How would you define Japanese Modernism?

Interview with Suzuki Sadami

by Raquel Abi-Samara
(edited by William Tyler)

1) How would you define Japanese Modernism? From the cultural point of view, may we understand it as an all-encompassing phenomenon (just like Western Modernism), that is, would it have had an influence on all forms of art, fashion, life styles, consumption patterns, and other values?

In your book, *Modan Toshi no Hyôgen* (Expressions of the Modern City, published in 1992), in which you analyze modernity in Japan, you assert that the word "modernism" (*modanizumu)* entered into common use in the Japanese language beginning in 1926. Not unusual, Japanese literary and artistic critics associate the birth of Japanese Modernism with the vanguard movements of the 1920's, when the word "modernism" was introduced in Japan. In one of your essays, you claim that "artistic modernism in Japan became an official movement after the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923.

Suzuki; Thanks for your good questions. The chief thrust of my work in cultural studies has been to analyze how terms were used and how conceptual systems were constructed according to the evaluational standards at particular times in Japanese history. We have to be careful to separate concepts as we analyze and understand them today from concepts as they were understood in the history of the period and the locale under study.

In fact, the word of "modan," as written in Japanese *katakana*, appeared for the first time in an essay on the "modern girl" movement in England in a women's magazine 1923, and it quickly came into wide spread use circa 1926. The word was applied to many new styles of art and everyday lifestyles in urban settings, influenced from Europe and America at the time. The word "modan" was used to establish a new and different definition of the modern and to draw a distinction between it and an earlier *katakana* word, namely

“haikara,” which also meant being fashionable in the European—namely, Victorian—style. The word haikara had come into use in Japan in late nineteenth century, its origin deriving from the word “high collar” in English.

This new stage of modernist culture is clearly identifiable in the expanded growth of Japanese urban and mass society starting from the mid 1920s. Especially in case of the artistic and literary scenes, the *katakana* term “modanizumu” referred to styles influenced by European and American Modernism—or modernism in the narrow sense in which is used in the history of the fine art arts and identified by such historical movements as Cubism, Expressionism, Constructionism, Abstract Art, Dada and Surrealism. In literary circles, modernist styles were influenced by the concepts of “stream of consciousness,” Freudianism, and l’esprit nouveau in France or Neue Sachlichkeit in Germany. These new styles were utilized to depict the new urban lifestyle of the new middle class that began to emerge and develop starting from 1920s. This new literary style, which included the proletarian movement in literature as well, falls under the rubric of was called “the newly arising art” (Shinkô geijutsu, 新興芸術).

Nonetheless, the word of “modanizumu” in Japan had generally been used to describe phenomena characteristic of fine arts and literature dating from after the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 and influenced by new movements in the West that emerged after World War I ended. In 1980s, however, the study of Japanese modernism began to revisit and rethink these ideas, and a number of dramatic changes were introduced.

What was the first of these? First came the ideas of the scholar and journalist Unno Hiroshi in his critique of art and literature that insisted these phenomena were already in evidence by1920 and they predate the “rupture” of the earthquake. His positionis put forth in his book *Tokyo, the Modern City: Japan’s 1920s* (Modan toshi Tokyo: Nihon no 1920nendai, 1980). The second step forward was to reexamine modanizumu in the fine arts and demonstrate that new trends influenced by early European modernist movements such as Fauvism, Cubism and Constructionism began having their effect on Japan even earlier—from the early 1910s, as a matter of fact. This is concept of simultaneity—of demonstrating how similar and shared cultural characteristics emerged across the globe at the beginning of the twentieth century. I started my research on these trened in the late

1980s. These are the reasons why I claim in my book of 1992 that artistic modernism within mass culture in Japan started after the Great Kanto Earthquake.

In addition to the above, let me emphasize that the modernist trends in Japanese society reflect the growth of the new middle class that emerged after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905—a class that included new and independently minded businessmen, free-lance professionals, middle level administrative types in white collar jobs, teachers and government officials. This new types stood in contrast to the old middle class of village headmen and traditional manufacturers and merchants.

2) On the other hand, there are literary critics who place the birth of modernist fiction in the 1880's, such as, for example, the critic Karatani Kôjin, in his famous book *Nihon Kindai Bungaku no Kigen* (Origins of Modern Japanese Literature, 1982). This is also the case of the academician Mizutani Akio, who also looks from an historical perspective, and dates the birth of modernism in literature as having taken place between 1885 and 1889, starting with the adoption of the cabinet system for the issuance of the Meiji Constitution. How would you define the birth of Japanese modernism?

Suzuki; In addition to the definition of "modernism" given in response to your first question, Modernism was also a wide spread cultural condition characteristic of capitalist nation states. This is the standard definition for Western modernism, and it covers the period from the late eighteenth century to early twentieth. If one uses this definition, then I, and almost all of Japanese scholars today, would answer your question by saying that cultural modernism in Japan started in the late nineteenth century under the influence of European modernism.

However, if one takes a much broader view, then we have to pay attention to two additional points. First, some scholars of cultural history in Japan think of the Tokugawa period (1600-1867) as "modern" or "early modern" for the reason that many cultural elements seen in modern Europe can also be identified in Japanese culture that predates the onset of Meiji Period modernization. Take, for example, the many popular novels and dramas written by Ihara Saikaku and Chikamatsu Monzaemon. They represent the

emergence of Japanese as a "national language" from around the mid-seventeenth century—and a time that predates the emergence of national languages and literatures in modern Europe. This is true even though no formal system for teaching the national language to the Japanese people was set up by either the central authorities (*bakufu)* or the local clans (*han*).

If one applies the yardstick of European standards to gauging modernization and modernity in Japan, one might well make mistakes in analyzing the nature of Japanese modernization movements. Grasping the scenes that define cultural modernization in Japan is a very complicated task, but that complexity makes for interesting research.

As you said in your question, Japanese critics on art and literature writing after World War II generally thought that modernization of the arts in Japan started from the Meiji period, and they saw modernization as equivalent to Westernization. Some argued that it started with the so-called "political novels" and the movement for democratic rights of the 1880s in which authors translated and/or imitated works written in England and France. Others argued that realist thought in literature started from Tsubouchi Shôyô's famous essay "Essence of Novel" of 1885-86 and Futabatei Shimei's novel "Floating Cloud" of 1887-89. This was the view, for example, put forward by Nakamura Mitsuo, one of the most famous literary critics after World War II.

Meanwhile, Etô Jun, another famous postwar critic, began to challenge the mainstream theory that realism in Japanese fiction started with Tsubouchi Shôyô. Etô tried to show that realism in literature started around 1900 with literary "sketches" created by a group of writers led by Masaoka Shiki（1867-1902), who is well known for his insistence on introducing literary realism into the traditional poetic forms of *tanka* and *haiku*, and in prose too. Etô put forward his ideas in his essay of 1971 titled "The Origin of Realism: Problems concerning Sketch Prose and The Other" (Riarizumu no genryû, shasei to tasha no mondai

Meanwhile, Karatani Kôjin took up the example of landscape prose in the writings of the famous novelist Kunikida Doppo (1871-1909). In this he was following in the footsteps of Etô, as well as referencing the theory about the starting point for modern thought in the West, namely, the simultaneous emergence of landscape painting and the independent

inner life of the mind—a mind independent, that is, of church (ie., Christian) doctrine. In his study *The Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (Nihon kindai bungaku no kigen) of 1980, Karatani extended the theory to Japan, drawing a connection between the concept of landscape and interiority in modern Japanese literature. His study just goes to show how anachronistic views of literary modernization still hold sway in Japan.

The concept from Tokugawa Japan that was analogous to landscape was that of "true views" (shinkei / 真景) in which the artist actually copied real scenes as opposed to those imagined in one's head. The introduction of perspective into landscape drawing in Japan from Europe had already taken place in the Tokugawa Period. It spread rapidly among the popular art forms practiced in eighteenth-century Japan, especially in the work of the artist Maruyama Ôkyo（1733-1795）. In doing landscapes in the sumi-e style, Ôkyo was especially adept at using other methods of perspective—the bird's eye view and the use of shadows—practices that date from eleventh-century China. We also know that artists working in early twentieth-century Japan were well aware of Ôkyo's skills in handling perspective. Today, it is said among art historians in Europe that the Chinese methods of perspective that Ôkyo used so influenced Leonardo DaVinci. How is it possible to say, as Karatani seems to suggest, that the concept of landscape was never a part of Tokugawa Japan?

Admittedly, the perspective techniques that came from Europe did not become the mainstream in painting and wood prints. In the case of the ukiyoe printmaker and painter Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), he actively used the techniques of creating three vanishing points on a single surface or playfully focused on objects far in the distance in drawing his landscape prints. That is why it is said nineteenth-century French artists found his works so stimulating because they were eager to escape from the constraints of perspective that required a single focal or vanishing point.

In the East Asia, unlike the West, a naïve experimental realism had been a principal idea in Confucianism from ancient times; facts made know by heaven (tien) constitute the truth, and many poems and prose were written based on real emotions and realistic scenes. Moreover, the Neo-Confucianists from Sung dynasty, relying on this experimental realism, rejected fictions as lies, even as they enjoyed them. They also insisted upon the essentially

good nature of human beings but sought to control human behavior by following the Reason of Heaven (*tien ri*). By contrast, the Wang Yang-ming school of Neo-Confucian philosophy of the Ming dynasty insisted that reason exists in the spontaneous emotions that arise from the fundamentally good nature of human beings. Especially the leftwing school of Wan Yanming philosophy, as it was called from the 1930s, tried to teach this idea to the general public and not just intellectuals

Although Neo-Confucianism held sway as the major stream in moral and philosophical thinking in China, in Tokugawa Japan it competed with a variety of other ideas. For example, the thinker and classicist Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) turned *Kokugaku,* or "National Learning," into a significant intellectual force. Norinaga argued that Japanese thought rested on the real emotions of sexual and familial love, and in advancing his theory of the "real presentation of human emotion"(*mono no aware no setsu*, 物の哀れの説), he rejected both Neo-Confucian and Buddhist thought, both of which came to Japan from China. Starting from the latter half of the 17th century, a preference, especially among the merchant class, for emphasizing the importance of "ninjô" or "human feelings" began to supplant the Buddhist notion of impermanence that had dominated thinking since the medieval period, and this constellation of feelings was referred to as "mono no aware". Confucianists were also influenced by this trend, but Norinaga championed the view that what was unique about the Japanese spirit or mentality was its strong orientation toward feelings and emotions instead of logic.

Similarly, another popular thinker from the mid-Tokugawa era was Ishida Baigan (1685-1744). He argued human beings are essentially free and live independently of each other because of their ability to control their own bodies and speech in spite of whatever social status they may belong to. In these secularization movements, much of the poetry and the novels from this period present real emotions and realistic scenes. Even prose and novels done in the documentary style became popular in18th century Japan.

Thus, in literary works of poetry and in novels from the Tokugawa era, expressions of real emotion and realistic scene are easy to identify—a fact that was recognized by many thinkers at the time. For example, Chikamatsu Monzaemon（1653-1724）, the famous dramatist for the *joruri* or puppet theater advocated the theory of "the representation the

truth through fiction" (*kyojitsu hiniku*, 虚実皮肉). These ideas were still well known in the Meiji period, and they were used as references or glosses in the reception of modern European Romanticist and Realist methods in writing about everyday life.

This explains why ideas of liberty and equality, or Romanticism and Realism, from modern Europe found ready acceptance in Meiji Japan. It is clear that Japanese intellectuals at the time saw the Japanese classics of the *Man'yoshû* and *The Tale of Genji* as works involving Romantic ideas and Realistic methods. However, this means they understood Romanticism only as an expression of emotions and Realism as realistic depiction of feelings and scenes. They did not go so far as to absorb the value system of modern art that conferred special importance upon imagination and originality. Thus, in absorbing Romanticism and Realism, they developed a bias that reflects the traditional concepts that served as the receptors for the introduction of these ideas.

In fact, around 1900, writers such as Masaoka Shiki and Kunikida Doppo embraced impressionism as a new style of poetry and prose that derived from European expressionist methods and that called for writing based on the five senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting. One example of this influence is to be found in "The Rendezvous" from *A Hunter's Sketches* (1847～52) by Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev, translated by Futabatei Shimei in 1888. In his "Musashino"(1901), Doppo wrote his impressions of a scene in the Musashino woods as it changes not only over time but also with each different walk he takes. Unlike the argument presented by Karatani, the recording of momentary impressions was simply that—recording impressions that bombarded the writer at the time. Such impressions do not constitute a record of his inner experience or interiority. Nor are they a static landscape independent of religious notions, even though Doppo may well have thought that the moving scenes he composed were the realization of "the Life of Nature." He was doing this at almost the same time the philosophical theory of "direct experience" or "stream of consciousness" created by the American pragmatist philosopher William James (1842-1910) began to be known and accepted by Japanese intellectuals. It was not long afterward that the movement of writing impressions became a mainstream activity in literary circles in Japan—not only as "writing sketches" (*shasei-bun*) and in "naturalist"

(*shizen-shugi*) novels, but also among followers of the Symbolist and "Shirakaba"(White Birch) schools.

What I have said so far should give you a clearer picture of the true sense of the literary world in Japan at the turn of the twentieth century. I discuss it much more detail in my book, *Nihon no "bungaku" gainen* of 1998, It was translated by Royal Tyler as *The Concept of "Literature in Japan"* in 2006. For further development of my ideas on the topic of traditional thought in East Asia, see my *Seimei no tankyû* (Inquiry in Views of Life) published in 2007.

To put the matter in a nutshell, you can think of the modernization of Japanese literary works as starting from the seventeenth century, of it being transformed into a national system at the time of Meiji Restoration, and of it then catching up with European movements during the years from the late nineteenth to the turn of the twentieth century. And expressions equivalent to the narrower sense of European modernism after the First World War developed in Japan from 1920s at the same time in Europe and America.

Let me hurriedly add one or two more points on the subject of Japanese modernism or the modernization of art and literature in Japan. One—and this very briefly—the history of cultural modernization in Japan has always been accompanied by reformulations of traditional elements. Two, we need to discuss new trends in the literary world at the turn of the twentieth century such as impressionism and the newly emergent symbolist movement. I shall talk about these movements later in this interview.

3) In *Nihon no Bungaku Gainen* (The Concept of Literature in Japan, 1998), you present a different idea of modernity, expressed by the word *"kindai"* in Japanese. This word, as your study shows, dates from the 13th century, and, at that time, merely signified "recent". The first use that you encounter for this word, associated with the literary movement called at the time "modernism" dates from 1911, in an essay entitled *"Kindaishugi no Engen"* (The Origins of Modernism), written by the critic Kaneko Chikusui (1870-1937). Could you please comment on what you understand to be modernity based on the term "kindai"?

Suzuki; The word of “modern” in English means, generally speaking, “recent” in time. The same holds true for “kindai” in Japanese. Likewise, the word “contemporary” in English means “more recent” than “modern”, although “modern” and “contemporary” are not always clearly distinguished and often overlap in a confusing manner. “Gendai” and “kindai” in Japanese are also like that. Thus we have the well-known example of “kindai” being used in thirteenth century in Japan! For example, the famous master of tanka poetry in the Kamakura period, Fujiwara Teika (1162-1241), wrote a theoretical text titled *Modern Good Tanka* (Kindai shûka, 1209). In addition to these two terms, we also have the word “kinsei.” It is often used as synonymous with “kindai.”

And we can see the usage of the word “modernism” as having the meaning of the most recent style in each era. The same point applies to the Japanese word “kindaishugi”. When Kaneko Chikusui, a professor at Waseda University, returned from Germany in 1904 and introduced new ideas from Europe such as Neo-idealism, he gave the title of *”Kindaishugi no engen”* to an article he published in 1911 in *Taiyô*, the biggest general-interest magazine in Japan at that time. In the article, he said the word “kindaishugi” or “modânizumu” was a fashionable word in Japanese—a word very much “in vogue” among intellectuals—and it referred to modern life and new trends in ideas brought about by developments in science and technology. In another essay he insisted that the trend toward decadence was becoming big in his day and society needed to overcome this kind of modernism. Nonetheless, journalists and the media did not take up the word “modânizumu” right away in either of these two meanings. There are only a few instances of its usage, and they were confined to small coterie magazines during the 1910s.

As I state above, the word of “modernism” and “modanizumu” in Japanese has been used with special meanings that continually shift and redefine the modern each time. However, in certain fields, “modernism” does have special meanings that are fixed to a particular era. In Christian thought, for example, “modernism” has three special meanings. One is to adopt developments in science and technology; two is liberalism, and three is secularization. In the history of the fine arts, “modernism” is also used in three different phases. The first begins with the impressionism of 1860s; the second, from “Fauvists” at the

beginning of the twentieth century; and the third, from “Dada” and “Surrealism” which spread after the First World War.

In Japanese history, we now typically use “kindai” to refer to the era starting from the Meiji Restoration and use it to mean the starting period of building the capitalist nation-state. This discourse was firmly established after World War II, following a pattern initiated by the Marxist movement around 1920 in speaking about capitalism, and of course, the beginning of the socialist revolution.

In the Meiji period, historians called the Tokugawa era, “kindai”, “kinsei”, or “the Edo era”, following the custom of naming historical periods after the capital city at the time. Meanwhile, they referred to their own age, or the Meiji period, as “kondai,” meaning, literally, “today’s period,” or they also used the nomenclature of the “Tokyo period”. In this meaning, today’s Japan is in succession to the “Tokyo period”.

A group of historians after the Second World War used “gendai” to mean the contemporary period after World War II and to set it apart from the “kindai” starting from the Meiji Restoration. Although this usage was wide spread at one time, nowadays “kin-gendai”—meaning “modern and contemporary”—is often employed to the encompass the era that stretches from Meiji up to today. One reason for the popularity of “kin-gendai” is doubtless the inability to settle arguments about where to draw the dividing line between these periods of history. Back in the medieval age there were similar problems that parallel those experienced by historians today.

In my opinion, literary history is but one part of cultural history, and it is better to employ the same period divisions in talking about literary and cultural history. Like it or not, our modern cultural systems were, as a general rule, the product of national cultures constructed by individual nation states. Nonetheless, there are exceptions to this rule. Although Tokugawa Japan developed a national language by publishing works in the national language (*kokugo*) of Japanese, and the level of literacy among the general public was the highest in the world at the time—even novels written in the Japanese national language had a level of originality that rivaled European publications—the educational system for the people was not built by the state. Or, even though the Tokugawa government designated Neo-Confucianism as the form of official education for the samurai class, as I

have previously stated, education for purposes of reading and arithmetic was the product of the people, and it not imposed from above. That's why I say the cultural level achieved in the Tokugawa era is part of the process that led to the creation to modern culture.

Moreover, what I call "gendai," or the contemporary in Japan, commenced around 1920, because that was the beginning of the manifestation of mass culture. Two newspapers in particular, the *Mainichi* and the *Asahi*, became nationwide publications around the time of the Great Kanto Earthquake with each paper claiming to have thirty million readers each. Similarly, the mass monthly magazine named "King" was inaugurated in 1925. By the next year it was printing over ten thousand copies a month. I define mass culture as representing a system of mass production, mass propaganda and mass consumption. It continues today in spite of the fact that there have been two major disruptions. One was Japan's defeat in World War II, and the second was the advent of the
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post-Cold War period circa 1990.

4) In the article "Rewriting the Literary History of Japanese Modernism" (*Pacific Rim Modernisms*, University of Toronto Press, forthcoming) you state "New Sensationalism" (*shinkankaku*) came to be one of the key elements in Japanese modernism. What is "New Sensationalism"? In this same article, you refer to the "centralization of the concept of life in the Taishô period" (*Taishô seimei-shugi;* Taishô life centrism) as one of the discourses that

flourished right after the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). How do these concepts ("New Sensationalism" and "Taishô life-centrism") relate to Japanese modernism?

Suzuki: Almost all literary critics in Japan from the late 1920s until today have seen "New Sensationalism" (*shinkankaku*) as the key element in Japanese modernism. This is true in spite of the fact that new sensationalism was slighted or largely ignored after the Second World War. Starting in the 1970s, however, it once again emerged as the key concept for defining the literary scene of 1920s when, in the 1980s, there was a movement to rethink the culture of Japan in the twenties.

New Sensationalism refers to a new mode of literary expression. It was a style rich in metaphor. It first appeared in the literary magazine *Bungei jidai* (Age of Literature) that was started after the Great Kanto Earthquake under the sponsorship of the publishing house of Bungeishunjû. Kataoka Teppei (1894-1944), Kawabata Yasunari（1899-1972）and Yokomitsu Riichi（1898-1947）each demonstrated this new mode of expression in their fiction, and they addressed the meaning of the new method in various essays.

Even today, it is widely held that the literary history of Japanese Modernism began after the Great Kanto Earthquake. I tried to completely change this timeframe from 1923 to the turn to the century in my essay, "Rewriting the Literary History of Japanese Modernism". If my thinking is correct, then the significance of "New Sensationalism" in literary history is also subject to revision and needs to be rewritten.

As members of the coterie magazine *Bungei jidai* that created "New Sensationalism," Kataoka Teppei and Kawabata Yasunari advanced a notion of literature as a sort of general expression of "life" after the manner of "Taishô Vitalist" thought. Only Yokomitsu Riichi insisted on giving more material form to the phrase, in spite of his allegiance to the symbolist aspects inherent in "Taishô Vitalism."

As I said previously, the impressionist movement emerged in Japan and became wide spread in literary circles at the turn of the twentieth century, and I have advocated a new point-of-view concerning the timing of the onset of Japanese modernism. These are ideas that I presented in 2006 in my articles on the reformulation of the concept of "Art" in which artists turned away from traditional concepts and moved toward the formation of symbolist

aesthetics in Japan under the influence of the European symbolist movement that had emerged in Europe after the demise of the naturalist movement in the nineteenth century.

As I have also said, when Kunikida Doppo strove at the turn of the century to record his impressions of the ever-changing scene in Musashino, he sought to capture the Life of Nature. His literary "sketches" on the Life of Nature stand at the very forefront of literary Taishô Vitalism, or Life-centrism. In Taishô Vitalism that includes the principle of Universal Life, all phenomena were thought to be manifestations of Universal life—including one's inner life.

The principle of Universal Life in thought and philosophy also began to come to the fore at around the same time—simultaneous to new movements in philosophy in Europe and America led by William James, Henri Bergson and various currents within German Lebenphilosophy. Using traditional notions in Taoism, Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism, Shintô, and even Christian thought as receptors, and mixing in ideas from biological thought, these new trends in philosophy and aesthetics converged like a create great current to create what I call Taishô vitalism. In fact, almost all thinkers, artists, poets and novelists who started their careers in the decade between the turn of the twentieth century and the 1910s reveal this trend in their works. Taisho vitalism was an amalgam of thought and artistic methods from East and West. What caused this trend to emerge was the crisis of everyday living brought on by the Russo-Japanese War and the rapid development of mechanist civilization and modern urbanization.

5) How was European modernism received in Japan? Among the European vanguard movements (*Sturm and Drang* and the German Early Romantics, realism, symbolism, futurism, expressionism, dadaism, surrealism), was there one in particular that bore the greatest influence on Japanese modernism? The "Futurist Manifesto" of Marinetti, published in Paris in February of 1909, was immediately commented upon in the Japanese press and received its first translation into Japanese, by Mori Ogai, in the month following its publication in France. With regard to other European manifestos and vanguard movements, was the reception as immediate as in the case of Marinetti's Futurism? Does European modernism exercise greater influence on Japanese modernism, or vice-versa? In

what ways does Japanese Modernism, in poetry, resemble and differ from Western, European Modernism?

Suzuki: Yes, European modernist movements in the fine arts, including literature, had a big impact on Japanese art. But, before addressing that issue, let me explain about the general use of the word "modernism" in the fine arts and literary history of Europe.

It can be said that the modernization of the human spirit in Europe had three fundamental tendencies: one, rationalism in the narrow sense of Deism; two, Romanticism as a movement designed to liberate the mind from Christian thought by borrowing heavily from Greek and Roman mythology or accounts of local gods and spirits; and three, empiricism, experimentalism and/or materialism.

Romanticism placed great value on the importance of creative originality and imagination in all of the fine arts including literature. Seen from this point-of-view, even the realist stream in literary history—namely, naturalism which was influenced by the natural sciences—looks very much like Romanticism. At the same time, the Romanticist spirit has an anti-modernist look to it, because it protests against rationalism and empiricism in the development of modern civilization. Also, as I said before about the history of fine arts in Europe, the impressionist movement that emerged in France in the 1860s looks very much like the inaugural movement in the larger movement of "modernism". Indeed, it can be said that impressionism based on the reality of five senses of human nature arose simultaneous to the emergence of empiricism.

Romanticism and the realist method in aesthetics were easily incorporated by Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, the movement in Japan was biased toward the representation of realistic scenes and real emotions; moreover, it was lacking in the spirit of creative originality and imagination. There were two reasons for this bias, in my opinion. One, Japanese artists embraced romanticism and realism at the one and the same time. And two, the reception of these two movements was colored by the high evaluation attached to real emotions and oriental empiricism, both of which developed out of the secularism of the Tokugawa era.

The Japanese embrace of impressionism in the fine arts, and of symbolism in the arts of

Europe, at the turn of the century had the effect of causing the literary style of "naturalism" to tilt sharply toward impressionism and symbolism, thereby creating a "new naturalism" that is distinctive to Japan. Moreover, the great current of Taishô vitalism was also able to incorporate and swallow up, one after the other, all of the European vanguard movements that you cite in your question. Nearly all of these vanguard movements had their roots in the theory of vitalism, especially in Bergson's thought, that swept turn-of-the-century Europe. These traces are readily apparent in the literary scene at that time, and we can find may examples of works influenced by the methods of Futurism or Cubism in poetry, so-called post-impressionism in England, expressionism in *tanka*, and stream of consciousness in the case of novels.

However, my opinions are still only a guideline. I started using this approach to the literary arts of 1900 to 1920 in the 1980s, and only succeeded in clarifying the framework of my ideas by 2007. Recently, younger researchers have started to follow my approach, but their research has yet to reach full flower.

6) What is the relationship between European Modernism and Japanese Modernism? You showed in some articles that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the poet Matsuo Bashô (1644-1694) received renewed interest and attention, both in Japan and in Europe. The Japanese poet Kanbara Ariake (1876-1952), in the introduction of *Shunchôshû* (Collection of Spring Birds, 1905), asserts: "When Bashô emerged in the Genroku era, he succeeded in creating a certain spirit by endowing *sekku* (short verses) with the Zen philosophy of Genchi and interweaving with it the ordinary. This is the closest to symbolism in our literature". The poet Hagiwara Sakutarô (1886-1942), in the article "The Essence of Symbols", 1926), claims that though nineteenth-century French symbolism led by Mallarmé revolved around the themes of 'mysticism, enchantment, ghostliness, and Eastern fatalism,' today's European modernism was finally understanding its essence intuitively and approaching symbolism in the East, represented by Bashô. In the words of the expressionist poet Iwan Goll (1891-1950), "the model for symbolism is the Japanese *hokku*." Could you please comment on the influence of classical literature, in this case, the *haiku* of Bashô, on European Modernism and on Japanese Modernism?

Suzuki: One of the goals that I have endeavored to achieve is to get people to think of avant-garde trends in tandem with the way in which the classic works were reevaluated in different eras. As I said before, when European Romanticism and realism as a literary method were accepted in Japan, critics looked to the Man'yo-shu and the Tale of Genji as precursors. So that is one pattern. Another is the case of what happened when European symbolist movement arrived in Japan at the turn of the new century. Kanbara Ariake explained European symbolism by citing Bashô's *haikai* as a good example of it. He sought to write his own poems in this style, thus ushering in a new interpretation of Bashô's *haikai*, and at the same time, finding the means to translate and render European symbolism into the Japanese style. By refusing to see Bashô's *haikai* as lessons in Zen as had been the longstanding practice, in his introduction of *Shunchôshû* (1905), Kanbara reclaimed Bashô's poetry as words that reflect a deep and mystical spirit. He argued that by using Buddhist words Bashô sought to introduce a mystical tone into his poetry that presented the joys and sorrows of life.

For generations *haikai* had been used by common people as a form of word play and for introducting a comical or humorous tone into poetry. Even Bashô, who considered the traditional spirit of poetry to be very important and who was respected like a saint in *haikai* circles, wrote his works in this same secular spirit. Although Masaoka Shiki launched a movement to revive of *haikai* as "haiku" in the 1890s, and he sought liberate this literary fine art from the traditions of the past, he considered the style of Yosa Buson (1716-1783) another major *haikai* poet active in the Tokugawa era—important because of the clarity of Buson's impressions. Thus, Kanbara Akiake is the first person in modern poetry circles to have effected change in the evaluation of Basho's *haikai*, including the shift from a comical to a mystic tone.

Six years later, the poet Noguchi Yonejirô (1975-1947) was invited to give a series of lectures in London. He had already established a reputation as a distinguished Japanese poet who wrote in English during his career as a young vagabond in America. He was now back in Japan and was a professor at Keiô University. He introduced Bashô's *haikai* to foreign audiences as a kind of poetry possessed of a deep spirit expressed in relatively easy

language. In doing do so, he was sharply contrasting it with English verse in which poetry relied heavily on rhetoric, and he was challenging notions circulated by Japanologists like Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850-1935) who treated *haiku* as word play on the order of an epigram. Among the young modernist poets who responded favorably to Noguchi was William Butler Yeats (1865-1939). Yeats attached great value to the spiritualist dimension of the poetry and paintings of William Blake (1757-1827). Likewise with Arthur Symons (1865-1945) who introduced the French symbolist movement to the world. It was not long afterward that, influenced by Japanese *haiku*, modernist poets in England and the United States created the style of "imagism" in poetry as an avant-garde movement in English letters.

Meanwhile in Japan, the movement to honor Bashô as an oriental symbolist imbued with the spirit of Zen took over poetry circles in a big way. In particular Ôta Mizuho (1876-1955), the leader of a group of *tanka* poets patronized by Iwanami Shigeo (1881-1966), founder of the Iwanami Publishing House, started a team study on Bashô's haikai from 1920 to 1926, engaging young scholars such as Abe Yoshishige (1883-1966), Abe Jorô (1883-1959), Watsuji Tetsurô (1889-1960) and the literary giant Kôda Rohan (1867-1947). At the same time, Shioi Ukô (1869-1913), a poet and a scholar of Japanese poetry who was influenced first by European Romanticism and then symbolism, published a series of study books from 1897 to 1907 that examined in great detail and reevaluated the worth of the *Shinkokin wakashû*. The *Shinkokin wakashû* was one of the official court anthologies of *tanka* verse edited in the medieval age, and it is full of poems imbued with the spirit of Buddhist, especially Zen, thought. It had long been neglected and overshadowed by the *Kokin-wakashû* which was seen as the model for the composition of *tanka* during Tokugawa and Meiji periods. Similarly, Okazaki Yoshie (1892-1982), a young scholar who was highly sympathetic to turn-of-the-century German aesthetics that emphasized the importance of mood in art, began to focus on "*yugen*". *Yugen* pointed to something that lay mysteriously behind the scenes, especially in thought influenced by Buddhism. It was the product of thinking done by medieval intellectuals who were influenced by Zen, and it is one of the Japanese aesthetic principles that ranks on a par with the equally important concept of "*aware*." This current in aesthetics that attached great importance to medieval

feelings—namely, *Nihon bungei-gaku*—provided a framework for interpreting the words *aware* and *mono no aware* as an elusive and evanescent mood in spite of the fact that the words originally only referred to human beings and the emotion of "ah-ness" experienced by a person in relation to some person or thing.

Until the poet Hagiwara Sakutarô (1886-1942) wrote his article on "The Essence of Symbols" (1926), these new movements dominated poetry circles and Japanese literary studies from turn of the century to the 1920s. They are reflective, moreover, of the Taishô vitalist movement in which literature was expected to be an expression of the inner life and writings to be a symbol of universal life.

In his essay, Hagiwara also suggests that the French symbolism led by the poet Stephan Mallarmé (1842-1898) was influenced by Oriental mysticism or "yugen." As a matter of fact, Buddhist thought did influence Mallarmé, although in his correspondence Mallarmé wrote he did not know much about it. My view is that the Buddhist influence is confined to only one point in his case. I conjecture that, upon hearing from a Buddhist friend that the Buddhist notion of eternal life was achieved through the death of one's life in this world, Mallarmé seized upon the idea that an "absolute" poem was born only through the death of poet. This idea is put forth, for example, in his incomplete prose poem "Igiture". Mallarmé was a poet who dreamed of making the world into the festival domain of the poem and who saw the Absolute Book as an alternative of the Bible. He spoke of this dream of spiritual revolution as a sort of religion or cult in his lecture on "Music and literature" delivered in London in 1894.

In short, the word "Eastern mysticism" used in Hagiwara's opinion on French symbolism and which you cited in your question refers to the hypothesis that appears in an essay by Iwan Goll (1891-1950), the Alsatian poet who was active among the avant-garde poets in France and Germany. And the statement that ". . . today's European modernism was finally understanding its essence intuitively and approaching symbolism in the East, represented by Bashô" is really quite beside the point, even if European modernists did have familiarity with Japanese haiku in the 1920s.

7) What is the role of subjectivity in Japanese modernism?

Suzuki: It is a major problem of in the study and appreciation of Japanese modernism. It is also one reason why it is often misunderstood. The chief reason why I set literary impressionism as the starting point for literary modernism in Japan is because it is relatively easy to draw comparisons between the history of literature, the fine arts and philosophy in the case of impressionism. Take the case of the history of fine art. If we view the first step toward the modernism of French impressionism of the 1860s as preceded by "pleinairisme," based on one European theory, it is relatively easy to follow the subsequent movements in the twentieth century. Or take the case of the history of philosophy. The time in late nineteenth-century Europe when philosophers focused their attention on the nature of consciousness can be said to be the starting point for the twentieth-century philosophy of phenomenology.

In case of literary impressionism, it is the impression that reigns over the world of the writer. Both the subjectivity of the writer and the objectivity of object that writer wants to write about are lost. There is a famous sentence that is often quoted in Japan: "If you see the sun as green in reality, then you can draw it green." This is declaration of impressionism that was put forth in 1910 by Takamura Kotarô (1883-1956), a famous poet and sculptor in modern Japan. In this case, the green sun is logically said to be the pure object in the subject. Or, to put it another way, the subject gets lost in the object.

Let me cite a far more conventional example. You say, "Ah, what clean and refreshing mountain air!" In this instance, is the "clean and refreshing" that you express your subjective impression? Or is it an attribute of the mountain air? It's not possible to say which it is. Thus, logically speaking, the statement "clean and refreshing mountain air" is neither subjective nor objective. Rather, subject and object exist in an undifferentiated state. In other words, a state in which subject and object are one.

But when the subject steps away from her or his impression of an object, then subjectivity is recovered, and the person thinks that the experience was just an illusion, or it revealed the essence of the object to some degree. In that case, impression turns into a memory in her or his subjectivity. Once that happens, subjects look upon impressions as phenomena, and they imagine the essence that lies behind them. In short, written

phenomena become symbols of their essence to some degree. Thus, in the case of impressionism, logically speaking, subjectivity is lost.

In Japanese, one meaning of the word "life" (*inochi, seimei*) is essence. Thus, Universal Life means the essence of the universe. To capture the essence of the universe is to capture Universal Life. Written phenomena that capture this essence by losing the subjectivity of the writer have to be a symbol of that essence or of its life. Thus, to write in this vein and capture the essence of the world means to present a symbol of the essence of the world or of Universal Life. In short, to some degree expression *is* capable of being understood as a symbol for Universal Life. This is the linguistic reason why Taisho Life-centrism arose in Japan. And it is a fact that the many trends toward impressionism and/or Taishô Vitalism inclined toward this sort of reductionism concerning essence or "Universal Life."

Yokomitsu Riichi fully understood this system of Taishô vitalist thinking when he declared in his essay "New Sensationalism" that it is now commonplace to jump into a material object and catch its essence. He insisted on constructing a material work as a symbol that gathers together the "pure objects caught in subject." This phrase—"pure objects caught in subject"—means the essentials of material objects or impressions caught by losing subjectivity. To construct a material work as a symbol is the point that sets his essay apart from the ideas put forth by Kawabata Yasunari and other followers of Taishô vitalism. At the risk of repeating myself, let me say once again that the narrowest definition of Japanese modernism rests on the constructionism of material form—starting from a mere dot of ink. However, the Marxist movement that arose in the 1920s and again in the years after World War II misleads us by forcing us to look at these impressions, or the "pure objects in subject" captured by losing subjectivity.

8) Why has the work "Remon" (Lemon, 1925) by Kajii Motojirô become one of the major references in Japanese Modernism? What is the story "Remon" about?

Suzuki; "Remon" is one of the masterpieces by Kajii Motojiro (1901-1932), who died at age thirty-one and whose reputation rests on twenty-five short stories. His fame grew rapidly

after World War II, and his works have exercised considerable influence on poets and novelists working in the postwar period. From the 1930s to 1970s, to know Kajii Motojiro's works was to put one's finger on the central but hidden core of contemporary Japanese fiction. Especially after the Second World War, almost without exception, major novelists declared their respect for Kajii's style. However, the more critics wrote on Kajii, the more their opinions began to run counter to each other. Some called his work western-style modernism and likened it to surrealism. Others said it was traditional easter-style symbolism as in the style of *sumie* or ink-brush painting, or more specifically the style of Nanga painting which came from the southern part of China in the Sung dynasty. Another set of critics said it was merely a sort of old-school I-novel reworked in a more modern fashion. Symbolist vs. realist, prose poem vs. intellectual prose, and so forth and so on—each critic had a different estimate of the value of his work.

If we can resolve the problem of how to understand this confusing welter of ideas about Kajii, and about how to properly evaluate his works, that might open up new perspectives on the literary history of modern and contemporary Japan. I have been wrestling with these questions for more than three decades since my youth, and in recent years I think I have come close to getting to the bottom of the matter in my dissertation, *Kajii Motojirô no sekai* (The World of Kajii Motojirô) published in 2001.

The story of "Remon," or "The Lemon," is really very simple. One day a poor and ill young man buys a lemon, and he feels supremely rejuvenated by it. His idea is that a commonplace piece of fruit is the best thing in the world, and he struts about Kyoto with it. Finally, he walks into Maruzen, a shop dealing in Western stationary, fancy goods and imported books. He goes to the second floor where the imported books are for sale. Then he takes a look at the paintings in art books. He makes a heap out of the books. Finally he puts the lemon on top of the pile that he has created. He feels as though the lemon—this commonplace piece of fruit--is reigning over the great masterpieces of the world. Suddenly he gets the idea that he is a gangster who has come to plant a bomb in the store. He walks out the door imagining that his lemon bomb is about to explode.

That's all there is to the story!

Perhaps the narrator thought of the lemon as grenade with a timing device. I don't know if there really is some sort of bomb like it or not. What I do know, however, is that the story is written in a style constructed along modernist concepts nearly identical with Yokomitsu Riichi's. Kajii learned this concept of art from an essay "The Essence of Beauty" (Bi no honshitsu) written in 1923 by the famous philosopher Nishida Kitarô (1870-1945). Moreover, he looked on Yokomitsu as one of his rivals. This is the first problem that one has to contend with in evaluating Kajii's style.

The second one is that "Remon " is written in a format that is somewhat like that of the I-novel, although the outlook, age and status of the young protagonist are not clearly described. We can recognize that the setting for the story is Kyoto, and we can guess that young man is a student at national higher school or university from the manner of his lifestyle. Actually, the style of the story is more nearly like an essay more than a work of fiction. We could easily call it a "state-of-mind novel" (*shinkyô shôsetsu*), a particular type of I-novel in Japan that dates from 1925. Indeed it has been said of this style that it is a form of the I-novel "that is peculiar to Japan". Its counterpart is not easily found in the fiction of the West in modern times or even in China today.

Thus, the I-novel form produced by European Romanticism—such as Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werhters* of 1874—arrived in Meiji Japan and was transformed to a new style influenced by new philosophical notion of "stream of consciousness" and the impressionism boom. Although this style was employed in writing stories and novels, it was often criticized as non-fictional. In fact, works in this style sometimes appeared in magazines in the columns or pages devoted to essays. This style was recognized as a quasi-I novel and was given the name of "state-of-mind novel" at just about the same time that Bashô's poetry was also undergoing reevaluation in 1925. This is the second problem related to Kajii's style. The literary history of modern Japan has been waiting for an answer to this question for quite sometime.

The third problem focuses on the intensity of the feelings that the protagonist experiences in the moment when he first encounters the lemon. In this passage, each sensation is clearly delineated in terms of looks, shape, color, smell and coolness of touch. It also evokes memories of a Chinese poem and imaginings about the sky in California. The

passage relies heavily on sensory apprehension of reality although not all of the five senses are called upon. There is nothing auditory or gustatory. In fact, the latter is relegated to another passage.

We might call this passage an example of the “cubism of sensation”. Kajii enjoyed looking at many avant-garde paintings from Europe, of course, and he tried to capture in his prose the joy of the sensations he experienced as he walked about—without constructing a unified image of the street. Instead his focus is scattered. He lets his eyes capture various sights and his ears various sounds. Do you know of the “cubism of sensation” in any other works of world literature?

The fourth question that this story poses is this: to feel that a commonplace item like a lemon is the best thing in the world is a perversion of values. It is “nonsense.” From the 1920s to 1935 there was a “nonsense” boom in mass culture, as seen in films from America starring Charles Chaplin (1889-1977), Buster Keeton (1895-1966) and Harold Lloyd (1893-1971), or in the many party jokes that appeared in magazines consumed by modern boys and girls. Such *nansensu* was generated for mass consumption and to give everyone a moment of joy. Ordinary characters associated with mass culture appear in some works by Kajii, for example, who borrowed this tactic from detective fiction. This also holds true for Yokomitsu Riichi, although Yokomitsu’s works aspired to a higher or purer level of literary quality. Kajii’s best friend in literary circles was, moreover, the young poet Kitagawa Fuyuhiko (1900-1990) who wrote some “nonsense poems” in which the poet enjoys a humorous illusory moment. Take, for example, his poem “Rush hour”: “My finger got punched with my ticket.”

In “Remon,” however, Kajii pursues nonsense far more aggressively by emphasizing the feeling of perversion or sedition that the lemon gives in the face of the bleak world that surrounds the protagonist. Thus, the work incorporates the will to revolt against all values—against any and everything thought to be good and beautiful. Although it does not mention them, “Remon” evokes images of bomb-throwing anarchists brought to bay by Bolshevists in Japan being hotly pursued by the police. Other subliminal influences from the cultural zeitgeist of the times are, for example, the German expressionist film *Das Kabinett des Doktor Caligari* and Dadaism.

The fifth problem related to Kajii's works extends far beyond the parameters of the "Remon." In spite of the fact that Kajii was influenced by the Bashô boom and was strongly attracted to Bashô's haiku, he refused to align himself with that movement. Instead he sought different state of mind more fitting to contemporary times. It comes across to us today as a sort of nascent existentialism. Over time Kajii gradually grew more critical of the individual whose being is taken up with the search for delightful moments in which one seeks to escape from the ennui of quotidian life into intoxicated illusions about life. Seen against the larger backdrop of the history of thought in modern and contemporary Japan, we can see Kajii's critique as a departure from and rejection of the Taishô Life-centrism that so many intellectuals enthusiastically embraced.

9) After having lived through a brief period of democracy in the Taishô era (1912-1926), Japan entered a period of a huge military build-up and expansionist policies at the beginning of the Showa period (1926-1989). This was a time of wide-scale press censorship, which only receded after the Second World War. What interesting works, in terms of literature and/or art, were produced in Japan during this period?

Suzuki: Who has been teaching you the history modern and contemporary Japan? Expansionist policies clearly date from Meiji Japan, especially in the case of the "annexation" of Korea in 1910, although Japan failed to occupy Siberia in 1917 and the Shandong Peninsula starting from 1927 when it sent troops to interfere in both revolutions in Russia and China. However, you neglect to make any mention of the disarmament treaty of 1930 that was signed in London by Japan, the United States and other governments and that was ratified by the Diet in 1934. Clearly, anti-militarist forces were alive in Japan until then. We can easily identify many debates over the peaceful and military uses of power in the press. The rapid rise to power of the militarists comes around 1935. And press censorship of anti-war or liberalist opinions starts around 1938, following on the heels of active suppression of the left wing in 1928.

Your version of the history of modern and contemporary Japan is basically scripted by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. It reflects an American strategy to

punish Japan for having sent troops to the Shandong Peninsula starting in 1927 and for destroying the Washington system created in 1921 under the hegemony of the United States. It ignores the historical process by which Japan went to war in the Second World War.

Starting from the war with China in 1937, the Japanese government saw itself as waving a flag of protest and protection against the communist powers, even as it adopted a sort of state socialist policy at home. It came under severe criticism from the United States and England after the Nanjing massacre at the end of 1937. Starting from the autumn of 1938, the Japanese flag switched directions and unfurled itself as the symbol of building its new world order in East Asia. Even in the case of Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere in East Asia, "each nation under the one roof" was not only a slogan designed for Japanese imperialist convenience during the Second World War, but it also included a policy of multi-culturalism that began with the building of the Manchuria State by a puppet government from 1932. This is evident, for example, in the language policy adopted for the Manchurian state. The official state languages were Chinese and Japanese. In areas where Mongolians were living, it was all three—Chinese, Japanese and Mongolian; as well as Russian in areas where Russians resided. Protection of Islamic and Tungusic minorities was undertaken, and Jewish refugees were accepted. The rationale behind this multi-culturalism in the case of Japanese imperialism governing multi-ethnic groups in this area were the ideas reminiscent of the declaration of cooperation among "the five nations" advanced by Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925)—as well as the desire to protect Japan from criticism from across the world.

These policies puzzled many people in East Asia including Japanese, and they came hand-in-hand with such ideas as "overcoming the modern" (*kindai no chôkoku*) and strong feelings of resentment among Asians directed against Western imperialism. Even among advocates of left-wing politics, there were those who dreamed of creating an economic bloc in East Asia in opposition to Western economic power. At the same time, as Japanization policies were instituted in domains such as Korea and Taiwan, linguistic education was limited to Japanese from circa 1939. The dream of constructing a utopia led by Japan

proved to be merely self-serving, and it was riddled with the contractions that I have just now cited.

Even the fanatic Tennô-ism that spread rapidly after 1935 rested upon a kind of universalism. We find this in statements like “the tennô is the outcome of universal life,” as claimed by Kakei Katsuhiko (1872-1961), professor of constitutional law at Tokyo Imperial University. At first his theory was used to support Shinto-ist power in the 1920s; then, the rise of the fanatic young military officers and right-wing thinkers who led Japan into the fascism of the 1930s; and finally, after their decline, the fanaticism that required everyone in Japan to devote their lives to the Tennô, the over-riding symbol of the life of the Japanese nation.

Do you know the phrase that states “Buddha, Confucius, Socrates and Jesus—they are all babies of the Tennô”? No, it’s not a crazy joke or nonsensical allegory. The phrase appears in a slim book expressing absolute loyalty to the Tennô written by Commander Sugimoto Gorô, who died on the Southern China Front in 1937 and who was deified as a war hero. It was widely known and read in Japan during the war. The logic of why the Buddha, Confucius, Socrates and Jesus are all babies of the tennô rests upon the idea that the Japanese emperor is like the Universal Life that produces all things, including all human beings. This kind of universalism had its philosophical roots in Taishô vitalism. I discuss and disclose the real nature of modern and contemporary Japanese history in my book *Nihon no bunka nashonarizumu* (Cultural Nationalism in Japan, Heibonsha, 2005), and I go into even further detail on the subject in my forthcoming book *Jiyû e no Michi* (The Way to Liberty).

Yes, it is true that, in spite of the fact that Taishô vitalism flourished during the years from 1900 to the 1930s, and it yielded many new fruits in the form of literature, fine art, and thought, it also bloomed with black flowers in the season of death in which so many people devoted their lives to the greater Life of the nation or universe. This is the key to rethinking modern and contemporary Japan. Under pressure from militarism, Japanese literary modernism in this period appeared in many refracted styles. Like many “post-modern” works, these works are full of allegory and self parody, and they use complex narrative styles borrowed from traditional oral literature, etc.

Moreover, these richly allegorical styles succeeded at a time of press censorship by GHQ, or the Occupation led by the United States Army after World War II, and by Japanese police power. These double press censorships were undertaken, ironically, for the purpose of building a new democratic state.

In summary, then, the Japanese movement in cultural modernism evolved from the end of the nineteenth century by importing Western modernisms through "receptors" that derive from Japanese traditional thought and lifestyle and using them to change or redefine the conditions of Japanese life. Nothing can be accepted without a receptor. But the receptor carries its inherent bias. The Tennô system in modern Japan was designed along the lines of the constitutional monarchy of Prussia, but it harks back to the *ritsuryô* legal codes of ancient times that were adjusted to meet the needs of the modern nation state. Even a concept as famous as *bushidô* was reconstructed along with the "Mikado Worship" of the Meiji period as a lifestyle of Japanese males living in imperial times—much like the concept of gentlemanship was it was defined in Victorian England.

In particular, after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, we find a proliferation of books on *bushidô*—ten books on the subject and two series of anthologies. The most famous of these is *Bushidô, the Soul of Japan: An Exposition of Japanese Thought* written in English by Nitobe Inazô (1862-1933). The *bushidô* movement is an example of "invention of tradition." As a matter of fact, we cannot find the word *bushidô* appearing in any dictionary before 1900, as Basil Hall Chamberlain pointed out in his essay, "The Invention of a New Religion," of 1912. The word that was typically used to describe the life of the samurai was "*shidô*" (士道) which originated from *shitaifu* in Chinese, the term for a government official. This is not to say that it is impossible to find instances in the Tokugawa period when the word *bushidô* was used. A Japanese researcher eager to check on the incidence of usage of the term found that, in publications from the two hundred and seventy years of the Tokugawa period, the term appears in less than thirty volumes, or one book in every ten years. Moreover, it was used in three contexts: one, to praise and wax nostalgic for the brave behavior of samurai in the period of the Warring States from the mid-15th to mid-16th century; two, to champion Confucianism which rejected such samurai customs as following one's lord to the grave as brutal; and three, to describe the code of manners observed by

government officials in serving the lords of their clan (*han*) during the years of Pax Tokugawana. In short, *bushidô* was not used with any frequency in the Tokugawa era, and it did not constitute a conceptual idea at the time. Even *hara-kiri* was not imbued with special significance. It was simply a death penalty that could be imposed on members of the samurai class.

In an analogous way, Japanese literary modernism was open to many new movements from Europe but it reformulated them along lines compatible with traditional Japanese thought and life style by changing the meaning of those concepts. In capturing the symbolist movements from England, France and Germany—each with their different emphases—Bashô's *haikai* style acted as a receptor but, in the process, it was re-evaluated as having a deeply mystical mood. In writing about the life of nature as a means to introduce impressionism and stream of consciousness, a commonly used essay style from the Tokugawa period that recorded impressions from everyday life functioned as a receptor. Or in embracing cubism in French painting, a young Japanese writer working in obscurity in 1925 invented the "cubism of sensations" as his methodology.

Japanese literary modernism embraces works from not only the period when it was in full flower but also its refracted styles, which are very interesting to read and study. Many charming passages locked in untranslated passages of poems, stories and novels still wait to be introduced to audiences abroad.

Thank you very much for your questions. (May, 2008)