is the “preparation period” for adulthood.

Meanwhile, \textit{Musui dokugen} was written in the late Edo period. In this autobiography, the world of children, especially that of lower ranking samurai in Edo, is more vividly described. Indeed, one could say it was precisely because Katsu Kokichi was in the lower ranks that he dared to describe everyday life so vividly. The passage tells us how the children played with a kite, and a simple fight over the kite turned to physical blows; or, how the author’s father reacted to the violence; or, how the parents of other children reacted to the fight. Nonetheless, the whole point of this portrayal is to depict how a roughneck, uneducated child became also a roughneck, uneducated adult. Katsu Kokichi clearly says that he wrote this autobiography for his offspring so that they could learn from his mistakes and not grow up to be an adult like himself.\textsuperscript{123}
The child’s “feelings” are described too, although in not much detail. The following is a humorous passage from *Musui dokugen* that depicts the author’s memory of his jūdō class when he was nine.

As I said, everyone in jūdō class hated me. On the day that an all-night midwinter session was to be held, we received permission from the teacher to bring food. We took a break at midnight. I had packed a lacquer box full of bean jam cakes and had been looking forward all day to this moment when we would share the food. My classmates had other plans. They got together and tied me up with an *obi*, hoisted me to one of the rafters, and began eating, even helping themselves to my cakes. So I pissed on their heads, spraying the food that had been spread out, and naturally, everything had to be thrown away. Served them right, too.124

In this passage, the only feelings that are described are Kokichi’s looking forward to eating bean jam cakes and his remark at the end—“Served them right, too (*i kimi da to omotta yo.*)”125—Otherwise, the incident is depicted so concisely that there is little room to convey the child’s frustration at how much it hurt to be tied up by his classmates, how surprised he was, or how resentful he felt when looking down at his classmates eating his cakes.

As in *Oritaku shiba no ki*, childhood is depicted as a preparation period for adulthood. *Oritaku shiba no ki* tells us how if Hakuseki had done certain things as a child, he would have been a better, more equipped adult. In *Musui dokugen*, Katsu Kokichi tells us what he did as child—he began taking jūdō lessons at nine and riding lessons at ten; became a student of a swordmaster, as well as schooling, at eleven. Both Hakuseki and Kokichi remember their childhood largely as a matter of practical education, namely, practical training to become an adult. They both accept the values and practices of the adult world without question. In *Oritaku shiba no ki*, Arai Hakuseki depicts his father as a perfect warrior with high morals, and he records the father’s words as if they were the

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absolute truth. In *Musui dokugen*, there is a scene where Katsu Kokichi is seven and he
loses in a fight with neighborhood boys. He decides “to commit *seppuku*” because he did
not want to live in shame. There is no line that separates the world of the child and the
adult in these two autobiographies.

In contrast, there are many descriptions of the child’s feelings in *Gin no saji*. As a
matter of fact, childhood is remembered as a matter of “having feelings” rather than
“doing something” or “preparing for adulthood.” As Sōseki wrote in his letter to
Kansuke, *Gin no saji* may not have a plot like a typical novel. Instead it consists of the
protagonist’s everyday life and how he feels on each occasion. Childhood is depicted not
as a preparation for adulthood but as the *place* in which a child once resided and that
adults have lost a long time ago. This is true not only in *Gin no saji* but also in such
tsuioku shōsetsu as Minakami Takitarō’s *Yamanote no ko* (A Child of Yamanote, 1911)
and Uno Kôji’s *Seijirô yume miru ko* (Seijiro the Child who Dreams. 1912), which were
written at about the same time as *Gin no saji*. Just as in *Gin no saji*, there is very little
“plot.” In *Yamanote no ko*, the protagonist is born into a good family and is told by
adults that he should not play with children of the low town, i.e., the children of lower
class families. The protagonist wonders why, and he begins going to town to play with
them behind his parents’ back. The sadness and loneliness that he feels as a child born
into “a good family” is depicted in the novel. On the other hand, in *Seijirô yume miru ko*,
the boy is raised in a lower class environment. He feels inferiority and self pity, but he
also provides a fascinating portrait of other children in this working class neighborhood.
In both novels, the emotional ramifications of difference in class are skillfully portrayed.
It seems that children’s experiences or their feelings were not given much value, at least in literary articulation, in the Edo period. In *Gin no saji* and other *tsuioku* shōsetsu written at the end of the Meiji period, however, childhood experiences and feelings are at the center of the work. In other words, by the end of the Meiji period, the childhood experiences and feelings had come to be validated. The discovery of childhood, as discussed earlier, must have been the direct cause of this validation of childhood experience. Karatani Kôjin argues that children were not considered as very different from adults before the turn of the century. They were simply “miniature adults.” This view of looking at children as miniature adults is clearly seen in the two autobiographies that were written in the Edo period. Childhood is depicted as merely a preparation period for adulthood.

At the turn of the century, due to changing social systems – compulsory education, the military draft, the age segregation, etc. – “childhood” was modernized. This is not to say that children during the Meiji period were not raised in a feudalistic and militaristic society. But, a new concept of childhood as an unrecoverable time of innocence and discovery began to emerge by the end of Meiji, and, in many ways, it stood in opposition to the very social systems that brought it into existence.

Such *tsuioku* shōsetsu writers as Minakami Takitarô, Uno Kôji, and Naka Kansuke were opposed to the new social systems that gave rise the concept of childhood that they themselves embraced and depicted. For example, in *Gin no saji*, the protagonist, Shun-bô, hates to go to school, and he challenges the morals and values that are taught in school. When Shun-bô hears that his favorite teacher is leaving school and is going to a war, he weeps. His classmates despise him, as it has been taught in school
that “a man should not cry more than once in three years.” Shun-bô protests and says that the other boys do not know how to weep in a manly manner. Or, when the Sino-Japanese war begins, the students talk of nothing but the Japanese spirit (Yamato damashii.) When a teacher talks about Chinese in an abusive way, Shun-bô stands up and says:

But sir, if we have the Japanese-spirit, Chinese people must have the Chinese-spirit. [...] In addition, some time ago you [...] taught us that one of the practices of samurai is to take pity on the enemy. So why do you only say bad things about the Chinese?”

The boy eventually becomes a withdrawn, detached observer. Through writing the novel, Kansuke seems to protest against the process of “homogenization” of children through modern, compulsory education. Also, one could argue that he criticizes “feudalistic” ideas. Through depicting childhood as the place for beauty and nostalgia, Kansuke is clearly depicting the way in which the adult world brings about the “corruption” of children.

The idea of childhood as a pure, innocent place seems to have become dominant during the Taishô period. It was reinforced – indeed even exaggerated – by the numerous children’s magazines inaugurated in the Taishô period, of which the most famous one is Akai tori (Red Bird), published by Suzuki Miekichi in starting in 1918. These magazines were centered on the principle called dôshin shugi (Principle of ‘A Child’s Heart’.) Takayama Tsuyoshi, a scholar of Japanese literature, defines dôshin shugi as follows: Dôshin shugi considers children as “angel-like creatures,” “[their] hearts do not know class distinctions.” It considers the world of children as an absolute ideal.

When comparing the 1926 edition of Gin no saji to its first publication in 1913 and 1915 (Part One and Part Two respectively,) Kansuke’s intention of making his
childhood memories more innocent and beautiful are all the more apparent. In the 1926 edition, many depictions of the negative aspects of the characters are deleted. For example, the first publication describes how obasan suffers from a rush of blood to the head. It also says that sometimes she morbidly loses her temper, and if the protagonist is peevish, she becomes like a fireball. It also says she suffered a great deal on her deathbed. These descriptions depict her very human nature. However, they are deleted in the 1926 edition. Only her saint-like nature is depicted. Also, in the first publication, Shun-bō and Okuni-san plays with a girl, Osen-chan, whose sickly mother is originally from a very good samurai family. But the family went to ruin during the Meiji Restoration, and she married a carpenter. On a New Year’s Day, Shun-bō and Okuni-san feel superior when compare their nicely decorated battledores with Osen-chan’s thin, plain one. Knowing that Osen-chan is envious, they proudly play with their beautiful battledores. This commonly seen example of childhood cruelty is also deleted in the 1926 edition.

Iiyama Mayo, a scholar of Japanese literature, points out these changes and says that these changes have been necessary to impress readers and also to help to beautify the world of Gin no saji. Ichikawa Hiroaki, also a scholar of Japanese literature, argues that these changes resulted from the fact that Kansuke became the head of the Naka family seven years after Gin no saji was serialized in Tokyo Asahi Shinbun. He suggests that, after Kansuke became the head of the house, he might have felt the need to hide the darker side of his household from others, and from his own memories, in order to maintain better relations with his family members. Besides these points, I argue that the concept of dōshin shugi, which emerged after Kansuke initially wrote Gin no saji
might well have influenced him in making these changes. Whatever the reason, Kansuke deleted the depictions of the negative characteristics of the characters from the 1926 edition. Critics warn, however, readers not look solely at the beautiful side of *Gin no saji*. Critics and scholars say that readers should also be aware of *Gin no saji*’s darker aspects and how they are depicted in subtle ways. Later in life, Kansuke wrote two essays subtitled “*Gin no saji*’ hoi” (Supplement to ‘*Gin no saji*’). They were “Hanasaka jii” (The Old Man Who Makes Flowers Bloom, 1951) and “Kona no uta” (Song of the Top, 1952.) In these essays, he wrote once again about his childhood. Unlike *Gin no saji*, however, these two essays contain many unpleasant memories. I have appended a translation of “Hanasaka jii” to illustrate this darker vision.

*Gin no saji* ends when the protagonist reaches adolescence and has his first sexual feelings for a woman, although the feelings are described in a subtle way through the evocation of the scene. Throughout the work, Kansuke portrays childhood as a place different from adulthood. The dividing line he sets between childhood and adulthood seems to be the emergence of sexual desire. This is clear in the scenes of departure that conclude Part One and Two of *Gin no saji*. At the end of Part One, when Okei-chan is about to move away, she and Shun-bô separate in innocence; they are an eternal model of childhood friendship. In Part Two, when *ane-sama* (the elder sister of the protagonist’s friend) departs, the protagonist feels the twinge of sexual yearning, effectively ending the novel.

As mentioned previously, after *Gin no saji*, Kansuke wrote two novels that dealt with the darker themes: sexuality and jealousy. If having sexual desire means to become an adult, it can be said that Naka Kansuke, who rejected and avoided sexuality most of
his lifetime, was a person who refused to be an adult, or who did not truly grow up. In other words, he endeavored to maintain the innocence of childhood forever. Perhaps one reason Gin no saji enjoyed such literary success in reconstructing childhood is because Kansuke was so obsessed with his own childhood, and he remained attached to it throughout his life.

Gin no saji and other tsuiōku shōsetsu written at the end of the Meiji period seem to have influenced later works in the field of Japanese literature in two important ways. The first is in the field of children’s literature. Probably inspired by works in that genre, such well-known writers as Arishima Takeo, Shimazaki Tôson, and Chiba Shôzô began to write their own evocations of childhood for children. Second, this genre legitimized and provided models for the recovery of childhood in autobiographical fiction. It appears that writing about childhood became associated subsequently with writing about the “self” and with the development of what is called the “I-novel.” As argued previously, tsuiōku shōsetsu can be seen as one of several genres that were later lumped together under the sobriquet, the “I-novel.” In a sense, then, it is a forerunner of the I-novel that began to emerge in the 1920s.

It has been argued in this study that a new concept of childhood was articulated in the late Meiji period in the form of remembrance. I have sought to demonstrate how the new construct manifests itself in terms of the author and the literary form of Gin no saji. What remains to be explored is why so many new meanings of childhood proliferated at the end of Meiji and the beginning of Taishô, as well as their relation to underlying social transformations. This, I hope, will be the subject of my future study.
APPENDIX

THE DARKER SIDE OF *GIN NO SAJI*

As previously mentioned, Naka Kansuke wrote two essays – “Hanasaka jii (The Old Man Who Makes Flowers Bloom)” and “Koma no uta (The Song of the Top).” Both are subtitled “Gin no saji hoi (Supplement to Gin no saji).” Both describe his childhood. Although the childhood period covered in the essays is about the same as that covered in *Gin no saji*, one finds many dark, unpleasant memories that are not depicted in *Gin no saji*. That is why Watanabe Gekisaburô calls these two essays “the dark side of *Gin no saji*.”¹³²

The title of the essay “Hanasaka jii” comes from a famous and traditional Japanese folk tale. In the supplementary essay, Kansuke talks about the picture book “Hanasaka jii” that he possessed when he was a child. However, the essay has nothing to do with the story of the old folk tale per se. The story of “Hanasaka jii” goes as follows – There is an honest old man. He has a dog named Pochi. One day when the honest man walks Pochi, the dog stops at one spot and barks loudly. Wondering why Pochi is barking, the honest man digs at the spot and finds a big ceramic pot. In the pot are gold and silver coins. Meanwhile, there is a greedy old man living next to the honest...
man. The greedy man hears what happened to the honest man. He takes Pochi for a walk and digs at the spot where Pochi sits down. Instead of gold and silver coins, he finds lots of garbage in the ground. Enraged, he kills Pochi and buries him under a pine tree. The honest man makes a mortar and a pestle out of the pine tree to make rice cakes in order to comfort Pochi’s soul. Each time he pounds rice with the pestle, gold and silver coins appear. Seeing what happened to the honest man, the greedy man borrows the mortar and the pestle from the honest man and tries to make rice cakes. However, every time he pounds rice with the pestle, foul things appear. The greedy man gets very upset. He burns the mortar and the pestle. When the honest man takes the ashes of the mortar and the pestle and scatters them over one tree, the tree bursts into flower. The Lord of the region passes by, and he sees the honest man throwing ashes on trees and making flowers bloom. He is very pleased. He gives money to the honest man. Being jealous of the honest man’s good fortune, the greedy man waits for a chance for the Lord to come by again. When the Lord finally comes to the village, the greedy man throws ashes on trees. Not only do flowers not bloom but also some ashes get into the Lord’s eyes. The Lord is upset and punishes the greedy man.

This story must have held deep personal significance for Naka Kansuke. The jealousy of the greedy old man makes the honest old man’s life miserable. Jealousy, indeed, is one of the dark human emotions Kansuke deals with in his novels Deibadatta and Inu. As Kansuke writes, “the first page of (his) strange and unhappy life begins in a pedestrian way with the story, ‘The Old Man Who Makes Flowers Bloom (Hanasaka jii).’” In his personal life, his jealous older brother persecuted Kansuke on every
occasion and made Kansuke’s life miserable. This darker side of Kansuke’s childhood illustrates that the representation in *Gin no saji* was a stylistic selection of memory.

A translation of Kansuke’s version of “Hanasaka jii” is as follows.
TRANSLATION OF NAKA KANSUKE’S

“THE OLD MAN WHO MAKES FLOWERS BLOOM

-- Supplement to ‘Gin no saji’ --”

It was several years ago when I was living in Hatori, where I had evacuated to during the war, that I began writing this manuscript. I don’t remember why – perhaps because I was asked to do another work at that time, or perhaps because we suddenly decided to go back to Tokyo but I did not finish the piece and the draft manuscript was got buried among books. I recently decided to take up the piece again. The original begins like this:

The memories of my life that left an indelible scar on my brain like a tattoo carved on pale, delicate skin, the sight of which strikes people as abnormal – such memories have been washed by the waves of age and are beginning to fade. I am no longer confident that I can reconstruct the experiences, without distortion, in their original form. In this essay, for better or worse, or whether fortunate or unfortunate, I will gather up my memories that have to do with books – memories that are indivisible from the course of my life, so full of hardship.

The first page of my strange and unhappy life begins in a pedestrian way with the story, “The Old Man Who Makes Flowers Bloom (Hanasaka jii).” Perhaps this is unnecessary information, but for the benefit of younger readers, I feel compelled to add that “Hanasaka jii” was once the first story in anthologies of folktales that beginning readers were expected to master, albeit haltingly. The book was a little larger than a
playing card. Quality Japanese paper was used only for the cover, designed with a gaudy print to please the eyes of children. However, inside the paper was of inferior quality. Crude wood block prints illustrated the volume and the text was composed in the anachronistic language of an Edo-period storybook. Even after I entered school, I still did not fully comprehend what I was reading. Hanasaki jii, who is wearing a light green cap sows ashes from the bamboo basket under his arm, and flowers bloom on a dead tree as a reward for his honesty. As expected, “he lived happily ever after!” But his lips were painted red as if he had applied lipstick, and he looked incongruously young. If happiness is being wrapped and kept safe in a secure and safe environment, then our times as children, the age when we are exposed to our first fairy tales, when we are loved and forgiven our weaknesses and ignorance, must certainly be the time of our greatest happiness, though every individual child, of course, experiences frustration. Since I was a weak child and was considered late in developing, and because I raised by an aunt who loved children and who was skilled at explaining picture books, I was supposed to be the one who was the most fortunate in terms of that kind of happiness. However, fate did not grant me happiness so easily.

My grandmother died – I remember that on her shaved head she wore a round cap that looked like a paper bag, a cap that was in fashion at the time. Her room became the room of the three younger of us six siblings – my two little sisters and myself. Since the room had been built for an old person, shōji screens had been installed on the east and the west side of the room to let in lots of sunlight even on winter mornings. There was a cliff to the west of the room, and tall trees, such as Japanese cypresses and hiba arborvitae, lined the edges. Thus, the west side of the room did not get much sunlight in the
afternoon. Because of this, it was cool in the summer. Near the room, one of the trees was a coral tree thick with leaves. It was a safe sleeping place for sparrows, and we loved the tree for its shiny leaves and beautiful berries.

My grandmother’s room was located diagonal to the main room of the house and jutted out to the south. There was a small recessed garden formed between my grandmother’s room and the study that had been built off the main room, and it was entered off the veranda, which formed a corridor. Behind the study, and running to the east, was a bamboo fence with a gate in the middle. Formed from bundles of bamboo that were arranged in a beautiful zigzag pattern, it was in the back of the study. An ancient Chinese quince tree was planted on the opposite side of the fence. A heavy square stone lantern stood massively in the middle of the recessed garden. The ancient Chinese quince shed its old bark, leaving a splotched pattern. The beautiful light crimson flowers that blossomed seemed too gentle for the old tree. After the flowers scattered, heavy, hard fruits appeared. They did not resemble the flowers at all. Looking south from the room there was a view of a grass hill that looked like an unglazed earthen pot turned upside-down. Young pine trees, azaleas, and Japanese maple trees were planted there. In short, because the room was far away from the sitting room, the living room, the people in the house, the maid’s room, and the front door, it was a quiet, truly lovely place. After my grandmother passed away, the room was called the “seven tatami-mat room,” but actually it was a six tatami-mat room with an alcove that was the size of one tatami. It was called seven mats to distinguish it from the six tatami-mat room next to it. Next to the alcove was a large closet. The right sliding door of the closet was decorated with a painting of chrysanthemums in a big vase and a crab, while the left one displayed
illustrations of bamboo. Both were ink paintings in the Chinese manner. Behind the
door with the crab drawn on it – the crab looked a bit scary – there was a Buddhist altar
on the upper shelf. In the lower corner, a box contained my illustrated storybooks. It was
an old box made from paulownia wood. Now there is no way for me to know whether it
originally held Chinese books or Noh manuscripts. “The Other Best 100” was inscribed
in faded characters. Of course at that time, I did not understand what “The Other Best
100” meant. The north entrance to the room was demarcated by shōji sliding doors,
which led into a corridor that connected to the family storehouse.

I do not remember how old I was, but guessing from what happened before and
after the incident, I think I was quite young. I was playing alone in front of my precious
toy box and was sitting with my back against the polished cedar alcove post, smooth and
shiny as the head of Obinzuru-sama, one of Buddha’s disciples. I was thus half-hidden in
the room, a position consistent with my character at that time. My aunt was probably in
the kitchen helping with chores. My parents repeatedly told her that all they expected of
her was to take care of the children. They clearly stated that she need not do housework.
However, because she felt guilty when she had free time, she usually helped around the
house without being asked. The kitchen was at the opposite end of the house separated
from my grandmother’s room by one unoccupied room after another. It was like I was in
another world, with any number of walls, fusuma, and shoji between the nearest person
and myself. I suppose my aunt must have instructed me to play quietly until she came
back. If I remember correctly, in the toy box were, in addition to the book “The Old Man
Who Makes Flowers Bloom,” a set of one hundred cards, each with one of the famous
poems of the ages – which I will write about later – a small brass mallet, an aventurine
pill box, and also some toys that I had bought at a fair booth. My older brother passed by the room on some errand. He entered and declared that my aunt was spoiling me too much. Then he used my obi to tie my hands. There is some likelihood that I have not remembered correctly the reason for his tying me up. In any case, his conduct was completely uncalled for, since I had done nothing wrong. I did not cry and was silent as he tied me up. I was that kind of child. I might have been slow for my age, but it was useless to resist because he was more than twelve years older than I. My brother left the room making some parting insult. I tried to free my hands, but I could not do so because they were tied very tightly. “You’ll never get free from those knots,” he told me. Perhaps he wanted me to beg him to untie me, but I was not bright enough to realize it. I did not cry for help, nor did I go to my aunt. Fortunately, since my obi was made from muslin, I was able to loosen it little by little with my teeth, just like a mouse. When my aunt came to check on me, she raised a huge ruckus as if she had set on fire. Perhaps, my older brother felt as if he had gotten something off his chest, but, of course, he was severely scolded for what he had done. Still, one’s innate nature is one’s nature, and it permeates to the core of one’s being. One cannot easily change one’s essential personality, at least not without intense moral reflection and ascetic practice. Moreover, punishment, or half-baked self-realization, creates only a drearily adverse effect. Unfortunately, the relationship between my brother and me as symbolized by his tying me up continued for fifty years, or for the rest of his miserable life. Of the people who appear in this essay, my aunt died first, fifty years ago. Then my parents and siblings departed one after another. Now I am the only one who is left. However, I will soon
follow them in the same path, the endless (?) path on which we have been fated not to return, or catch up, or stay to wait.

This is where my original manuscript ends.

In those days I was sickly and skinny. I had a large head and wore a frown on my face, so my father gave me the nickname “Tako bōzu” (Octopus Boy). But, in truth, I was a twisted child, not even as cute as an octopus. Therefore, other than my aunt, who raised me so tenderly, no one cared much for me. I, in turn, did not care much for anyone either. I don’t believe I was a mean, spiteful child, but neither was I interesting or cute. It is strange to talk so vividly about my description of myself as such a young child, but in truth I have seen a photograph of myself from the time when we were living in Kanda. This photograph was quite different from photographs of later years. They put the negative in a box of paulownia wood, and placed a black cloth underneath so that we could see the figures on the negative. The photo studio stood diagonally opposite our house. I heard that, while visiting the photo studio, my sisters had a quarrel over me. My second oldest sister, who had a hot temper, was sitting in a chair to one side of me, and she looked quite displeased. My oldest sister, who was gentle, was seated in the chair on the other side, and she was smiling. I was standing in the middle with one hand placed in the lap of each sister on either side, wearing a tearful face. We look as if we were slightly tipsy. The nature of our relationship did not change and continued into adulthood. This happened when I was five years old. I was wearing a cotton crepe kimono with the pattern of hand drums. I had a toy hand drum that was just the right size for me to rest on my shoulder, and I was so proud of the pattern of my kimono. However, whenever the photo was taken out, I became a laughingstock. I was so
ashamed of it. I don’t remember how old I was, but I finally smashed the precious photograph. As you can now judge, I had no qualities that would invite the jealousy of others. Nonetheless, my older brother was enraged by my family members’ taking pity on my weak health and being generous to me. On every occasion, he took his resentment out on me and the others in the family. Perhaps his behavior was unintentional, yet it was entirely in keeping with his character.

That was when we moved from the heart of Kanda to the high ground of Yamanote, but before our new house was complete. Since the house that we were provisionally renting was small, my aunt and I were relegated to stay in a separate tenement. The veranda and front windows of the main house faced north and the veranda of our room faced south. Our two dwellings faced each other at a distance of about twenty paces. One evening – it must have been dusk as the lamp light was reflected on the shōji door of the main house – my aunt told me that she would look after the house and I should go to the main house to take care of some errands. She watched from the veranda as I set off. Since I was always clinging to my aunt and never wanted to go outside, she was often skillful at creating situations to force me to get some exercise. As the timid boy sent on a mission approached the main house, my aunt shouted, “Pan-pon is coming on an errand. Praise him, everyone!” “Pan-pon” was the baby talk name I had given myself, but it soon became my nickname at home. The shōji door of the main house opened. Everyone was gathered for dinner sitting in the living room. I completed my mission (?), delivered the message from my aunt. My father, mother, and sisters found it amusing to praise me, chorusing to the heavens: “Great job! Wonderful job!” However, my brother angrily declared, “Not a good job! Not a good, wonderful job at
all!” After some commotion, I burst into tears. My brother had ruined my sense of accomplishment.

I remember my first birthday after moving into the new house. It must have been before I entered school because I remember my aunt trying to teach me how to use chopsticks properly. In order to celebrate my birthday, red bean rice was cooked and a fish with the head still on it was served on each person’s tray. When we gathered for dinner and everyone sat in front of his or her tray in the family seating order, each person told me separately, “Happy Birthday.” By repeating the phrase each time, they wanted me to remember very formalized responses. If they had not done that, I would not have spoken. Then, they praised my best clothes. The crested ceremonial clothes of habutae with crests – a circle with two lines! I was pleased by the special meal, but more than that, I was proud of my best clothes. I felt as though we were having a big party, and everyone was trying to make me feel happy so I would eat. I was weak, and I did not have any appetite at all. I forgot whether or not my brother had said “Happy Birthday” to me. But, he spoke ill of my clothing. He told me that I looked like a “wealthy country bumpkin.” I did not know what a country bumpkin was, but I knew he was insulting me. My enjoyment of the occasion was ruined, and I grew discontent. Immediately, my pleasure was clouded, and I began to get cranky. That incident ended without developing into anything serious, but this kind of relationship between my brother and myself worsened for the next ten years to the point that I refused to celebrate my birthday anymore.

I had a set of old poetry cards. These were used to play a game in which a reader intoned the beginning lines of a poem, and the first player to pick up the card
corresponding to the second half of the poem won the card. Because the set I had received was old and missing some cards, it could not be used for a formal game. Still being unable to read the poems, I played by looking at the pictures on them. Since I only knew a few poems, I could win a mere six or seven cards. Most of the time I played with my aunt, and occasionally my eldest sister played with me and let me take some cards. It was fun. It was truly a fun game. I thought I was a good player, and I really liked the simple pictures drawn with yellow and blue colors. The pictures were worn and faded, but I did not care. I was a child who could imagine a mountain by looking at one little stone, or a big tree by looking at blade of grass. I, whose only experience was of my own house and its surroundings, had a mysterious world that was made from the oceans and mountains, ships and birds, that were depicted on the cards.

However, my brother began saying that he would like to reinforce his cards by using my cards as backing. The card game those days was different from the one that proceeded it in time. It was quietly played; each card was assigned a specific function; and luck determined the winner. It is also different from the one played today – a game dependent on lightening fast technique. In those days it was a very violent game – trying to get a card by twisting the person’s arm who held it, for example. Therefore, at our house, while playing the card game, we did not use a kerosene lamp. Instead we used a heavy candle stand that would not tip over. Even so, thick Western candles would be broken in the melee as we grappling for cards. Therefore, it was necessary that the cards be strong. My brother wanted to use my cards, my precious cards, as material to make stronger cards. Usually, it was my aunt who defended me, but, this time, my eldest sister felt sorry for me and told my brother not to do such thing. My aunt immediately took my

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side, too. My father and mother did as well. By that time, the cards themselves were something secondary to my brother. He was so stubborn; he would listen to no one. After a lengthy quarrel, he stomped out of the house and bought materials to make stronger cards. If someone had tried to stop him, the situation would have gotten very complicated. So, this time, everyone tried to persuade me. I submissively gave up my cards. Since then, I have never seen the like of such beautiful cards again.

I think it was after that incident — I remember I was still sleeping next to my mother, so I think it was when I was very young. As always, after dinner, all the family members were sitting around my father’s dinner tray in the living room. There was a household Shinto altar mounted in the corner of the room. A large brazier was located in the same part of the room but so as to not catch the shrine’s shadow. The upper seat next to the oblong brazier was my mother’s, and the lower seat was my brother’s. My father’s dinner tray was placed almost at the center of the room, my elder sisters found some space and sat there, and my younger sister and I sat in the lowest seat. That was the way that the seating order had been decided. My aunt and a maid joined us, so the room was crowded and lively. However, since this room was the place everyone gathered, it is also the site of the unpleasant incidents that made us suffer for such a long time. It was probably from about this time that I began to misbehave. It started with a small thing like not saying good night when I felt sleepy and went off to bed, or refusing to tidy up the toys that I had scattered about. Something like that sort of thing. Everyone, starting with my aunt, coaxed me to do better. They taught me one thing after another, how to behave properly. But everyone’s paying attention to me put my brother in a dark humor. He felt annoyed not because their instruction was harsh but because everyone gently cared for
me and was trying to teach me in a patient manner. He was enraged, saying that they were not strict enough with me. As they tried to calm him, he suddenly stood up, grabbed me, threw me, and kept slapping me hard, as if he were mad. After the first slap, I grew faint and did not comprehend what was happening. I was thrown here and dragged there, and all I could do was cry and cry. Everyone crowded around and got between us. They rescued me. But, later in my life, whenever I was on the street or elsewhere and I saw a big dog grab a little dog by the nape of its neck with its teeth and shake it, I can’t help but remember the incident. It was an animalistic hatred without reason, and an animalistic cry. Of course, my brother was scolded later. However, the family did not physically punish him as they did not wish to use violence to counter violence. If the verbal scolding did not cause him to reflect on his behavior from the bottom of his heart – which it never did – then he received only satisfaction from hurting me. At the same time, a new anger, that came from the fact that he had been scolded and I was protected, arose within him. His violence did not stop. It only grew worse.

It was at night that this kind of incident first occurred. When I woke up – I think I regained consciousness because of the pain coming from an injection – my father, mother and my aunt were at my bedside. The doctor also might have been there but I don’t remember. My mother and aunt might have been weeping. I looked around blankly. Then I was told what had happened. Probably it would have been better had I not heard. The next day, my brother made many excuses, but my father forced him to apologize to me. That time, I was always instructed, as I was also told to do, later to say, “I forgive you.” I heard later that when my mother woke up and glanced at my sleeping face, she found me having a convolution. However, once the physical punishment – if one can call
it that – started, it became a sort of awful habit. It got worse and worse. Unfortunately, I suffered no more convulsions, which made it all the easier for my brother to beat me.

An excerpt from *Gin no saji*:

That night I was forced to come out to a living room ‘court’ from my hiding place in the bedroom. [My family members] both intimidated me and soothed me, and encouraged me to go to school, but I had made up my mind not to be swayed by them. Then, suddenly, my older brother grabbed me by the collar, did an incomprehensible thing, threw me down on the tatami mats, slapping my face repeatedly. My aunt cried out, “What are you doing to this poor child? What are you doing?” She protected me, and took me to the refuge of the bedroom while telling him, “I’ll talk him into it.” My brother was taking *jūdo* lessons in high school. Next morning, with my cheeks swollen, I withdrew to the bedroom quietly without eating anything. My aunt, worried about me, brought me the food that was offered to the Buddha in the altar, and made me eat it. That day, I began to have a very high fever. Worsening my fragile state of health, I could not sleep all night long. My aunt, without sleep, chanted the Buddhist sutras, and took care of me all night.”

After causing this great uproar, I went to school, accompanied by my aunt at first, being taken to and from the gate of the school by her for several days. When I came home after a long day of schoolwork, my aunt declared, “Good job, great job!” She took a clamshell wrapped in red paper out from the drawer of the Buddhist altar and gave it to me as a reward. In the shell were my favorite candies. I had a good time deciding on which candy to eat next. However, my brother, who learned what my aunt was doing, made her stop. My aunt and my parents opposed my brother and approved what my aunt was doing for me, but the more they argued with him, the more obstinate he became. In order not to upset him, and to not darken the atmosphere of the house, in the end, his opinion carried the day. I still cannot think of any good reason to forbid the clamshell. However, the more his opinions carried weight, the more sympathy people in the
household felt towards me. For better or for worse, the result always went against what he wanted.

My aunt used to make a windwheel. This is the name I gave to this toy. One often saw these types of toys, but I do not know their name. My aunt cut heavy construction paper in the shape of a cherry blossom, then, on each petal, she pasted beautiful gossamer-like paper with a different color and pattern for each petal: a spotted pattern; purple, light blue, red; a peach blossom pattern; a whirlpool pattern. These patterns and colors were arranged in the Yûzen design. She would take a red string and wind it through the center of the cherry blossom, and putting her fingers through the loops, she pulled on opposite ends of the string, causing the flower of the wind wheel to open and close with its beautiful color and make a sighing sound as it revolved on its axis. My aunt also played kinoni dochi, a seed game, with me. The game was popular in my aunt’s hometown, and we played the game with camellia seeds. When we split the shells, we found one, or sometimes two seeds in the upper and lower halves of the shell. Some of them were a boat, arrowhead, or spindle-shaped, and they were named accordingly as moo, jaa, toko, kai, and so forth. We got rid of the odd-shaped, nameless seeds that were not suitable to the game, and decided which seeds each player should keep. Each player had the same number of the seeds, shook them with both hands, and dropped them quietly on the tatami mat. The player whose seeds landed with the greatest number of white sprouts showing, won the game and took all the seeds. To win or lose the game depended on the relationship between the shape and the weight of the seed. I heard that sometimes people decorated the seeds by putting lacquer on them, or craftily put lead inside, in order to win. In addition, my aunt played keteki with me, too. This was also
popular in her province, and I liked it very much. *Ketteki* must have been “ketteki,” a name for the special sleeves of kimono. But, if that was the case, the name was more complicated than the game itself. Also the name did not make any sense. We played it with one hundred cards of *Hyakunin isshu*, the Hundred Poems by the Hundred Poets. Although the same game was played with western playing cards, *Hyakunin isshu* was more fun as there were more cards and more variety. We classified the cards into such categories as *dai-tsuki* – a card on which a noble person’s seat was drawn; *owar* – a card on which a nobleman wearing a high headdress was drawn; *mae-ori* – a card on which a nobleman’s high headdress flipped forward; *ato-ori, bin-tsuki* – a card on which a nobleman wore a headdress with decorations at the ears; *yashoi* – a card on which a quiver was drawn; *kurosou* – a card on which a man with black clothes was drawn. There was also *bōzu, hime*, and so forth.

Every player had an equal number of cards, and each participant would play a card in the same category put forth by the first player. The person who used up his or her cards first was the winner. I thought I was good at the game, but thinking back on it now, I might have been the worst player of all.
Chapter 1: Introduction


Chapter 2: The writer and the work


In 1868, one of the biggest clans in the Edo period, the Owari clan, was divided into three—the Nagoya, Inuyama and Imao clans. In 1871, because of the abolition of clans and establishment of prefectures, the Imao clan became Imao Prefecture. However, Imao Prefecture only lasted for four months from June 22 to November 22 of 1871. See Kojima Hirotsugu, “Owari han,” in Kedama Kôta, et al. *Shinpen monogatari hanshi* (Tokyo: Shin Jinbutsu Ôraisha, 1975) 323, and Horibe Isao, ‘*Gin no saji’ kô* (Tokyo: Kanrin Shôbô, 1993) 49-52. Hereafter, Horibe Isao, ‘*Gin no saji’ kô* (Tokyo: Kanrin Shôbô, 1993), is referred to in the notes as GSK.
Horibe Isao, GSK, 110.

Ibid., 122.

Although the name Shun-bô only appears in the first publication (see endnote 27 below) and the name of the protagonist disappears in the later editions, for convenience sake, the protagonist is called Shun-bô in this study.


Horibe Isao, GSK, 114


Naka Kansuke, “Haña no shi,” *NKZ*, vol. 6 (1990), 356.


Horibe Isao, GSK, 94-95.

*Gin no saji* has been edited a few times since it was first serialized in *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*. The two texts to which I refer in this study are “Gin no saji” and “Gin no saji hatsude,” both included in *Naka Kansuke zenshû*, vol. 1, published by Iwanami Shoten in 1990. “Gin no saji hatsude” is a complete text serialized in *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* in 1913 and 1915, but revised in conformity with contemporary usage as to kanji and kana. In this study, I refer to “Gin no saji hatsude” as the “first publication.” “Gin no saji” included in *Naka Kansuke zenshû* by Iwanami Shoten is based on the version of the text included in *Naka Kansuke zenshû* published by Kadokawa Shoten in 1960. The Kadokawa Shoten version is based on the text published by Iwanami Shoten in 1926.
Therefore, the "Gin no saji" to which I refer in this study is the "1926 edition." Unless otherwise specified, my citations refer to the 1926 edition as reprinted in Naka Kansuke zenshū, 17 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989-1990), vol. 1 (i989) 3-175.

_Gin no saji_ has been translated into English as _The Silver Spoon_ by Etsuko Terasaki. Although the translator does not mention which version of _Gin no saji_ she translated, her translation seems to correspond to the 1926 edition.

30 Horibe Isao, _GSK_, 116-120.

In the first publication of _Gin no saji_, Okuni-san’s father is mentioned as the retainer of Tosa Daimyō. The change from Tosa Daimyō to Awa Daimyō must be due to the fact that Naka later found a mistake in the first publication and corrected the information.

34 Horibe Isao, _GSK_, 111-113.
35 Henceforth, a parenthetical page citation in the text refers to the volume and the page of _NKZ_.
36 Naka Kansuke, _The Silver Spoon_, 93.
37 Horibe Isao, _GSK_, 110.
38 Naka Kansuke, _The Silver Spoon_, 31.


Naka Kansuke is often introduced as one of Sōseki’s pupils. Tatsuno Takashi called Kansuke one of Sōseki’s triumvirate along with Terada Torahiko and Suzuki Miekiichi, and Sugimori Hisahide states that the successors of the true Sōseki spirit are Naka Kansuke and Shiga Naoya. (Quoted in Watanabe Gekisaburō, *Naka Kansuke no bungaku* (Tokyo: Ôfûsha, 1976) 4-5.) Nevertheless, Naka never claimed to be a pupil of Sōseki. He only states that he is “a humble member” of Sōseki’s circle. See Naka Kansuke, “Kuromaku,” *NKZ*, vol. 4 (1989) 359.


*Gin no saji* is divided into Part I and II. Both I and II consist of the recollection of memories of the narrator, *watakushi* (I). Part I, which has fifty seven (57) chapters, deals with the narrator’s preschool and early-school period. Part II, which originally consisted of forty seven (47) chapters but was later reduced to twenty two (22), deals with the narrator’s early adolescent life. Besides Part I and II of *Gin no saji*, Naka wrote two essays, which he subtitled as “‘Gin no saji’ hoi (Supplement to ‘Gin no saji’).” They are “Hanasaka jii” and “Koma no uta.”

86


Ibid., 403.


Naka Kansuke’s age in this study is calculated in the Japanese *kazoedoshi* way, in which a person is already considered one year old when he or she is born.


Komiya Toyotaka calls him “inja (a recluse),” and Watanabe Gekisaburō calls him “kokō no shijin (a poet of proud loneliness).” See Komiya Toyotaka, “Naka Kansuke no sakuhin,” *Naka Kansuke, Uchida Hyakken shû* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō,
1956) 399, and Watanabe Gekisaburô, Naka Kansuke no bungaku (Tokyo: Ôfûsha, 1976)
1. “Watakushi no sansatsu,” Toshô: Iwanami bunko sôkan 60 nen kinen, 454 (May

Chapter 3: Reconstruction of childhood in Gin no saji

62 In the preface of Seijirô yume miru ko, Uno Kôji mentions that he had an urge to
show his hometown, Osaka, to some thoughtful people. Uno Kôji, “Seijirô yume

63 Watsuji Tetsurô, “Kaisetsu,” in Naka Kansuke, Gin no saji (Tokyo: Iwanami

64 Jinnai Hidenobu, Tokyo: A Spatial Anthropology, trans. Kimiko Nishimura

65 Ibid., 4–20.

66 Ibid., 16.


69 Ibid., 228.

70 Naka Kansuke, The Silver Spoon, trans. Etsuko Terasaki (Chicago: Chicago

71 Ibid., 34.

72 Ibid., 38-39.
Ibid., 32.


Ibid., 86.

Ibid., 86-87.


To determine this, I compared the map in Jinnai’s *Tokyo no kukan jinruigaku* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1985), 83 with the map in Horibe’s *GSK*, 83.


Ibid., 111.

Ibid., 92.

Ibid., 119.


Tomioka Taeko, *Naka Kansuke no koi* (Osaka: Sōgensha, 1993) 242. Regarding Natsume Sōseki’s words, see Chapter 2 (p. 19) of this study.

Ibid., 338.


Although it is recorded in the book that it was published in the 10th year of the Taishô period (1921,) the errata given by Kansuke in the book is dated in the 11th year of the Taishô period (1922.) Since it is said in the afterward of *NKZ* vol. 1 that the book was published in 1922, I will follow this and refer to this book as the “1922 edition” in this study.


Linguistically speaking, the sound /p/ is considered voiceless. (See Natsuko Tsujimura, *An Introduction to Japanese Linguistics* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996) 16.) However, Komatsu Hideo considers the /p/ sound as *han-dakuon* (half-voiced.) Moreover, he states that the relationship between /h/ and /p/ is that of voiceless and voiced. Since /p/ and /h/ are contrasted here, I treat the sound /p/ as voiced sound. (See Komatsu Hideo, *Nihongo no on’in* (Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha, 1981) 279.)

This onomatopoeic word is found in Chapter 13 of the first publication of *Gin no saji*, but it is deleted after the 1926 edition.


Chapter 4: Conclusion


Ibid., 59.

Ibid., 60.

Ibid., 63.


Ibid., 17.

Ibid., 19.


Appendix


134 The original title in Japanese is “Hanasaka jii – ‘Gi no saji’ hoi.”
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works in English:


*Works in Japanese:*


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