

English Translation and Interpretation of *Inochi no tomoshibi* by Fukazawa Shichiro

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English

Abstract. This paper consists of an English translation and interpretation of the short story *Inochi no tomoshibi* by Fukazawa Shichiro. The “Background and Interpretation” focuses briefly on the political conflict of the decade following the post-war American occupation of Japan, with particular reference to the position of Emperor Hirohito and the conflict surrounding the Japan-US Security Treaty. This is followed by a discussion of Fukazawa’s story *Furyumutan* (*An Elegant Fantasy*) and the implications of the resulting murder, referred to as the ‘Shimanaka incident.’ The latter part of the “Background and Interpretation” describes Fukazawa’s life as a reclusive wanderer in the subsequent two-year period (1961–1962), as reflected in two of his relevant works, *Ruro no shuki* (*Memoirs of a Wanderer*) and the *Inochi no tomoshibi* (*Flame of Life*) quartet, with a comparative discussion of the tone, content and significance of the works.

Introduction

Flame of Life is the title story of a series of four short pieces, published in 1967 in an anthology entitled *Ruro no shuki* (*Memoirs of a Wanderer*) by Fukazawa Shichiro. The *Flame of Life* series, set in 1962, is a contemplative work in which Fukazawa reflects on the previous two years.

I decided to translate *Flame of Life*, the fourth story of the series, first because it is a delightful literary work. I was charmed by the narrator’s passion and sensitivity, fascinated and amused by his obsessiveness and touched by his wistfulness. I hope my translation conveys something of the uniqueness of Fukazawa’s character, and the immediacy and unadorned simplicity of his writing.

I was attracted to *Flame of Life* also because of its context. The story is a useful starting point for an analysis of its background, the events of 1961–1962, which was a crucial period in Fukazawa’s life. In turn, in order to fully appreciate the story one must be aware of the circumstances and the state of mind that inspired Fukazawa to write it. The “Background

and Interpretation” therefore discusses the events in Fukazawa’s life, both public and private, that influenced the story. It also points out some of the idiosyncrasies of Fukazawa’s character and analyzes the main themes of the *Flame of Life* series. While I believe this is a fascinating story in its own right, I hope the “Background and Interpretation” will enhance the reader’s appreciation of it by providing further insights into both Fukazawa’s literature and the man himself.

深沢七郎の「いのちのともしび」

英語翻訳と解説

前書き

「いのちのともしび」は四つの短編からなるシリーズの代表作として、1967年に出版された深沢七郎作の短編集、「流浪の手記」に掲載されている。「いのちのともしび」シリーズは、深沢がその直前の二年間を振り返った、存在そのものを問う作品である。このシリーズの四つ目の小説である「いのちのともしび」の翻訳に取り組んだ主な理由は二つある。第一にこの小説は魅力的な文学作品だからである。私は、深沢の情熱と感性に魅せられ、そして異常とも言える『こだわり』を楽しませてもらった。さらに、彼の哀れな側面にも心を打たれた。この英語翻訳が深沢の独特な性格と文体の飾り気のない直接的表現をすこしでも反映することが出来たとすれば、幸いに思う。

第二に、私は「いのちのともしび」の内容そのものと文脈にも興味を持った。というのは、この小説は、深沢の人生において重大な時期であった1961-1962年の事柄を考える上で好都合な内容が含まれているからである。一方、「いのちのともしび」を十分に理解するために、深沢がそれを書いた時の複雑な心境をもたらした事柄に気付かなければならない。この「解説」では、従って、本小説に影響を与えた深沢の公的かつ私的な生活の中で起こった事柄について論述する。ここでは、また、深沢のユニークな性格を注目し、「いのちのともしび」シリーズ全体に見られる主なテーマについて論ずる。「いのちのともしび」はそれ自体魅力的である一方、読者がこの「解説」を通じて、深沢の文学と人となりについて理解を深め、この小説をさらに楽しむことが出来れば幸いである。

Flame of Life

I wound up in Sapporo¹ in late June, weary and footsore, to find the city at the peak of the strawberry season. And what strawberries! The sight of them stopped me in my tracks.

¹ The capital city of Hokkaido, the northernmost of the four main islands of Japan.

In Tokyo strawberries are neatly packed in little boxes, but here the greengrocer was scooping them up with a garden trowel from a heap at the front of the shop and tossing them into newspaper bags. When they first came on the market they apparently cost around fifty yen for a hundred grams, but now at the peak of the season they were only forty yen a kilo. Housewives out doing their shopping came hot on each other's heels to buy them. I quickly bought a kilo too. Once I had bought them, though, I had second thoughts as I took them back to my lodgings: Could I really eat all these? I washed them and put them on a plate, but when I tried to mash them with a spoon I was disappointed. They were so damned hard I couldn't get them to mash up at all. But I explained to the woman in the room next to mine, "Being hard doesn't mean they're no good, you know; it's just that they're too fresh." I made that up for my neighbor's sake because I knew she had bought a kilo too, like everyone else.

"Oh, really, I haven't tried them yet. I'll just throw them out if they're no good. After all, they were only forty yen," she said.

I put one in my mouth, thinking: There's no way I could throw these out, such beautiful strawberries, and so many of them. Then, "Wow!" I burst out loud. My tongue curled up around the earthy aroma and thick, syrupy juice. It was good enough to make you howl. These strawberries were a cultivated variety but they hadn't lost their wildness. They were very red, so red they were almost black.

I rushed around shouting, "These are wild, these are really wild!" and borrowed a grater from someone. Then I grated them all up and added a bottle of milk. It was enough to fill two noodle bowls to the brim.

"If I add any sugar to this lot, it'll overflow for sure," I said to the strawberries, adding a little sugar and taking a spoonful of the mixture. If I had stirred it up it would have overflowed, so I kept on adding the sugar little by little and eating from that spot.

"Mmmm, mmm, this is so good," I kept saying to the strawberries as I scooped down the entire two bowlfuls. The strawberries were forty yen and the milk was fourteen yen a bottle²; I probably used only about two or three yen's worth of sugar, so it must have cost me about fifty-six or -seven yen altogether. Well, now I was really in a bind. From that day on I had to buy and eat a kilo at a time, every single day.

Some people might say I didn't really have to keep on buying so many day after day. But to my mind that just wasn't an option. After all, they were selling the strawberries out there. And because they were selling them, everyone was queuing up to buy them. So I

² 一合 (1 *gou*) = 0.18 liters

had to buy them too. They were so cheap and delicious and nutritious, you were missing out on something if you didn't eat them.

I bought the strawberries and held them in both hands and moaned out loud, overcome at the fact that, at forty yen a kilo, the strawberries here were perfectly priced so that every household in Sapporo could afford to keep on buying a kilo at a time, day after day – in other words, that every single day a kilo of strawberries was eaten in every home.

“No, no,” a woman informed me to my amazement, “my family comes twice every day, for a kilo at a time.”

Ahhh! And even though they ate two kilos of strawberries day after day, it wasn't as if they'd had to sell the house to make ends meet, or as if life had got so hard that the whole family committed suicide or anything like that. I moaned in sheer wonder at this realization – namely, that in Sapporo a large number of households consumed two kilos of strawberries every single day.

'You're missing out if you don't eat them' is similar to saying, 'Strawberries are very good for you'; and 'You're missing out if you don't buy them' is as good as thinking, 'The strawberries are so cheap there, I wonder if it's not a crime to buy them at that price.'

One day, after I had bought my kilo of strawberries, I stood back and surveyed the shop. I was trembling a little. If only they would hurry up and sell out. Watching the strawberries being bought and sold, I felt my chest tighten with a mounting sense of urgency, as if I were chasing after a crook who was getting away.

They sold hand over fist, and when they were nearly all gone I breathed a sigh of relief. I had been thinking that when the strawberries sold out that would put an end to the criminal dealings too. But the next moment, I happened to glance into the inner part of the shop and my heart missed a beat. A small man was heading my way from the back of the shop, holding an apple box up over his head – and the box was piled high with strawberries. Oh my God! Even before the shock had time to sink in, they came tumbling out onto the heap. Not another mountain of strawberries! I backed away and returned to my room, defeated.

The shops close early in Sapporo. Probably through force of habit due to the cold winters, when evening starts to fall shoppers quicken their footsteps and sellers stop selling their wares and hurry to pack up shop before dusk. Women walk by, heading home from the shops with things to eat. Whenever I see people carrying food it makes me think human nature must be basically good.

One evening as I was walking past the greengrocer's, even though the shop was closed and empty of customers, I saw the salesgirl scooping strawberries into a large newspaper bag. I stopped and watched her pack the strawberries into the bag and weigh them as if for a customer. There was no one there to buy them but she was weighing them? I peered at the scales. Two kilos? Three kilos? At three kilos the girl picked up the bag and left the shop. She had finished work and was on her way home, by the look of it. She had probably bought the strawberries to take home to her family or perhaps she had been asked to drop them off at a friend's house on the way. The bag she was holding was so big and heavy it could well have been full of apples or vegetables rather than strawberries.

So many! I watched, enchanted by the scene. Looking out over a wide, open, grassy plain is a pleasure in itself. What a magnificent sight! I thought, as I gazed after the girl carrying all those strawberries. Red strawberries with pointed tips – candle flames, that's what they looked like. It occurred to me that those strawberries might be the flame of my own existence. I had forgotten about 'love' and 'peace' and all those things connected with human relationships that make life so difficult; I couldn't be bothered with all that.

One day I stood in front of the mirror, looked myself in the eye and said, "Get on over there, guys." Then I went out into the town again to buy strawberries.

July came.

"They'll get even cheaper still," I was amazed to hear people say. Then, sure enough, they appeared in the shops at "25 yen a kilo." I was staggered. Tomatoes were seventy-five yen a kilo and strawberries were twenty-five. The cheaper ones were smaller so it was a nuisance removing the stems, but they were just as fresh and full of flavor. When strawberries get smaller it means the season is coming to an end. And when they are smaller you can mash them with a spoon without having to grate them. The strawberry season lasts a long time, from around the end of May to mid-July.

I'll have to come back next year, I thought. I made up my mind that if I were still alive I would return to Sapporo in the strawberry season the following year.

So this year I came to Sapporo. I arrived at night, and as soon as I had got off the train I walked through the town and peered in the window of a greengrocer's. There weren't many of them, but I could see the rows of red strawberries. Ah, there you are, there you are, flame of my life! It was all I could do not to call out to them. There was a sign next to them saying, "60 yen for 100 grams."

“About how many are there in a hundred grams?” I asked the salesman. He got out his trowel and a newspaper bag with a long-suffering look. “Maybe ten, or about half a dozen if they’re big ones,” he said, scooping up some strawberries. He was about to pour them into the bag so I quickly turned up my nose and said, “Ah, I’m not gonna buy any.” Not at that price, I was thinking, when he said, “They’re still coming from Honshu³, you know; that’s why they’re so pricey. They’ll get cheaper, though, when the others come on the market.” Apparently the salesman had no time for the Honshu strawberries either. These were the same ones that were sent to Tokyo and thereabouts from the northern and central regions of the mainland, and by the time they got to Sapporo they were twice what they cost in Tokyo.

“And the others, when do you think ...?” I asked.

“We should start to see the first ones from about the end of the month, but don’t expect any bargains at the beginning of the season,” he told me. It was May sixteenth. The nights were still cold and the tips of my fingers were frozen.

“It’s still pretty chilly in Sapporo, isn’t it,” I said, and walked off through the town, muttering to myself, “You can’t really blame them, in this cold.”

The next day I went to the main street. In Sapporo the main street is a wide avenue a hundred and fifty meters across, lined with six rows of trees, that divides the city into north and south. There were always stalls lined up under the trees as if for a festival. Milk, hard-boiled eggs, bread rolls filled with sweet bean jam, rice crackers, soft drinks, there were even bananas, summer oranges and apples laid out there; and there were stalls selling plants too. Beneath the elms lining the avenue, the lilac was in bloom and a lilac festival was underway. Lilac flowers – or *lilas* flowers, as they are sometimes called – grow in clusters like begonias and smell like violets. The grassy area in the center of the avenue was planted with tulips, daisies and pansies, in colors as vivid as those of alpine flowers. Under the trees, there was a plant stall with rows of small potted cactuses, and at another a man, who looked like a laborer and appeared to have just brought his wares straight from the mountains and dumped them down there, was selling all kinds of alpine plants⁴ just as they were with the roots exposed. Something at the next stall caught my eye. Ah! I recalled. Next to life itself!

The dewgrass⁵ I saw lined up there was a moss that grows in the mists of the Konsen-

³ The main island of Japan.

⁴ Fukazawa names the plants: いわちどり (iwachidori), ひめくもま (himekumoma), えぞうすゆき (ezousuyuki), みねぞう (minezou), こまぐさ (komagusa), 日高せばや (hidakasebaya).

⁵ もうせんごけ (mousengoke) – also called in English (*round-leafed*) *sun dew*.

genya Plain⁶. The roots of the moss were entwined in clumps like rubber balls, measuring about two or three centimeters across. I had spent days last year just gazing at this dewgrass. I had put a clump in some water in a square rice-cracker tin; it was similar to the hair-cap moss⁷ in Kyoto, but smaller and greener, and the mass of tangled roots grew by itself without any soil. Looking at that dewgrass was like gazing at a cedar forest far away in the distance.

Yes, that's right! I remembered. I had thrown out last year's dewgrass when I left, but there had been times when I had gazed at it thinking that it was second only to life itself. And then again I had wondered at times: Or is it my life that comes second?

"How much is that?" I asked, pointing to the smallest piece, a clump about the size of a large rice bowl.

"It's a hundred yen but you can have it for fifty," said a middle-aged woman, in workman's clothes, who looked as if she had just stepped off the train from Kushiro. I bought the dewgrass for fifty yen, she wrapped it in newspaper for me, and I walked through the town with it swinging from my hand, thinking: Now to find an empty rice-cracker tin. I heard a country music record playing somewhere. It was Hank Williams' "Kaw-Liga." Ah! That's right, I'd forgotten – that too had been my life, I recalled with a pang.

After the lilac came to an end, it was lily-of-the-valley; and, sure enough, the women I saw selling it here and there around the town for ten or twenty yen a bunch were all outfitted like workmen.

The middle of June came. After the lily-of-the-valley finished, the acacia came into bloom. On the tree acacia flowers resemble clusters of white lilac, but if you break off a branch and hold the flowers in your hand they look and smell like cherry blossoms. Ah! That's right, I'd forgotten – these too... My thoughts went back to last year when these flowers were blooming.

⁶ 根釧原野 (Konsengenyu Plain) – a vast plateau, containing areas of pristine marshland, that extends east from the city of Kushiro in eastern Hokkaido.

⁷ すぎこけ (sugigoke)

Background and Interpretation

In June 1961 Fukazawa Shichiro arrived “weary and footsore” in Sapporo, Hokkaido, the northernmost of the four main islands of Japan. He was both physically and emotionally exhausted. He had spent the previous six months in fear for his life and the lives of those around him, drifting from place to place – Kyoto, Osaka, Onomichi, Hiroshima, Tohoku – in the company of two police bodyguards. Traveling by bus and on foot, wearing traditional Japanese wooden clogs (*geta*) because his shoes hurt him, he had wandered the streets of Hokkaido too – Hakodate, Sapporo, Asahikawa, Wakkanai, Kushiro. Unbeknownst to his bodyguards, however, these were not entirely aimless wanderings. In the back of Fukazawa’s troubled mind a vague plan had taken shape. Without really knowing how or why, he was searching for the man who would kill him.

In order to understand how Fukazawa came to be in these desperate circumstances, we must first consider the political climate in Japan at the beginning of the 1960s. From the mid-1950s there had been a dramatic increase in political participation. Many left-wing groups – composed of communists, left-wing socialists, liberals, student groups and many white- and blue-collar workers (Bix) – had formed to challenge what they considered to be the outdated aims and ideals of conservative politicians. While the leftists were inspired by the democratic ideals of peace and equality outlined in the new post-war constitution, the conservative leaders of the newly formed Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) were preoccupied with plans to amend the American-flavored document to correct its democratic ‘excesses.’

One bone of contention was the status of Emperor Hirohito. LDP leaders hoped to revise the constitution in order to restore the emperor’s status from that of a mere symbol to head of state, and thereby revive some of his pre-war authority. Many Japanese were deeply dissatisfied, however, that the question of his accountability for the Asia-Pacific war had never been properly addressed. While Emperor Hirohito and the nation’s leaders had expressed their condolences to the bereaved families, they had persistently avoided the issue of their responsibility to the Japanese people and the world (Bix).

Another source of conflict was the Japan-US Security Treaty, which had been imposed on Japan in 1952 as a condition for ending the post-World-War-II American occupation. The agreement required Japan to accept American bases on Japanese soil and obligated the Self-Defense Forces to aid the United States in the event of war against another Far Eastern

nation or an attack on American bases in Japan. Liberals felt that the treaty was “a flagrant negation of the peace ideals described in their new constitution” (Bix). The Security Treaty, which had as its main object the containment of China and the Soviet Union, was at cross-purposes with their vision of Japan as a peaceful, Pacific Asian power. Conservative politicians, however, were more interested in the economic benefits promised by the alliance.

As the 1950s drew to a close, the gap widened between the ideals of opposing factions. Fearing rearmament and the possibility of being obliged to support the United States in a war against the Soviet Union, left-wing liberals increasingly condemned the LDP’s efforts to revise the constitution in order to reinstate the emperor’s powers and modify the restrictions concerning abandonment of war. This only fuelled the right-wing nationalists’ patriotic fervor and drove them even further from their opponents’ democratic ideals. Attempting to gain public support for their policies, the government clamped down on attempts to raise the question of Japan’s war culpability. State control of education was reinstated and a system of textbook control was implemented that censored references to Japan’s “aggressive Asian colonialism and wars” (Bix). A book published in 1957, in which veterans returning from China confessed to Japanese atrocities committed there, was soon discontinued by the publisher “under threat from right-wing thugs” (Bix).

These blatantly unconstitutional acts fanned the flame of leftist dissension and by the end of the 1950s Japan was in a state of political turmoil. Things came to a head over the LDP government’s proposal to renew the Japan-US Security Treaty, which, although superficially revised, would still subordinate Japan to American military policies. In 1958, anticipating public demonstrations protesting the renewal of the treaty, the government introduced a bill to strengthen the powers of the police, which in turn was fiercely resisted by the mass media and most of the nation’s labor unions as well as the opposition parties within the Diet. The LDP succeeded in ratifying the revised Security Treaty in May 1960, but only after bringing five hundred uniformed policemen into the House of Representatives to control opposition from both inside and outside the Diet building. This was followed by a month of “the largest demonstrations in Japanese history” (Bix), culminating in the death of a student protester in a clash with police in front of the Diet building, and calls for a general strike.

In the wake of the treaty struggle, in December 1960, the prominent literary magazine *Chuo Koron* published a parody by Fukazawa Shichiro entitled *Furyumutan (An Elegant Fantasy)*. The story is written in the form of a dream in which the narrator gets caught up

in a left-wing revolution in Tokyo. Supported by the Self-Defense Forces and supplied with weapons from Korea, the United States and the Soviet Union, the revolutionaries storm the Metropolitan Police Board before taking over the imperial residence and executing the emperor and empress, and crown prince and princess. The narrator describes with amused detachment the execution of the crown prince and princess, whose severed heads roll across the plaza with an artificial metallic sound and disappear into the crowd. Next he physically assaults and engages in a violently abusive exchange with the emperor's mother.

The 'dream' abounds in comical details. Fukazawa ridicules the pomp and tradition associated with the imperial family and grossly exaggerates their loss of status. Gazing at the corpses of the beheaded emperor and empress, and later in his encounter with the emperor's mother, the narrator notices 'Made in England' labels on their western-style clothes; the three 'god-given treasures,' handed down through generations of emperors as symbols of imperial status, are transformed into cheap children's toys; hitherto prestigious and coveted Order of Cultural Merit Awards litter the ground. No one and nothing is sacred in this gleefully anarchistic fantasy.

While *An Elegant Fantasy* provoked expressions of delight and approval from some readers, it enraged nationalist conservatives. They insisted that by insulting the emperor, whom the constitution had decreed to be the symbol of the Japanese people, Fukazawa was guilty of insulting the entire nation. After the government refused to take any legal action, the rightists took it into their own hands to chastise those who were responsible for the story's publication. They demanded that *Chuo Koron* cease publication, the Chuo Koron Company be dissolved, Fukazawa be expelled from Japan and apologies be published in the three major newspapers (Kyoya 302). The backlash continued throughout January 1961, with rightists threatening and berating employees of the Chuo Koron Company both inside and outside the company's Tokyo headquarters, and finally, on 1 February 1961, a seventeen-year-old member of a radical right-wing party invaded the residence of the company president, Shimanaka Hoji, intent on assassinating him. Finding him not at home, the youth attacked Shimanaka's wife with a short sword, severely wounding her, before turning on the elderly family maid and killing her with one thrust of his sword as she attempted to defend her employer.

The shockingly violent 'Shimanaka incident' had far-reaching implications for freedom of expression. Bix notes:

Shimanaka disavowed any association with the writer. Rather than criticize the rightists for the bloodbath at his home, or defend freedom of speech and artistic

expression, he repeatedly issued public apologies in the newspapers for having troubled the throne. Then, to further mollify rightwing and respectable opinion alike, *Chuo Koron* changed its editorial direction and became an outlet for activities that made the behavior of the wartime state appear less condemnable. Other large commercial publishers followed suit, censoring themselves more strictly on subjects concerning the throne. No one (except for a few small, underground presses) thereafter dared publish parodies mocking the authority of emperors.

Hando Kazutoshi, then director of the publishing company Bungeishunju Ltd, recalls that the company “buckled under pressure from rightists to forgo the publication of a book by Oe Kenzaburo” about the assassination of Asanuma Inejuro, chairman of the Socialist Party, who was killed at a televised political rally later that year. “Those were turbulent times in the immediate wake of the signing of the 1960 Japan-US Security Treaty, and the company’s editorial department was filled with dread of terrorism by rightists and leftists alike,” Hando reminisces (Interview: Asahi Shinbun).

Although the edition of *Chuo Koron* in which *Furyumutan* appeared was never actually banned, the story is not included in anthologies of Fukazawa’s writing and it is extremely unlikely that a magazine or journal would consider publishing a translation of it even today.

What prompted Fukazawa to dream up this story that had such tragic and far-reaching repercussions? Interpretations were many and varied: the ‘dream’ expressed a desire for revolution; it expressed a fear of revolution (Nakamura 16); it was intended to insult the imperial family; it was an inverse expression of affection for the imperials (Soma 186); it was an attack on the ‘symbol’ monarchy and on the myth that Hirohito had saved the nation from destruction (Bix); it asserted a mutual relationship of culpability for the war shared by the emperor and the Japanese people (Bix); it was a “literary reflection of the anti-treaty movement” (Soma 74). Speculation continues to this day.

According to Fukazawa himself, he was just trying to be funny. “I like to fool around,” he explained immediately after the story was published: “The brutality in *Furyumutan* was intended as the base for a comedy.” Again in a media interview after the ‘Shimanaka incident,’ he denied that *An Elegant Fantasy* was politically motivated: “I had no intention of making any political comment whatsoever in that story, but as there seem to be people who take it that way I will absolutely avoid writing anything to do with politics from now on” (Soma 81).

Fukazawa was obviously influenced by television broadcasts of the demonstrations

against the revised Japan-US Security Treaty, but those familiar with his character – he was a nonconformist, with strong anarchist and nihilist leanings – suggest that he simply enjoyed the excitement generated by the conflict. Hamano reports: “Shichiro was crazy about rockabilly music at the time and had absolutely no convictions one way or the other; [...] he just went along with the side that was making the most noise” (114), much like a schoolboy egging on a playground fight. Fukazawa said he realized later when it was pointed out to him that he probably had been influenced by the Security Treaty conflict, but what he had really wanted to express was “the strange sense of foreboding that underlies gay festivities” (Soma 75). He had in fact written a story earlier the same year based directly on the Security Treaty conflict, entitled *Savage! Savage! Molto savage! (Kick up a fuss! More! More!)*, in which the narrator says: “[I thought] the demonstrations were like gay, light-hearted festival celebrations. [...] It had absolutely nothing to do with me, but I liked the side that was against the treaty anyway because they were the ones making all the fuss, so I supported them right from the start” (Soma 75).

As far as the imperial family was concerned, Fukazawa did have a motive of sorts to stage their demise. He was opposed to the enormously popular marriage between Crown Prince Akihito and Shoda Michiko, who in April 1959 had become the first commoner ever to marry a crown prince. Die-hard traditionalists had also been among the small minority of Japanese who opposed the marriage, seeing it as yet another step in the erosion of traditional values, but Fukazawa’s reasoning was somewhat different. He despised anything unnatural or artificial. Most of his literature depicts simple, ordinary people; he felt close to them and considered himself to be one of them. To him the imperials seemed intolerably inhuman and ridiculous with their exaggeratedly traditional ways and artificial, arcane way of speaking. He had been nursing a vision of the imperial family of the future, inbred to the point where they had become monstrous beings that were less than human, and he was annoyed that Akihito and Michiko’s union would delay, if not prohibit, this eventuality. He had previously published his thoughts on this matter in the literary magazine *Gunzo* saying, in effect, that he opposed the marriage on the grounds that a normal person would not be capable of carrying out the emperor’s job because they would not be stupid enough (Fukazawa 1959).

In addition, it seems that he considered the emperor to have shirked his responsibilities to the Japanese people regarding Japan’s involvement in the Asia-Pacific war. Hamano recreates a conversation between Fukazawa and his nephew:

“They lived high on our money [...] and what did they ever do for us? They

had everyone running off to the war just to get themselves killed – squeezing out all the money they could get.”

“But uncle, a lot of people say that it was Emperor Hirohito who saved the Japanese people with his unconditional surrender on August 15th.”

“You idiot! [His advisors] told him that he would save his own life if he surrendered.” (112)

In fact this is almost the exact conversation that takes place between the narrator and the emperor’s mother in Fukazawa’s ‘dream.’ While Fukazawa may not have had strong political convictions, his feelings toward the imperial family were obviously not entirely neutral. He does not condemn them outright, however. Not only does he allow the emperor’s mother to have her say – “How dare you scum accuse us of being bloodsuckers,” she mutters, “when it was the Japanese people who thanked and supported the emperor and wanted the war in the first place” – he has her speak in his own local Koshu dialect, which, while ridiculously incongruous, perhaps indicates a certain sympathy with her. Neither was Fukazawa’s dismal vision of the future imperial family one-sided. The Japanese people of the future would revere the monstrously deformed creatures, he predicted. “This is our nation,” they would say, gazing at a family photograph of the imperial monsters with “mysterious, marveling, respectful eyes” as if it were “a national treasure” or a “religious icon” (Soma 186).

Fukazawa offered another explanation for *An Elegant Fantasy*. Immediately after the ‘Shimanaka incident,’ he said that the story had stemmed from his feelings of aversion to the thirty-one-syllable Japanese poem known as *waka*, the composition of which is a traditional imperial pastime. “In order to bring out the ridiculousness of composing *waka* as a form of amusement, I thought [...] the imperial family would be the most effective,” he explained (Soma 70). Fukazawa disliked the predictable, pretentiously elegant language and rigid structure of *waka*, and the ‘deathbed poems’ that feature in *An Elegant Fantasy* – one for each of the beheaded imperials – are clearly a caricature of this poetic form. The symbolism is traditional and deliberately evocative to the point of absurdity and the poems’ ridiculousness is compounded by the shallow interpretation of them that is offered by an elderly court chamberlain. Fukazawa was an accomplished guitarist and songwriter, and it was not unusual for him to compose songs or poems and then build a story around them later. His most famous novel, *Narayama Bushiko* (*The Legend of Narayama*) is said to have been created in this way. Kyoya suggests that Fukazawa “first wrote the deathbed poems for the emperor and empress, crown prince and princess just for the fun of it” and then

made up the story as a means to interpret them (24–25).

It appears that the overwhelming public reaction to *An Elegant Fantasy* was not so much a result of Fukazawa's own political convictions, but due to that fact that the story happened to strike a chord that rang true in the hearts of many Japanese people whatever their political persuasion. Considering the volatile political climate at the time, the fact that Fukazawa was naive enough to think that the public would read nothing more into the story than the joke he had intended does indeed testify to his lack of political awareness. Ironically it was the 'Furyumutan incident' that led Fukazawa to pledge his allegiance to the communist party. In a press interview five years later he is reported to have said: "That really put me off the rightists, so now I always vote for the communists in every election; that way there's no mistake" (Soma 187).

Whatever motives Fukazawa may or may not have had for writing *An Elegant Fantasy*, his comments after the incident point consistently to one thing: he was a writer first and foremost and his literature was his one true preoccupation. Arashiyama, a friend and colleague, comments,

At heart, all Fukazawa thought about was literature, novels. [...] He enjoyed the business ventures and social gatherings and so on [...] but underneath it all he was looking for material for his novels. [...] In that sense he was a purely literary man. [...] Writing was always on his mind. (178–179)

Hamano describes him as a man "who was destined to write and who had to speak out even if it meant that a hundred million people turned their backs on him and his life was endangered" (156).

Another important consideration is that Fukazawa did not operate according to a socially accepted system of values or what is generally regarded as common sense. In the preface to a collection of Fukazawa's work, Yoro suggests, "It was surely Fukazawa's character that led to the Furyumutan incident. [...] He had no 'social common sense.' He was raw and untamed, but that was part of his appeal" (1–2).

From his youth Fukazawa was blind in one eye, but his impaired vision apparently did not bother him:

It's all the same to me whether I see scenery or people's faces or buildings in two dimensions or three. Whatever I can see with my own eyes is good enough for me. People call me 'prejudiced' but I don't care. I am satisfied just with my own world, so I have never felt that one eye wasn't enough. (Fukazawa 1993: 346)

Not only were Fukazawa's principles unconventional, he was outrageously forthright; he lacked all social graces and pretensions and cared nothing for public accolades. His nihilistic flouting of tradition and authority, combined with a childlike naivety, endowed him with a talent for shocking or delighting others, or more often than not achieving both at the same time. On this occasion, however, his obliviousness to social norms caused him to grossly underestimate the reaction to his 'comic story.' Having had no inkling of its wider implications, Fukazawa was profoundly shocked by the aftermath to the publishing of *An Elegant Fantasy* and devastated by the ensuing murder. Five days after the 'Shimanaka incident,' Fukazawa, his face thin and haggard, gave a press interview in which he claimed "full responsibility for everything":

"That story was a comedy. But it led to all sorts of things, even the death of a woman who had nothing to do with it at all. [...] It's my fault for writing it that way." Fukazawa made no move to wipe away the tears that rolled down his cheeks. He looked tormented by an overwhelming sadness. When asked, "Are you living with your family? Where are you staying now?" he whispered imploringly, "Don't ask me please." After the press interview, which lasted about twenty minutes, he left the room supported by a police bodyguard. Fukazawa, the man at the center of the maelstrom stirred up by the 'Shimanaka incident,' was exhausted to the point where he was quite unable to walk on his own. (qtd. in Nakamura 35)

Fukazawa went into hiding under police protection after the incident, moving from place to place while he waited for the rightists' fury to abate. Already tormented by guilt and remorse, he was hounded with threatening letters from right-wing extremists:

"No matter what you say, your family will be wiped out; traitor to your country, you will get what you deserve."

"Demented Fukazawa, die die die, die die die; traitor who rubbed dirt in a hundred million faces for your own misguided profit, die die die, die die die, die die die ..." (Hamano 127)

What Fukazawa feared above all was that another innocent person may be harmed on his account. It occurred to him that if he himself were killed everything would be resolved. *Ruro no shuki (Memoirs of a Wanderer)*, first published in 1962 in the literary magazine *Gunzo*, is an account of his subsequent wanderings. The narrator of the account describes his horrified disbelief and remorse after a story that he had written as a comedy had inad-

vertently led to a murder: "I am responsible for causing the murder. Everyone except me is a victim, even the young assassin," he concludes. Noticing, among the hundred or so threatening letters that he receives from the terrorists, a letter from "someone in Ishikari," a large region in western Hokkaido, he decides almost unconsciously to go to Hokkaido, seek out the terrorist and have himself killed: "Perhaps I just needed to search for him, though I knew neither his name nor address, to go to the area where he lived – no, even to be headed in that direction." He drifts from place to place in Hokkaido and spends a fruitless week walking around the Ishikari region: "When I thought that this was the area where he lived, I somehow didn't want to leave there. [...] Perhaps I was looking for a place to die." Failing to find his prospective assassin, however, he heads for Sapporo, the main city of Hokkaido, where he leads an aimless, impulsive, hand-to-mouth existence in a cheap boarding house. The larger part of the *Memoirs* depicts this period, with some quite lighthearted and hilarious accounts of his adventures. Beneath it all, however, there is a pervading sense of loneliness and desolation. "I couldn't be bothered" is the narrator's catchphrase – nothing really interests or excites him or holds his attention for long. On a whim he sets off for eastern Hokkaido and spends three days wandering alone in the vast, misty wilderness of the Konsengenya Plain. Seeing a house in the distance, he is sure that if he goes there and says his name, a young man will come out of the house and kill him. "Then my body will be disposed of in the mist. I will be killed without anyone knowing, and no one will be accused of the murder. This was what I came here for," he hallucinates. The account ends with him stopping at a house to ask for a drink of water and standing "wrapped in mist at the back door of a strange house, guzzling the [cold spring] water like a beggar."

Fukazawa later criticized the *Memoirs*: "Looking back on it I think the writing is far too romantic – or should I say emotional. I don't like it; it makes my skin crawl" (Soma 80). Although the *Memoirs* are by no means devoid of the tongue-in-cheek humor that was Fukazawa's trademark, it seems that the underlying anguish was too apparent for his taste. Fukazawa hated anything overtly emotional or deliberately evocative. His writing style is noted for its dry humor and detached, matter-of-fact mode of expression. Although he could be shockingly outspoken, Fukazawa was actually quite inscrutable. On a personal level he was a very private and guarded person who did not trust or confide in others easily. Soma points out, therefore, that although Fukazawa was uncomfortable with what he considered to be an over-expression of his emotional state at the time, the *Memoirs* are valuable for that very reason: "they are for Fukazawa a rare example of an 'I-novel' which directly reflects his true feelings" (80).

Ruro no shuki (*Memoirs of a Wanderer*) is the title story of an anthology by the same name, which was published in 1967. Unfettered freedom is the pervading theme of the volume: “The day I stop wandering will be the day I die,” Fukazawa writes in the preface. “We are born naked but in the process of living all sorts of things hang onto us. They are fleas. The things we own, family, friends – they are all fleas. By living the life of a wanderer you can get away from the fleas.” By the time this volume was published, however, Fukazawa’s wanderings had become largely vicarious. Since 1965 he had been living at ‘Love Me Farm’ where he was to settle for the rest of his days:

I moved to a rural village in Saitama. I live in a house surrounded by rice fields, but someone goes past down the road, someone appears in front of me, and that becomes my own wandering. Things go round and round, appearing and disappearing. As long as I live, I will be a wanderer. (Fukazawa 1967: 5)

The *Memoirs of a Wanderer* anthology includes, among other works, the *Flame of Life* (*Inochi no tomoshibi*) series, four very short pieces arranged in the following order: *Watashi no junigatsu* (*My December*), *Kiete yuku hitotachi* (*Those Who Are No More*), *Wataridori no yo ni* (*Like a Migratory Bird*) and *Inochi no tomoshibi* (*Flame of Life*). Written at the end of 1962, almost two years after the publication of *Furyumutan*, the passage of time has obviously assuaged Fukazawa’s despair to a certain extent. There are no declarations of guilt or sorrow, no anguished images, such as there are in the *Memoirs*. Overall, however, this series also lacks the energy and humor of the *Memoirs*. Particularly in the first three parts of the quartet, the tone is detached, with a pessimistic, almost callous edge to it. There is little evidence of the comic writer that Fukazawa aspired to be. The first three of the series, in particular, are essays rather than stories, and the thoughts and opinions expressed in them seem to come directly from Fukazawa’s own mouth. I will, however, continue to refer to him as ‘the narrator’ in the context of these stories. In *My December*, the narrator reflects on the year that is drawing to a close, overtly rejoicing at the fact that there is no need for him to send the customary New Year cards or end-of-year gifts this year:

Because of my story ‘F’ I have lost touch with everyone; I spent both last year and this year on the move, and even though that’s how I spend my days I can get away with it without anyone looking at me suspiciously. [...] I always felt that getting letters from people and talking with them was just like seasonal flowers – now they are beautiful, but later they wilt. Now I can live more the way I want to. [...] Last year I still felt some lingering affection for the world I

left behind, but this year I don't feel any at all. [...] I want to keep on wandering around like this forever; I want to be 'Jimmy the migratory bird.'

The concluding line of *My December* is a terse summary of the events of the outgoing year: "Various people died." The tone is cool and decisive, but there is a profound sense of disillusionment, almost an emotional numbness, beneath it all.

Those Who Are No More is a reflection on death. The narrator remembers nostalgically those "eternal people" – Marilyn Monroe, Hank Williams, James Dean – all of whom died young, but live on in their films and music. But what is eternity anyway?: "The sun is eternal, but when I die it will disappear." To be alive, muses the narrator, "is to hear of the death of others." "People die just like persimmons being stolen from a tree. One here, one there, before you know it they are gone." All a funeral should consist of is "disposing of the corpse." "I decided I didn't have to burn incense or do anything like that for anyone any more," he concludes.

In Like a Migratory Bird the narrator describes his new, unfettered, carefree life as 'Jimmy the migratory bird.' In the two years he has spent as a wandering recluse he has come to realize how much unnecessary baggage he had been carrying. Life should be lived for the moment, purely for fun, he asserts: "To think is to be unhappy." From now on, "with each passing year, Jimmy the migratory bird will find more and more things to get rid of and make his load lighter and lighter." In this piece too, however, there is an underlying despondence that belies the narrator's words.

The fourth story of the quartet, *Flame of Life*, is the only one that has any real storyline and it is the most appealing of the four pieces in that it exudes a sense of passion and even humor that is conspicuously lacking in the others. Through his encounter with the strawberries the narrator seems to have regained his humanity and the capacity to feel. In sharp contrast to the other three, this is a very sensual story: taste, sight, smell, sound and touch – every one of the five senses is represented with a captivating sense of immediacy. The narrative abounds with exclamations as if the narrator cannot contain his emotions: he "howls" at the taste of the strawberries, "moans in sheer wonder" at their price, and barely stops himself from calling out to them when he sees them again. He feels his chest "tighten with a mounting sense of urgency," "breathes a sigh of relief," is "shocked," "enchanted," "amazed," "staggered," feels "a pang" when he recalls the events of the year before. There is a sense of emotional tension and confusion, however, almost as if the narrator cannot quite make up his mind whether to laugh or cry.

The title *Flame of Life* (*Inochi no tomoshibi*), which is also the collective title of the four pieces, symbolizes the omnipresent theme of the quartet. The expression ‘*inochi no tomoshibi*’ refers to an image of each person’s life as a flame that starts burning when they are born and goes out the moment they die. The flame flickers, burning sometimes faintly, sometimes more brightly; it is vulnerable and impermanent. ‘*Inochi no tomoshibi*’ speaks of the fleeting, ephemeral nature of our existence and the vanity of worldly pursuits. ‘*Tomoshibi*’ is a light, but it is a fragile one and short-lived. If we consider the events that led up to Fukazawa’s arrival in Sapporo, it is plain to see why he might have been particularly aware of life’s fragility at the time. The ‘Shimanaka incident’ had been a painful reminder of it, and he had lived every day since then never knowing when his own flame might be extinguished. While the same could be said for all of us at any time, Fukazawa’s recent experiences must have brought the realization to the very forefront of his consciousness.

The transience of life, and the juxtaposition or sameness of life and death, is a major theme in Fukazawa’s literature. While *Those Who Are No More* is a direct expression of this concept, the theme of impermanence is sustained more subtly in *Flame of Life* in the precise temporal and seasonal references. We are constantly reminded that time moves on, seasons come and go: strawberries, lilac, lily-of-the-valley, acacia, dewgrass, popular music – everything has its day and then is gone and forgotten. When the narrator returns the following year, however, the months and seasons are repeating their cycle. Even Hank Williams, who sacrificed his life to drugs and alcohol in 1953, lives on in his music. Thus, underlying the theme of transience and impermanence is the complementary theme of continuity – the oneness of life and death. This philosophy, which underlies all of Fukazawa’s literature, is a fundamental Buddhist concept: all form is emptiness; all emptiness is form. In Japan cherry blossoms are thought to be the ultimate expression of this idea. They bloom fleetingly and fall, only to be reborn the following spring – to bloom is to fall and to fall is to bloom. *Flame of Life* ends with acacia flowers, which, if you hold them in your hand, “look and smell like cherry blossoms” – the symbol of fragility, impermanence and death, but also of continuity, new life and new hope.

In the same way, ‘*inochi no tomoshibi*,’ while fragile and fleeting, also implies hope and inspiration. The Sapporo strawberries, which the narrator sees as his ‘flame of life,’ are seasonal and therefore impermanent, but they are also full of life, color, and goodness. The narrator’s obsession with them stems not only from a painful awareness of the fragility of his own life but also from a need to find some meaning, some inspiration, in his surroundings

to sustain him in his despair and confirm his own existence. When he returns to Sapporo the following year and sees the strawberries – “There you are, there you are, flame of my life!” – there is a sense of joy and relief in the confirmation that his flame is still burning. He seems to identify the strawberries themselves with the fact that he has survived to see them again.

The dewgrass moss, Hank Williams’ *Kaw-Liga* (a song about a wooden Indian with a heart of “knotty pine” who was too stubborn to express his love so he “just stood there and never let it show”) and the acacia flowers, about which the narrator reminisces on his return to Sapporo, are all variations on the same theme as the strawberries – they are all the narrator’s ‘flame of life.’ “That too had been my life,” says the narrator ... and “these too.” Fruit, plants, music, flowers – by losing himself in these reassuringly simple, natural things the narrator is able to gain a respite from the memories and fears that pursue him. Although he thinks he has come to Hokkaido “looking for a place to die,” he unconsciously and instinctively reaches out for something to live for, something to cling to. The following poem, a poignant memory of those comfortless days, was displayed on a hanging scroll over the Buddhist altar in Fukazawa’s house at ‘Love Me Farm’ for the rest of his life (Hamano 175 – 176):

Wanting to hold them
I broke off a branch
Not knowing why
Just wanting to hold them
The day I walked with acacia flowers
In a dream in Sapporo

The narrator of *Flame of Life* appreciates not only nature and music, he also expresses compassion for his fellow human beings, echoing a sentiment that appears three times in various forms in the *Memoirs*: “Whenever I see people carrying food I think human nature must be basically good.” He is communicative, receiving and passing on tidbits of information about the strawberries, and even talking to himself in the mirror. On the other hand, he asserts: “I had forgotten about ‘love’ and ‘peace’ and all those things connected with human relationships that make life so difficult; I couldn’t be bothered with all that.” Considering that peace had been the ultimate aim of the demonstrations against the US-Japan Security Treaty, it is little wonder that Fukazawa had no sympathy for that right now. In addition, in the aftermath of the ‘*Furyumutan* incident’ Fukazawa had been

shunned by both colleagues and strangers alike and spent months in semi-isolation. In the light of his gross miscalculation of the reaction to his 'comic story' he must have been painfully aware of the gap between his own worldview and that of those around him. While he was convinced that everything had been his fault, he was still unable to fathom where he had gone wrong. All this must have left him with little energy for "all those things connected with human relationships."

It seems that Fukazawa would suffer human contact, but only on his own terms. This is epitomized in *Memoirs of a Wanderer* in the narrator's relationship with a 'young hooligan' who comes and goes in the story. Whenever he appears the narrator is pleased to see him, but when he suddenly disappears: "Finding myself alone, I was a bit lonely at first, but then I felt as if a weight had been lifted from my shoulders." Similarly, while the narrator of *Flame of Life* has no time for 'love,' in the *Memoirs* he expounds the virtues of 'infatuation,' explaining: "'Love' is permanent but 'infatuation' is only for the moment."

This ambivalence with regard to human relationships was nothing new to Fukazawa, however; it seems to have been a lifelong feature of his character. Fukazawa describes his 'people phobia':

"Even if I meet someone I really like, I can't trust and confide in them. I never know when I will start to resent them and think of them as an enemy. It has been said about me that I don't like people, but I think it's more like a phobia. I give people the cold shoulder right from the start, so they think what a self-centered guy I am. And that's really what I want them to think because it makes things easier for me." (qtd. in Tsunazawa 1)

Hamano describes how twenty years later, as Fukazawa's health deteriorated and he began to suffer from the heart attacks that eventually killed him, his aversion to human contact became even more extreme. He broke off relationships with long-term friends one after another over trifles or simply because he was "tired of them" (Hamano 171). It was not only human relationships that were sacrificed. He cut down his beloved white plum blossom tree one day on a whim and used it for firewood, explaining to a horrified acquaintance (who was soon to suffer a similar fate), "I went off that plum tree; it pissed me off. When I saw it happily growing away there, I just felt like cutting it down on the spot. That's how I am" (Hamano 174).

Perhaps because he appears to be full of contradictions, Fukazawa is often described as self-willed and contrary. Much of his enigmatic behavior is, however, quite compatible and consistent with his own very specific set of principles—his "finely honed theory of

existence” (Hamano 156). In *Like a Migratory Bird* the narrator cites some examples of what he considers to be the work of “devils”: “people who use hair oil,” “classical music,” “respecting other people,” “religious worship” and “Rodin’s ‘Thinker.’” While the connection between these things may not be immediately obvious, they are not random choices. They are all examples of behaviors that are artificial or calculated; they represent a life based on concepts and ideologies. Fukazawa explains his philosophy of life:

I don’t believe in the words ‘live as a human being.’ We don’t ‘live’; we are just ‘alive.’ What human life amounts to is just being alive for no reason. [...] It is enough for people to just be alive, to just be moving. That’s why I say we are the same as maggots or caterpillars. You and I and maggots and caterpillars are just moving creatures. There is no need to think about anything else.” (qtd. in Tsunazawa 7)

For the same reasons that Fukazawa condemned the formal stiffness of *waka*, the narrator of *Like a Migratory Bird* argues against classical music: “Classical music is something cultured and academic, something difficult that is not really music at all.” Fukazawa liked simple music with its roots in the common people – spontaneous, irrational kind of music that “makes you shake and dance and sing and turns you inside out” (Tsunazawa 8). Similarly, while he loved flowers in their natural state, which is evident in his precise observations on the features of each variety in *Flame of Life*, he despised the elaborately arranged bouquets that are customarily presented on formal occasions in Japan (Hamano 170). *Flame of Life* abounds in natural, spontaneous, wholesome images: the greengrocer scooping up strawberries with a garden trowel and “tossing them into newspaper bags”; the earthy aroma and vibrant redness of the strawberries that, although cultivated, “hadn’t lost their wildness”; women walking home “with things to eat”; the salesgirl with her big, heavy bag of strawberries; the pleasure of “looking out over a wide, open, grassy plain”; the flowers planted in the main street “in colors as vivid as those of alpine flowers”; “the mists of the marshlands”; the plant seller who looked as if he had “just brought his wares straight from the mountains and dumped them down there”; the country women dressed for manual labor. Having come from Tokyo via some of the major cities of Honshu, Fukazawa was clearly charmed by the abundance of nature, the unspoiled landscape and the simple, unaffected inhabitants of Hokkaido.

During the year that passes in the *Flame of Life*, there is a clear progression in the narrator’s state of mind, or ‘flame of life.’ Fukazawa had spent the six months since the

'Shimanaka incident' in constant fear for his life and the lives of those around him. In addition to his physical wanderings, he was in the final stages of a grueling emotional journey. He did not know whether he would live to see another year. When we meet the narrator at the beginning of the story, his flame of life is at a low ebb. The opening line, "I wound up in Sapporo in late June, weary and footsore" is heavy with exhaustion and uncertainty. During the narrator's encounter with the strawberries, however, his flame flares up, flickering wildly in every direction, fuelled by his obsession. There is a desperate, manic energy in everything he does and feels. By the end of the story, the crisis is past. The narrator steps purposefully off the train in Sapporo on his return there, a much calmer, lighter man without the emotional baggage of the year before. While the memories still cause a pang, those days of impulsively reaching out like a drowning man clutching at straws are already half forgotten. The story ends without another mention of the strawberries that had so captivated him the year before; it seems they have served their purpose. His flame of life is burning steadily.

Likewise, by the end of the *Ruri no shuki* (*Memoirs of a Wanderer*) anthology, there is a sense of resolution. Perhaps the writing of this anthology was a cathartic process for Fukazawa. The afterword lacks the defensive, rebellious tone of the preface. Fukazawa seems to have come to terms with himself and his chosen path through life, and his style has regained its typical buoyancy:

People think that I started this life of wandering after the problems caused by *Furyumutan* but, when I come to think of it, I have always lived like this. I have not only moved from place to place, but I have changed jobs in the same way. Anyway, I try different things and soon get sick of them – that's my occupation. I wander from place to place, job to job, that's me. And I think that makes me a pretty discerning sort of guy.

There are also signs that *An Elegant Fantasy* may finally be laid to rest: "I didn't mean to write a serious story – I thought I was being witty. I suppose it was that story's destiny. Every story has its destiny, just as an orange or an apple does, just as a cicada or a fish does," Fukazawa concludes the anthology.

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Notes

- ▶ All quotations, with the exception of Bix and Asahi Shinbun, are my translation from the Japanese.
- ▶ To the best of my knowledge, none of the works referred to in this paper, with the exception of *Narayama bushiko*, are available in English translation. My English translations of the titles are provided purely for the purposes of this paper.