



CORNELL UNIVERSITY EAST ASIA PAPERS

THE DIARY OF A
JAPANESE INNKEEPER'S DAUGHTER

Translated by Miwa Kai

Edited and Annotated by
Robert J. Smith
Kazuko Smith



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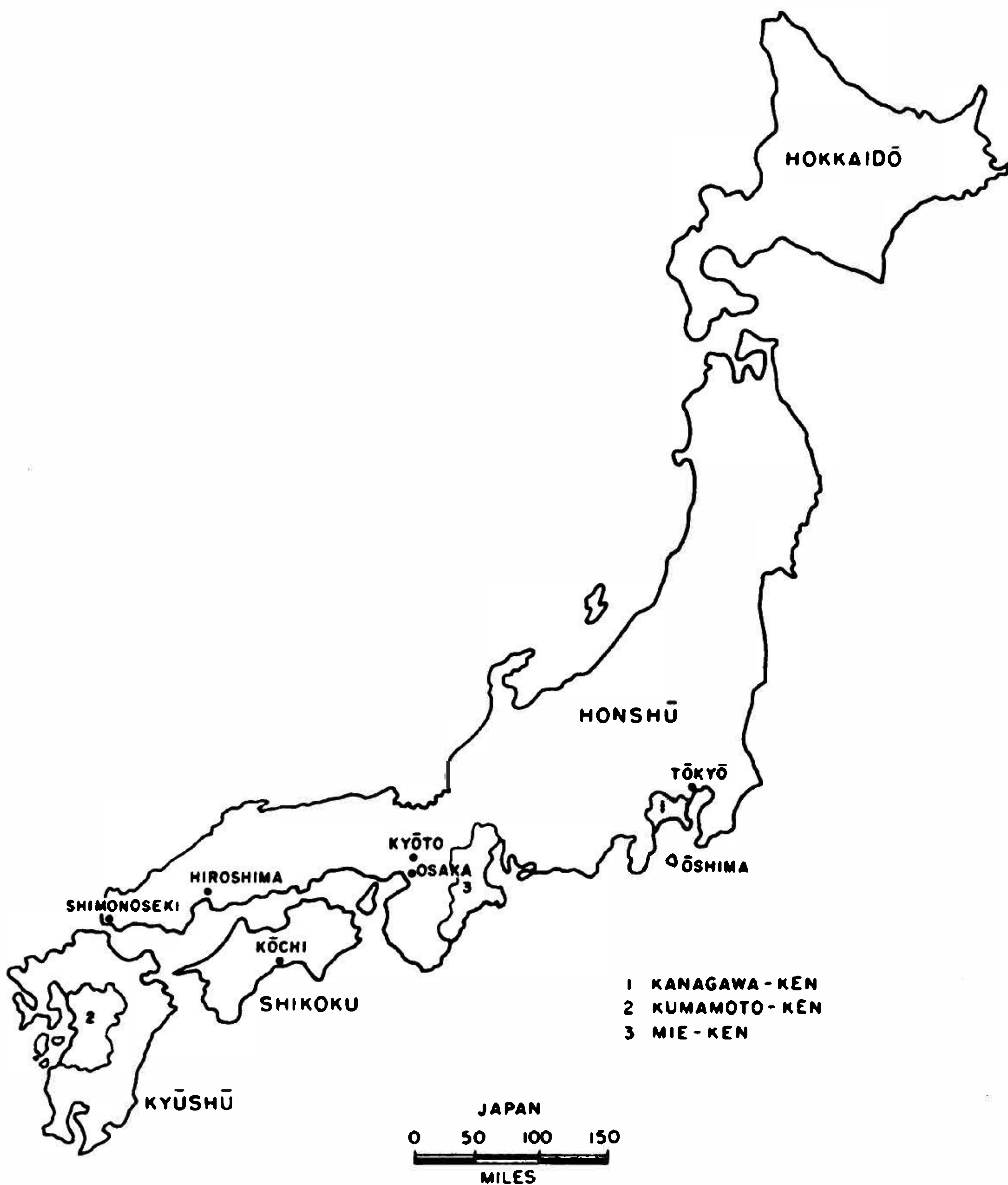
Miwa Kai, the original translator of the diary, graciously offered to read our version of the manuscript. Without her invaluable assistance many errors and ambiguities would have stood uncorrected and unresolved. We wish to thank her for her willingness to turn once again to a task so long delayed in its completion.

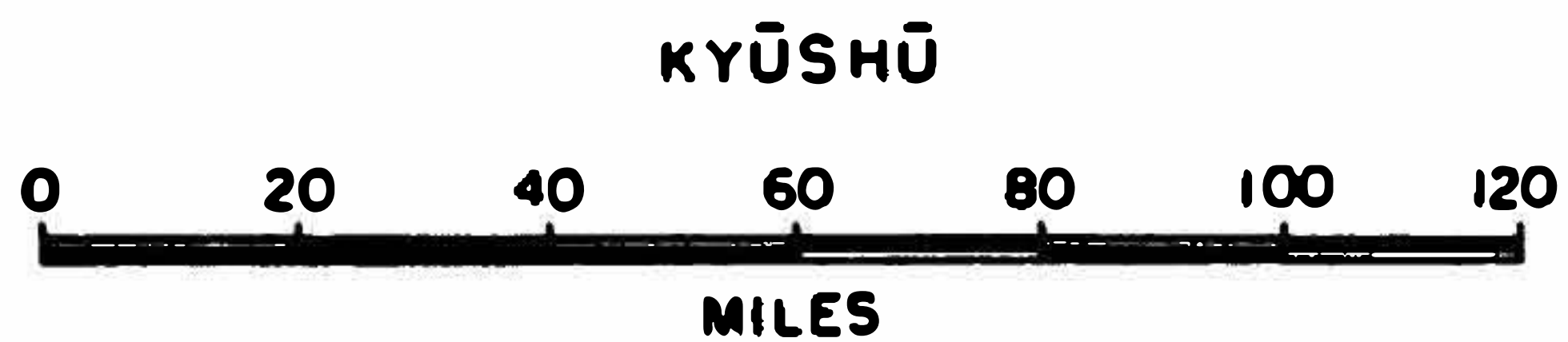
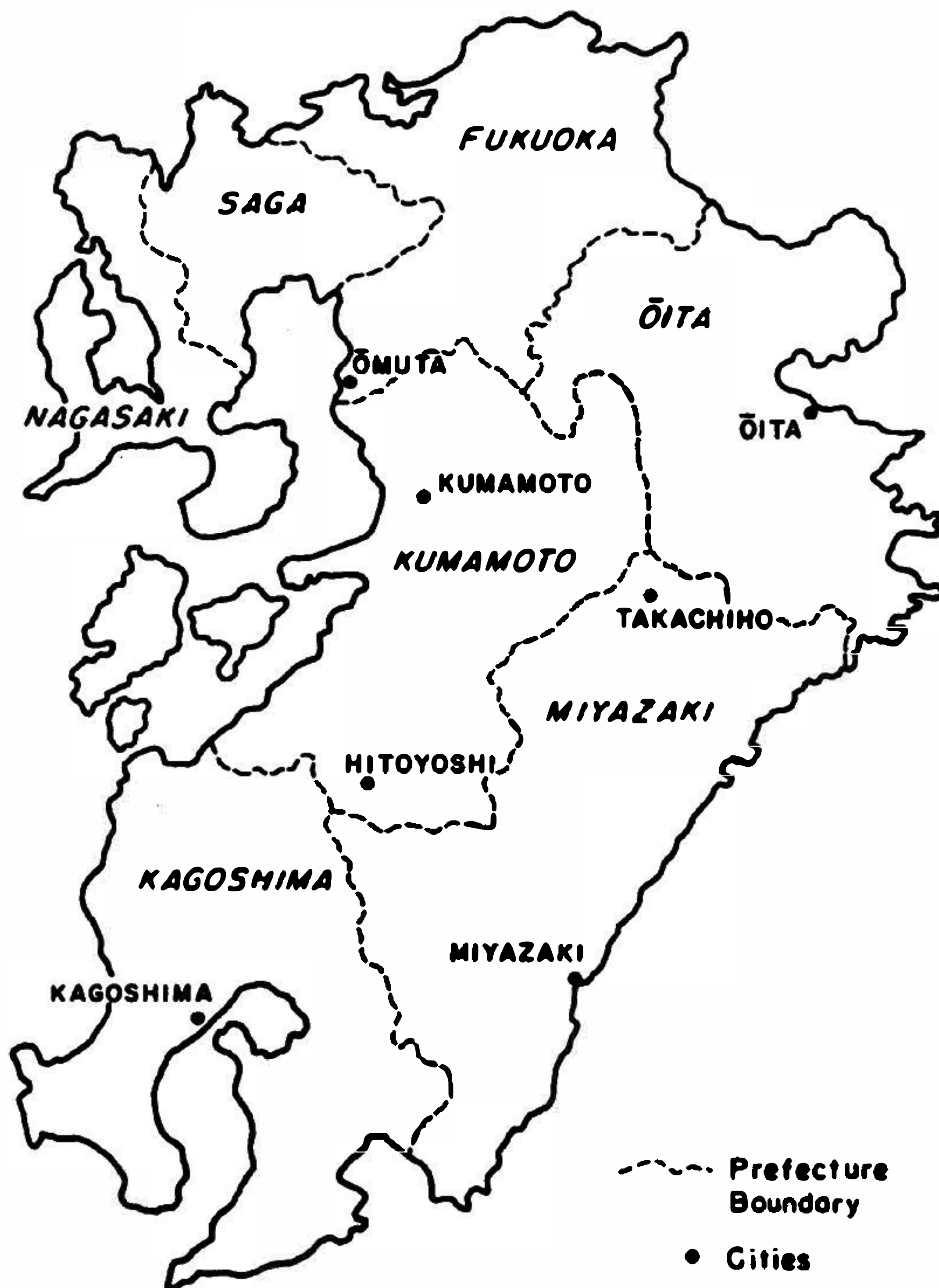
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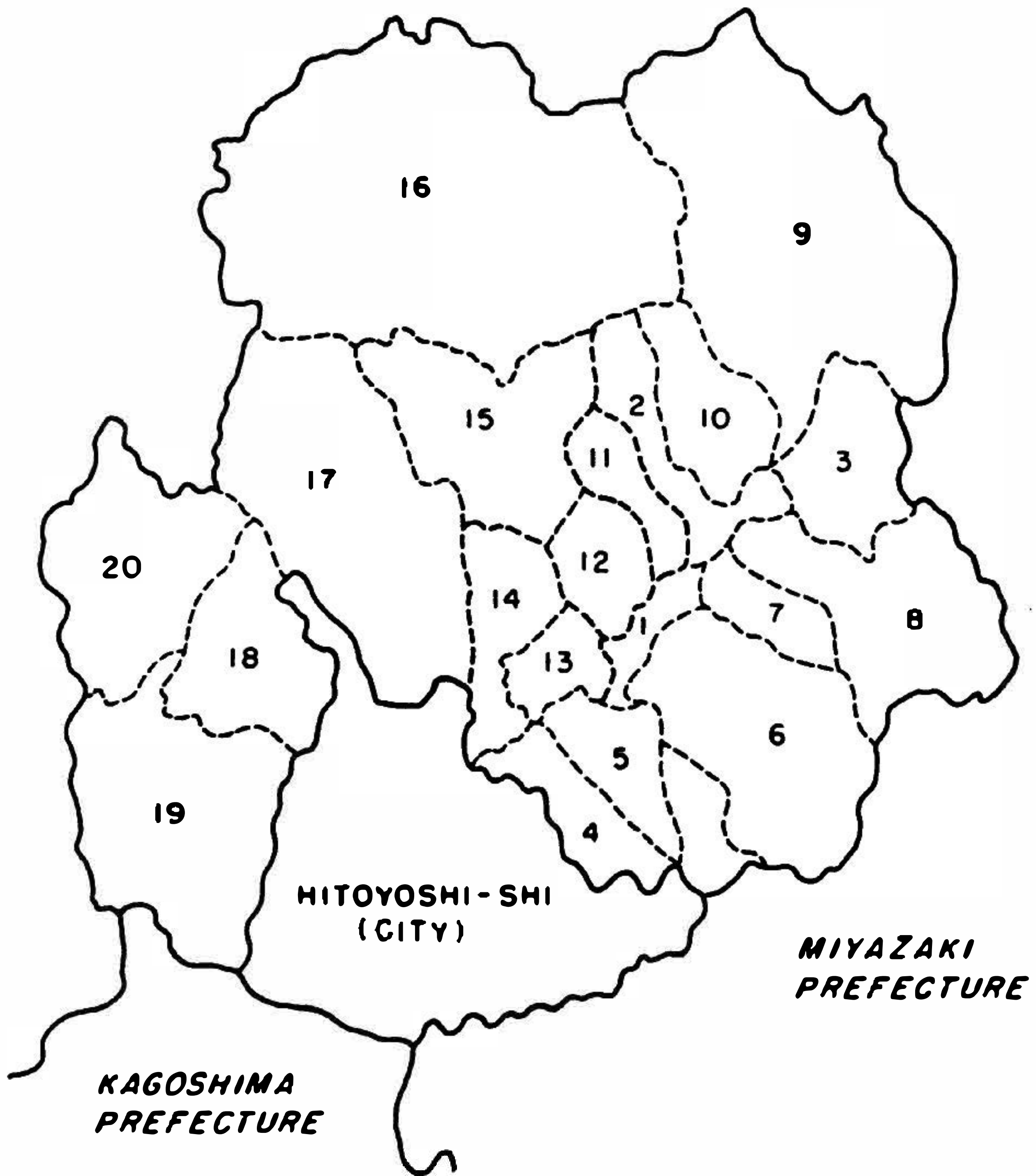
Finally, we wish to acknowledge the contribution of Barbara A. Donnell, who made of our jumbled copy an impeccably prepared manuscript.

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KUMA COUNTY



EXPLANATION OF MAP OF KUMA COUNTY

The map of Kuma county (gun) shows the twenty villages (mura) and towns (chō) located within its borders in 1936. Hitoyoshi city (shi) lies outside the county. In her diary Yaeko mentions the following places in Kuma-gun:

Map Number	Name
1	Menda- <u>mura</u>
2	Taragi- <u>chō</u>
3	Yunomae- <u>chō</u>
4	Nishi- <u>mura</u>
8	Kume- <u>mura</u>
9	Minakami- <u>mura</u> (now Mizukami)
10	Kurohiji- <u>mura</u>
11	Suye- <u>mura</u>
15	Youra- <u>mura</u>

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x



暑中の見舞の中上げます

皆様お変わりございませんか。お伺い申上げます。
：私方も若くは元氣に居りますれば何かの安心
下さいます。

日本の田舎は夏とどんな風にお感じになりますか。
珍しい風光が澤山揃います。
たこと、田舎の静けさ、涼しくなりすたらう。又是非
一泊お邪魔さうな気分かと思ひ居ります。

お目にかけるやうな記事では、ないかもしれませんが
日記かいたく書くに居ります。

毎々暑さきつくなりますから何かの
お大ちゃんさるばるます様新し上げます。
（お）

THE DIARY
OF A
JAPANESE INNKEEPER'S DAUGHTER

INTRODUCTION

"The innkeeper's daughter at Kinokuniya is very pretty and charming." So wrote John F. Embree in his journal on October 24, 1935. He and his wife Ella had come to Japan to undertake the first longterm study there of an agricultural community by foreign social scientists. Following their arrival in Tokyo they had traveled widely surveying potential research sites and were now in the small town of Taragi in Kuma county, Kumamoto Prefecture, on the southern island of Kyushu. While looking over possibilities in the area they put up at a small inn called Kinokuniya, owned and operated by the Yamajis. A typical small family enterprise, the inn was run by Yamaji's wife and their daughter Yaeko, assisted by two very young maidservants.

An adopted daughter, Yaeko was born in Mie Prefecture, where her family still lived. The Yamajis had moved to Kumamoto ten years before and opened a lumber business in Hitoyoshi town, capital of Kuma county, operating it jointly with another family named Ohara. They had next moved to Taragi and started a lumberyard near the railroad station; the Oharas had moved to a nearby small town called Menda. As the Yamajis' business did not prosper, Yaeko's father had opened the Kinokuniya inn about six years before the Embrees' arrival in Japan.

They quickly became fond of this young woman, then 18 years old,¹ who had been assigned to wait on them personally. It is likely that the Yamajis, whose establishment almost certainly had never had a foreign guest before, had decided to entrust them to their daughter rather than to one of the even younger maidservants. The Embrees asked her to accompany them when they went out to watch the festivities of the tutelary

¹By the western system, now also in use in contemporary Japan, Yaeko was either 17 or 18 years old. At the time this diary was written the Japanese reckoned a person to be one year old at birth, adding another year at each New Year's.

deity (ujigami) of Taragi and she occasionally went with Ella Embree on shopping expeditions.

The village of Su²ye finally was selected as the research site and when the Embrees moved into their house there Yaeko's father insisted on delivering their baggage from the inn himself, not wishing to risk leaving it to others. Ella Embree wrote in her journal on November 3, 1935: "Yaeko-san came here in the morning to help us settle in. She walked the three miles from Taragi. Had to leave early because, she said, 'Mother will be worried, since there are so many people around now.'" It was the Meiji emperor's birthday (Meiji setsu) and a national holiday,³ so the inn must have been busy.

In the original draft introduction to the diary, John Embree wrote: "The diary reproduced here is that of Yamaji Yaeko,⁴ an innkeeper's daughter, in the town of Taragi in Kuma county, Kumamoto Prefecture. Taragi, with a population of about seven thousand, is typical of small towns of the area, consisting in its urban part of shops that cater to both Taragi residents and visitors from surrounding villages. The main street is on the prefectural road, the route of the main busline from Hitoyoshi, the capital of Kuma county, to Yunomae at the head of the valley. The branch railroad from Hitoyoshi to Yunomae also runs through Taragi. The houses along the main street have four main types of business--retailers (drapers, hardware stores), artisans (blacksmiths, clog makers), hotels, and recreation centers (movies, geisha houses). In the center of the town are the railroad station, police office, and post office.

²The two major accounts of the results of the research are John F. Embree, Suye Mura: A Japanese Village (1939) and Robert J. Smith and Ella Lury Wiswell, The Women of Suye Mura (1982), both published by the University of Chicago Press.

³Since the end of the Pacific War observed as Culture Day (bunka no hi).

⁴Names are given in the Japanese order, surname first. A list of all persons mentioned in the diary appears on pages 175-178.

"Taragi is also a cultural center. In addition to the usual elementary school there is a girls' higher school attended by the daughters not only of local shopkeepers, but also of the more well to do farmers in the neighboring villages. There is a local archaeology club. The services of the Taragi photographer are called upon for important weddings and other special events in neighboring hamlets as well as in the town itself. Important town festivals are attended by people from nearby villages. Taragi is thus a commercial and cultural center in its region and its urban inhabitants possess characteristic townsmen's attitudes."

Yaeko is a graduate of the Taragi girls' higher school (kōtō jogakkō). Open to those who had completed the compulsory six-year elementary school (shōgakkō), most girls' higher schools offered a five-year course of study (grades 7 through 11), but many were four-year institutions and in some the course was shortened to three years. Judging by her age and the number of years since her graduation, Yaeko's school had the full five grades.

Admission was based on performance in an entrance examination and was further limited by the economic and social status of the family. Only those who could pay the tuition and other expenses and also afford to lose the labor of a member in the family enterprise or on the farm sent their daughters to these schools. Nationally at this period some 25 percent of eligible girls took the examination but only about 8 percent of those completing elementary school actually entered the kōtō jogakkō. Perhaps another 10 percent went on to other kinds of schools open to women.

So Yaeko has much more schooling than the average Japanese teenage girl of her time, yet she is by no means what the Japanese call a bungaku shōjo, "a young lady with literary interests." She does mention lending a book of poetry to a former classmate and writes indifferent waka (31-syllable poems). Her classmate in Ōita sends her some of her own poems for comment. To be sure, she does quote the novelist Sōseki and the imperial anthology Kokin waka shū, but both the quote and the poem are so well known we can guess she learned them in school. Her magazine

reading is confined to the most popular publications, none with a trace of literary pretension. From them, Yaeko reads aloud to her mother who, like most women of her generation, was apparently functionally illiterate. She also arranges flowers, an essential skill of the cultivated young woman of the time whose family had any hopes of arranging a good marriage for her. Sewing and other domestic arts were taught in the girls' higher schools as well.

As we have said, Yaeko is an adopted daughter. The childless Yamajis are her uncle and aunt, but whether the relationship is through her father or mother we do not know. Perhaps she was born into a family with many children or perhaps her parents were prevailed upon to give her to these relatives in order that their family line not die out. It is likely they planned to take an adopted husband for her, to become head of the family in due course. In any event, her natal house seems to have retained an unusual degree of interest in her, for Ella Embree notes: "She expects to marry when she is 25. Her real parents in Mie Prefecture will probably arrange it, even though she says she does not know them well, since she left home so young." We are at a loss to explain this highly unusual circumstance, for ordinarily a person's foster parents would arrange the marriage when the time came. In her diary Yaeko never mentions her parents and writes of her grandmother back home only twice.

However that may be, the diary of this young woman provides some insight into the effects of education. She has been highly sensitized to nature and the change of seasons, remarking constantly on plants, flowers, birds, and the weather. She believes strongly in commitment to one's goals and equally strongly in the inability of people to escape their fate. More than a little wistfully, she realizes that she can only strive to do better whatever it is she must do in life.

There are many touching references to her youth, although she is at most eighteen. They are for the most part about her schooldays, former classmates, and teachers, whom she obviously admires and respects. Suffused with adolescent sentimentality, many of these passages comment on the transitory nature of those happy times. If she appears to give

undue emphasis to the evanescence of human happiness and pleasures, it is no wonder. Young as she is, no fewer than three of her former classmates are already dead. She sees those who live in Taragi frequently and corresponds with others who have taken up employment in the cities; they seem to constitute virtually the entire complement of her friends.

She expresses great fondness for her pet cats and likes to play with the neighbor's dog. Some of the most philosophical (and personal) passages concern the kitten she has named Lily. Forced to give it away to another family, she visits there frequently to take it a live mouse or some fresh fish. While speculating on the nature of its heart and soul (kokoro) she gives it stern advice about how to get along in the world. Although she does not remark on the obvious parallel and was perhaps unaware of it, this passage reads very much like a mother giving advice to a child she has given in adoption.

To Yaeko the world of reality, as opposed to that of the bright dreams of her youth, seems harsh. She refers to the experiences on the "battlefront of employment" that have so changed a former classmate who returns to Taragi for a visit. The boy Kazuo, who wanted to study music, has instead enrolled in a commercial school and works as an apprentice in a drygoods store during the summer vacation. Yaeko feels very vulnerable, remarking that one could expect a teacher's helping hand when one faced difficulties during schooldays. Now, however, one is alone and ever in danger of falling. She quotes only two proverbs: "Falling seven times, getting up eight times," and "The early riser gains a farthing."

The reader will soon note Yaeko's tendency to empathize with others in their joys and sorrows. She comments particularly on the grief of the bereaved--the mayor's widow, son and relatives, the people whose son dies in a plane crash, the condemned assassin Aizawa and his wife and child, and even her beloved kitten Lily, alone all day in its new home with no one to pet it. Many other entries concern the happiness of children, the little maidservant's unconcealed joy at going home on holiday, and Lily's ecstatic greeting when Yaeko goes to visit the kitten.

Related to these sentiments, we think, are some comments the reader may find either amusing or bizarre. Yaeko often expresses gratitude (kansha) for the most unlikely things and people. She is happy about the convenience of the new baggage delivery service, registers her gratitude for the hard work of the postoffice employees, is even grateful to the plants for the oxygen they produce, and occasionally ends an entry with the pat phrase "grateful for the whole day." The roots of these sentiments lie deep in Japanese religions, which stress the ultimate equality of all sentient beings and the interdependence of humans and other living things of this world as well. Gratitude for the work of others implies a strong sense of obligation to them for their efforts, a value emphasized by the educational system in ways both direct and indirect.

There is, furthermore, a remarkable lack of negative comment about people or events and few serious complaints. It must be remembered that as an innkeeper's daughter, Yaeko surely was the target of unwelcome remarks that guests at such establishments, virtually all of them male, inevitably would direct at any attractive young woman. She lives and works in a place where parties are held frequently and a lot of liquor consumed. Yet beyond an occasional complaint about nights when the guests are noisy, she emerges as a pleasant young person, quicker to find fault in herself than in others. Of the geisha-prostitutes from a nearby restaurant she writes only that she thinks them pretty.

In judging herself more harshly than others, Yaeko reflects a notion generally subscribed to by the Japanese. Scolded for preparing a dish badly she finds no fault with her irritable father, but resolves to make it correctly next time. When told to wear kimono rather than a housedress more often she observes that it is not good when one must still be corrected by others, implying that she is quite old enough to know what to do without being told.

Yaeko clearly respects her mother, on whom falls the main responsibility for running the business. Once, when her mother has taken to her bed with a raging headache, Yaeko writes it is as though the light has gone out of the house. Her father is mentioned frequently, but in

most respects remains a distant figure. She reports his comings and goings and visits from his business associates and friends. He continues to bid on standing timber for the Osaka lumber market, and with his associates makes frequent trips to the surrounding mountains to look over areas where auctions are to be held. Still in the lumber business, although no longer operating a local lumberyard, he apparently found it necessary to seek a steadier income. The inn seems to provide it, but the reader will be struck by how frequently there are no overnight guests.

Yaeko's duties include cleaning, sewing, serving the guests, and running errands for the inn. She gets by on very little sleep, often retiring at midnight and rising at five-thirty or six in the morning. So tied down is she by these chores that when she goes shopping in Taragi with Ella Embree, her journal entry reads: "Yaeko-san smiled to friends, explaining why she was out of a morning," rather than working in the inn as usual. When she can get away she goes to festivals and the movies, and sometimes has neighbor children in for games or classmates for a visit.

There are frequent references to music and dance. The former was provided through the radio and records; she mentions one occasion on which 12 people gathered at the inn to listen to records. But dancing was perhaps the most important form of domestic entertainment. "Western dance," perhaps better described as a variety of rhythmic calisthenics, was a component of the girls' higher school curriculum. A certain mystique attached to the women teachers of "dance," who were idealized as models of grace, health, and dedication. Yaeko mentions two of them, whom Americans might call gym teachers, in unmistakable terms of admiration. Within the family dancing by the children was a favorite entertainment, rather like singing and playing the piano in an earlier day in the west. Girls learned specific numbers at school, of course, but small children especially were encouraged to create their own songs and dances. Many Japanese of Yaeko's generation will have fond memories of dancing for their parents and siblings on occasions when the entire family gathered to admire and applaud their efforts.

Yaeko's is a restricted world, open to larger events and issues through popular magazines, radio, films, and the conversations of guests at the inn. She never mentions newspapers, but it is highly likely she read them, for inns usually subscribe to a daily paper for the benefit of their guests. If Yaeko did read them, the behavior is somewhat unusual for her age, for at this period it was considered inappropriate for a young woman to read the newspaper. Because it was defined as a serious medium the newspaper was thought to be a man's reading. Little of that larger world makes it into the diary. Yaeko is intrigued by the lunar and solar eclipses visible in Kyushu, to be sure. But the only event of national importance mentioned concerns the attempted coup d'etat of February 26, 1936, and that only indirectly. It is characteristic of her that she should be so affected by the execution of Lieutenant Colonel Aizawa and its tragic effect on his wife and child.

Diary keeping is quite common in Japan and the nikki of the famous and infamous alike occasionally are edited for publication. Writers and other artists, belle-lettrists, personages of the political, diplomatic, and military worlds, and other public figures of many kinds find a ready market for their diaries--or at least the executors of their estates do. Sometimes a diary kept by a person of less consequence will appear in serial form in a newspaper or magazine, often to be issued later as a book. These are published either because they were kept during a particularly interesting period of history, reveal something of the lives of celebrities the writer knew, or are simply old and therefore rare.

Had a woman like Yamaji Yaeko kept a diary under more ordinary circumstances--that is, a private one intended for her own amusement and edification--what would have become of it? We think the answer not too dissimilar were the question asked of the fate of American diaries. In all likelihood it never would have seen the light of day. Such a truly private diary might be destroyed by its owner later in her life. It might survive her death, to be put with miscellaneous family papers and eventually burned or otherwise disposed of. The chances of such a document ending up in the archives of some local historical society are

remote. We do know, however, of the publication of a fragment of the diary of a young farm woman from Hokkaido. Dating from 1934, the excerpts were published originally in Fujin Kōron, a woman's magazine. Subsequently reprinted in 1975, a partial translation into English appeared in 1982.⁵

There is another exceptional case of the publication of a portion of a woman's diary. The sociologist Nakano Takashi, of recent years concerned to stimulate his colleagues to see the value of life histories and personal documents, has edited and annotated the entries from his mother's diary for 1910.⁶ It is a document of great interest, valuable because it affords a rare glimpse of the inner workings of an old merchant-class household and its network of relationships with others. Because she had recently married into the household, the writer was at pains to enter details of gifts received and sent, obligations incurred and discharged, dates and practices of the annual ceremonial cycle--all of which she was placed in charge of. It affords another kind of insight as well, for toward the end of her long life (she died at the age of 88 in 1978) when she and her son were discussing the publication of the diary, she said to him that it should be published because it reveals the complete oppression of women in the old household system of the time. We can only hope Professor Nakano's venture stimulates others to bring out similar materials.

In Japan the diary has been a major literary form since the Heian period (794-1185) and its most noted practitioners have been women. If Yaeko's sometimes carries overtones of the writings of the likes of Murasaki Shikibu and Sei Shōnagon, it is because she had studied them in

⁵The English translation appears in Mikiso Hane, Peasants, Rebels, and Outcasts: The Underside of Modern Japan, New York: Pantheon, 1982, pp. 133-136. The original was reprinted in Heibonsha Editorial Staff, Dokumento Shōwa sesōshi: senzenhen (Documents on Showa Social Phenomena: Prewar Volume), Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1975, pp. 7-75.

⁶Nakano Takashi, Meiji yonjūsannen Kyōto: aru shōka no wakazuma no nikki (Kyoto in 1910: The Diary of the Young Wife of a Merchant Family), Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 1981.

school. There was, furthermore, a printed form used by schoolchildren keeping diaries, whose influence can be seen in Yaeko's unfailing report of the hour she gets up and the time she goes to bed, as well as her brief description of the weather, entered by each day's date. It is worth pointing out that she never once mentions the day of the week. The western calendar had long been in use, but the seven-day cycle had not as yet begun to displace the older cycle of festivals and markets which had for so long set the round of life throughout the year.

Yaeko adopts some rather odd conventions in the use of terms of reference, particularly sama, san, and chan. Sama is the very polite form of san; chan the familiar form. Ordinarily an adult is referred to by surname + san (Kamiya-san). A guest at the inn or a notable person might be accorded the more respectful surname + sama (Kamiya-sama). A child might be referred to by given name + either san or chan, using a diminutive for the given name in the latter case (Kazuo-san or Kazu-chan). But Yaeko uses sama for most adults and even for some of her former classmates. Were she a member of an elite family it is conceivable she would refer to customers, neighbors, and even some relatives in this excessively polite fashion, but she is not. Our guess is that the usage reflects Yaeko's perception of her position in society, for in this period it behooved an innkeeper's daughter to adopt an overtly respectful stance towards others. When she does occasionally use san for former classmates, she may well be lapsing into a habit formed during her schooldays before she assumed her duties in the family business. It may be also that because she was writing for John Embree and posterity, she used the formal sama more frequently than would be the case had the diary been strictly private.

She also uses kinterms to refer to some adults with whom her family are intimate. Here again she switches between overpolite and ordinary usages with reference to the same individual. The terms that occur in the diary are nī-san/sama (elder brother), nē-san/sama (elder sister), oji-san/sama (grandfather), obā-san/sama (grandmother), oji-san/sama (uncle), and oba-san/sama (aunt).

One final note on references to persons and animals. Japanese has no gender and we are sometimes uncertain as to the sex of the person referred to. The situation with respect to the gender of pets is even more ambiguous. Yaeko mentions a cat named Tama-chan (Jewel) and names her kitten Lily, but the names of pets in Japan are not linked to their sex, and both or either animal may well have been male. We are acquainted with a pet bitch named Eddie-sensei (teacher) after her owner's favorite country music singer, Eddie Arnold.

The content and character of Yaeko's diary are determined in some part by the circumstances that led to its being kept at all. Shortly after they had settled in Suze, the Embrees learned that Yaeko had kept a diary when she was in school, but had given it up. They asked if she would keep one for them and she agreed. That was in early November 1935. The diary begins on January 1, 1936; one imagines Yaeko's making a firm resolution to set about fulfilling her commitment. It runs through January 26 and picks up again on June 1, ending on September 16.

On October 29, 1936, just before the Embrees were to leave Suze to return to the United States, Yaeko delivered the diary to their house. Ella Embree wrote: "Earlier in the afternoon Yaeko and her mother arrived. They brought a basket of fruit and an envelope with senbetsu of one yen⁷ carefully presented to me on a small tray. Yaeko was all dressed up in mosu no awase and haori and looked as demure as ever. She brought the diary which she has been keeping for John. With much blushing and apologizing and explaining how funny she felt and how she did not want to do this, she finally gave it to Sano-san, asking him to translate

⁷Senbetsu is a parting gift presented by friends and neighbors to a person leaving a place permanently or planning a long absence.

⁸Mosu no awase is a lined kimono of very light wool. Although mosu (or mosurin) is from the English "muslin," in Japan it always refers to a woolen rather than a cotton fabric. A haori is a jacket-like over-kimono.

it well. One section had been written on different paper and she was not going to give it to us. She had kept that part during January, but had brought it along anyhow, and was at last persuaded to leave it, too. Her mother urged her to do so. Her mother impresses me as a very business-like person, a typical matron of a restaurant or hotel.

"We exchanged pleasantries and they left. After a few moments, we heard Yaeko's voice outside again. She had come back with some packs of cigarettes for Sano-san. The next day he had a letter from her asking him please to translate the diary well and saying she was sorry she had given it to us, for it was written very oddly because she did it after she was so tired at night and could not pay proper attention to good writing."

It was during this farewell visit that the photographs of Yaeko and her mother were taken. Sano, John Embree's young interpreter, never had the opportunity to translate the diary. His correspondence with the Embrees was interrupted by the outbreak of what the Japanese called the Greater East Asia War, and when Ella Embree visited Suyu in 1951 she learned that he had died during the war.

The task of translation fell to Miwa Kai who had been invited to the Embree home in Chicago in 1943-44 following her release from the detention camp in Topaz, Utah. In December 1946 John Embree, then at the University of Hawaii, completed the draft of his introduction to it, in which he thanks Yukuo Uyehara for his "critical reading of the manuscript." Subsequently John Embree joined the faculty of Yale University and in December 1950 he and their daughter Clare were killed by a car as they crossed a street together in Hamden, Connecticut. Ella Lury Wiswell gave us the drafts of the translation and the introduction in 1965, but somewhere in its checkered history the original of Yaeko's diary has been lost.

We have revised the translation insofar as that was possible, lacking the Japanese text, and provided this introduction. It has been nearly 50 years since Yamaji Yaeko opened her diary on January 1, 1936, and wrote: "Heaven and earth are renewed; the sun shines brightly; the

New Year has arrived!" We hope it has been translated well, as she was so anxious it be. We do not know what became of her, but whatever else she accomplished, at the very least she has left us a small window through which to view the daily life of a young woman in a Japan that no longer exists.

Robert J. Smith
Kazuko Smith

Ithaca, New York
1984

A NOTE ON CONVENTIONS

Names are given in the Japanese order, surname first.

In the text of the diary translations of words or phrases appear in parentheses; editorial clarifications are in brackets.

January 1 Clear

Heaven and earth are renewed; the sun shines brightly; the New Year has arrived! I washed in wakamizu^a to my heart's content and then sat down to breakfast. To begin with, had toso (spiced sake), zōni (rice cake and vegetables cooked in a broth), kazunoko (herring roe), and nishime (mixed vegetables cooked in stock and soy sauce). The countless auspicious New Year's dishes were a delight. New Year's greetings, which are exchanged every year, are all the more remembered now.

At eleven-thirty, the four of us--mother, Sadako-san,^b Tami-san,^c and I--left home to go to the Embrees' house in Suye. On the way we tried to imagine what the little girl^d there would be like. We arrived at two o'clock. Glancing into the entrance of the house, noticed five or six pairs of geta (wooden clogs); apparently New Year's guests were already calling. Heard the voice of Mrs. Embree, who seemed to be very busy... To have come so far only to go away again seemed a pity, so faintly called out, "Excuse me, please." It being difficult to escape her kindness, we feasted on various things and without realizing it stayed until three-thirty.^e

The complexion of the little girl's face--how beautifully it glowed! Although I wanted to say something, I lack the art. Wrapped in a feeling I cannot describe, received lots of tangerines as a present and we departed. On the way back, picked some yabu kōji,^f and when we got home the lights were already on. It was five-thirty.

Mother and Tami-san went to a movie.

Went to bed at nine.

Received New Year's greetings from Yanase-san, Ogawa-san, Ozaki-san, Kamiya-san, Ochiai-san, and Satō-san.^g

^a Fresh well-water drawn at New Year's. This is the first reference to a number of customs, games, foods, and practices specific to the New Year in Japan, in Yaeko's time as it is today, the great national holiday.

^b She is identified in the Embrees' fieldnotes: "Sadako-san is 13. Her family and Yaeko's used to live together in Hitoyoshi where they ran a lumber business. Hers moved to Menda, Yaeko's to Taragi. Sadako has been in Taragi ever since she started girls' school there. Visits her home in Menda occasionally.d"

- c One of the two maidservants at the inn. According to the Embrees' fieldnotes her name is Naraki Tami and she comes from Nishi village in Kuma county.
- d Clare, the two-year-old daughter of the Embrees, was with them in Suye for the first few weeks of their field research in the village.
- e In her fieldnotes, Ella Embree wrote: "Before our five male guests left, Yaeko-san, her mother, one of the maids from Kinokuniya, and Yaeko-san's small 'cousin' Sadako paid us a New Year's call. They walked the three miles from Taragi. Brought gifts of cakes and drank some shōchū [a rice distillate] with the other guests. After the men had left, we had lunch together and they started on their long hike to Taragi."
- f A low evergreen shrub whose glossy foliage and bright red berries are a common New Year's decoration. See Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan 8:283.
- g These probably are all Yaeko's former classmates, from whom she has received New Year's cards (nengajō).

January 2 Clear

Got up at seven.

Today the stirring cries announcing the first consignments of the year;^a outside the sounds of the shuttlecock going kachin kachin.^b All is filled with the atmosphere of the New Year. Having nothing to do,^c it was soon past noon.

At three o'clock I called over Nobu-chan and Tadaomiesan from next door and played karuta.^d The girls' team scored zero after zero and lost without winning a single point. We stopped playing cards at six o'clock.

After dinner the three of us--father, Yuki-san,^e and I--went to the movies. There I saw the truth of humanity and justice, and thinking about the changes in people's hearts since those olden days, returned home at eleven.

Went to bed at eleven-thirty.

Kakizome no

Ureshiku shimishi

Fude no ho ni

Yukashiku komoru

Sumi no iro ka na

Joyfully suffused with ink

At the New Year's first writing,

The brush is elegantly heavy

With the color and fragrance of the ink.^f

^a Hatsuni no isamashii kakegoe. Another custom of the New Year's observances. Shops sent out gaily decorated carts, wagons or trucks around the streets loaded with new inventory. These vehicles were accompanied by employees shouting out word of the arrival of the new goods, a combined effort to insure good fortune in the new year and attract customers. The word hatsu is prefixed to many activities, events, and objects at New Year's to indicate it is the first occurrence or encounter since the new year began.

^b Yet another reference specific to the New Year. During the first days of the New Year, and at no other time, girls dressed in their holiday best played battledore (hagoita) and shuttlecock (hane). The wooden battledore is colorfully decorated with padded brocade and silk figures, usually the face and bust of a female dancer, musician, or character from the kabuki theater. The shuttlecock, whose brightly

colored or white feathers are bound to a small round nut, is smaller than that used in badminton. The sound kachin kachin is that made by the hard shuttlecock striking the wooden face of the battledores. There is a certain sadness about Yaeko's observation, for she is now too old to join in this most special of girls' New Year's games.

- c The first three to five days of the New Year are taken as a holiday, so she has no chores to do, and since it is a family observance, there are no guests at the inn.
- d A game of cards. Yaeko does not specify which one.
- e The other maidservant.
- f As befits a graduate of girls' school, Yaeko writes poetry. This waka, something less than a total success, is nonetheless entirely appropriate to the occasion, referring as it does to the first taking up of the writing brush in the New Year.

January 3 Cloudy

Got up at seven.

Today is the third day of New Year's. Having become a year older,^a I regret the fleeting matsu no uchi (the first seven days of the New Year)..o

Mother went to the movies at six.

As a farewell to this New Year's, I was at least able to play karuta, tangerine pulling,^b and various other games with the children from next door.^c Wasn't even aware of the passage of time, and did not stop playing until nine o'clock.

Toasted the New Year's dried cuttlefish (surume) and ate it.

Mother returned at ten-thirty.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a On January 1 everyone added a year to his or her age. See page 1 of the Introduction.

^b Mikan hiki. Unfamiliar with this term, we sought the help of several Japanese friends without success. However, in the course of a visit with Professor Kawamura Nozomu of Tōkyō Toritsu Daigaku and his wife Reiko in Ithaca, we raised the question with them. We are indebted to Mrs. Kawamura for the following information on this game. Each player is given a long strip of thin paper, which is laid out flat on the floor. A tangerine is placed on one end of the strip of paper and the player, grasping the other end, attempts to pull it toward him. If the tangerine rolls off or the paper tears, he has lost. The winner, the person who has pulled the tangerine to the goal, gets to eat it. This game was widespread, being ~~common~~ wherever tangerines were plentiful, so was not peculiar to Kumamoto. It seems to have survived in many places until shortly after the end of the Pacific War in 1945. There is another form of the game, favored by adults. The player casts a threaded needle, attempting to pierce the skin of the tangerine. When it catches, he tries to pull the tangerine toward him by the thread, rather like line fishing. It is more challenging and requires more skill. Yaeko and the children from next door probably played the version using the strips of paper.

^c These are perhaps the Nobu and Tadaomi of the entry on page 17. On page 52 there is another reference to the children next door, but the names given are Nobu and Sueko.

January 4 Clear

Got up at seven.

A bright, clear day. The morning sun was unusually beautiful.

The mayor (chōchō), who had been ill for a long time, died yesterday. How great must be the sorrow of his wife and all the others! I feel it as though the sorrow were mine. Starting out as just a menial worker, he labored for more than 35 years for the growth of Upper Kuma,^a and taking to the political world became respected as a gracious and upright gentleman. The mayor has closed his life at 53 years. The funeral will most certainly be an official one.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a The district in which Taragi is located.

January 5 Clear

Got up at seven.

Today we served a special New Year's dinner.^a Received word from Iwasaki-sama to prepare for four persons. Standing in the kitchen for the first time in so long, it seemed as though the place had changed. It was very strange. Put the seven dishes on each of the trays,^b and waited for a while. The guests came at six o'clock. The banquet, gay and filled with conversation, was over at ten. Afterwards they all departed for some place in an automobile.

The whole neighborhood was quite gay until about eleven o'clock. Finally, about twelve, it seems to have quieted down.

^a The inn has reopened for business after the New Year's holiday.

^b Individual trays from which the person eats directly, not a serving tray.

January 6 Clear

Got up at six.

By noon I finished all the flower arrangements for the upstairs rooms.

At eleven, Mr. Embree's interpreter stopped by and talked about various things. He had gone back to Kōchi^a for the New Year's. He appears to be a very quiet person, almost to the point of making one feel sorry for him... He departed by the twelve-twenty bus.

Took down all the New Year's decorations. The New Year's atmosphere has disappeared completely. From now on I must busy myself again. All the things I have to do come into my head one after the other.

Dinner at six.

Went to bed at ten.

^a His home on the island of Shikoku.

January 7 Clear
 Mayor's funeral.
 Got up at six.

Finished cleaning all the rooms, starting with the upstairs.
 Hearing that the mayor's funeral wreaths were being carried by, ran out into the street in front. There must have been about 50 of them. The figure of the widow in the jinrikisha was too pitiful. In the jinrikisha ahead rode the eldest son. They say a lock of the mayor's hair was in the box the son held to his breast. The smothered sobs of the relatives will echo in my ears.

About four o'clock Mr. Embree came in. I wondered whether the smoke from the incense offerings [at the funeral] had hurt his eyes. Wondered whether or not he would eat anything, and was very happy when I learned that fortunately he likes kasutera.^a Because the coffee was made quickly, it must have tasted bad. He did not finish it.

American coffee: one spoonful; heat two minutes.^b

Went to bed at ten.

^a A kind of pound cake.

^b Evidently John Embree gave her a recipe for coffee. He was not fond of Japanese food, and this passage suggests that the inn had experienced some difficulty in preparing meals he would find palatable. To Yaeko on this occasion, cake (of a type said to have been introduced into Japan in the 16th century by the Portuguese--its name is probably from pao de Castela) and coffee must have seemed just the right things to serve her foreign guest.

January 8 Clear

The first total lunar eclipse of this year will be tomorrow.^a

Got up at six.

Finished cleaning all the rooms, starting with the upstairs.

Tomorrow morning at 1:28 and 1 second the eclipse will commence.

It should be total at 2:57 and 8 seconds, and will not end until 4:50 and 7 seconds. Won't be able to see it because I would be terribly sleepy at that hour.

Today is the third anniversary of the death of Tama-chan, my cat. I remember I went to bury it just three years ago today, crying! I still remember the color of its fur.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Carol Kammen has pointed out to us that an American girl would be much more likely to write "a lunar eclipse" rather than "the first lunar eclipse of this year." Yaeko probably had read a newspaper story, as the detailed account of the timing of the event suggests. She would have had some science courses in higher school if not as many as in a comparable school for boys. It has been observed that the Japanese are rather more "literate" in scientific matters than is the American public.

January 9 Clear

Got up at six-thirty.

At ten o'clock Mrs. Embree came and telephoned to the girls' school in Kumamoto. She said that tomorrow she is going to Tokyo, taking her little girl. If Suye were a little more convenient, it would have been possible to keep her with them. According to what she told me, a young maid cannot look after the child, work in the kitchen, and attend to everything all by herself. She said that her mother and father, as well as a nurse, are in Tokyo. After she takes her little girl there, she will no doubt be able to do all kinds of research work without anxiety.

My classmate Shiotsuki-san has been in Ōita^a for a long time. While we were still in school--it was when we were in the postgraduate course--she wrote in the margin of my notebook:

Majiwareba

Kimi ga kokoro o

Ware wa shiru

Waga kokoro mo

Kimi wa shiruran

Through our association

I learned to know your heart.

I wonder if you have come

to know mine.

I did not know then how to reply to this friend who believed in me so deeply. Perhaps I will receive a letter today.

My sewing has piled up quite a bit. Finished mother's tonight and will start on mine tomorrow.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a A city in Kyushu. The classmate is Shiotsuki Mitsuko. See page 57 and later entries.

January 10 Clear

Got up at six.

Cleaned very thoroughly today. Sewed from noon.

The kitten has been sick for a long time now. It is undoubtedly some kind of fever ϕ but there is no means of knowing the heart and soul (kokoro) of a cat. Poor thing ϕ I can only watch over it.

At six, Iwasaki-sama of Suze came and said that Mr. Embree goes to the village office almost every day. He also seems to have told [Iwasaki-sama] about our New Year's Day visit. Iwasaki-sama has a crippled hand, but his writing is very good. He writes with his left hand, and with what speed ϕ About eight o'clock he borrowed an electric lantern and left.

Went to bed at eleven.

January 11 Clear

Got up at six-thirty.

Cleaned as usual. This morning the cold was especially severe. Today is the sixth day since the beginning of the cold season (kan)g and kangyō-san come every night.^a Though it is their penance, they must be very cold. But for people who have renounced everything in order to devote themselves to Buddhism, it may be the fulfillment of a long-cherished desire. The last one who came looked very much like the priest Saigyō.^b Even his clear, gentle, and powerful voice seemed just like Saigyō's.

In this late night, when everyone is sound asleep, from somewhere comes the crowing of a cock that does not know the hour.

It is just midnight.

^a Ascetics who perform a thirty-day penance in mid-winter.

^b A poet-priest of the twelfth century. Yaeko appears to have seen a portrait of him, perhaps in a school textbook, and imagines what his voice must have been like. For an extended discussion of his career and an assessment of his paramount place in the history of Japanese poetry, see Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan 6: 367-368.

January 12 Cloudy

Got up at five-thirty.

There were guests by the first train, so I jumped out of bed. The maids were already up and briskly going about their work. One after another the shutters of the houses in the street clattered open. Somehow, it is a cloudy and uncomfortable day.

The kitten is much better. Its eyes seem brighter.

Father's cold appears to be quite bad. I hope it will not become worse.

Dinner at six. After dinner, read King^a until nine o'clock.

Went to bed at ten.

^a A popular magazine, one of many whose names appear in the pages of Yaeko's diary. Although she is a girls' school graduate, there is no mention of any more intellectual magazines, nor is there evidence that she reads works by the literary figures of the time.

January 13 Cloudy

Got up at six-thirty.

Since the siren has been installed at the school, it seems the conduct of the people of the town has become more regular. All the children are supposed to follow the signals of the siren.

Perhaps there has been a death in town; all sorts of funeral paraphernalia are being carried by. That which has life will surely die (sei aru mono wa hitsumetsu su),^a but just the same it is a sad and lonely thing.

At night read Fujin Kurabu.^b

Went to bed at eleven.

^a This common saying, which has its origins in Buddhist teaching, is a paraphrase of the first half of a well-known sentiment: shōga hitsumetsu, esha jōri (That which has life will surely die; all things that are linked will be sundered). It may be found in many sources, including the sutras Dainehankyō and Yuikyōgyō, but if Yaeko had ever encountered it in literature the most likely place is the famous scene of Koremori's suicide in the twelfth-century Heike monogatari (The Tale of the Heike), which she may have studied in school. She uses the phrase again (see page 80) to more telling effect in connection with the execution of Lt. Col. Aizawa who, like Koremori, left behind a wife and child(ren).

^b "Women's Club," another popular magazine.

January 14 Clear; later cloudy

Got up at six.

Cleaned as usual. About noon, went to fetch some milk for the cat.

Felt very cold about three o'clock, so put on a jacket. It will soon be New Year's by the old [lunar] calendar. As might be expected, it is mainly the farmers who are excited in anticipation of the holiday.^a

Dinner at seven. Sat in the kotatsu.^b

The world unknown to me is still extensive. I cannot but be deeply affected by every last word I hear people speak.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Japan was still in transition from the lunar calendar to the western one, which was more widely observed in the towns and cities than in the countryside. It is worth pointing out, however, that while Yaeko's New Year was celebrated according to the new system, all the other festivals and holidays mentioned in her diary are reckoned by the lunar calendar. These include Boys' Day (the fifth day of the fifth month), Tanabata (the seventh day of the seventh month), and the autumnal equinox (the eighth day of the eighth month).

^b There are two kinds of kotatsu. One is a pit sunk in the floor of a room, with a container of charcoal embers in the bottom. A wooden frame over which a coverlet is spread covers the opening, and people sit around it as though at a low table, their legs and feet in the opening. The other variety, probably the one to which Yaeko refers, is simpler. A container of charcoal embers is placed on a metal plate on the floor under a low wooden frame with a coverlet and people sit around it. The charcoal brazier (hibachi) and the kotatsu were the only means of heating a room in general use at this period. The brazier is very little used now, displaced by kerosene stoves and electric heaters, but kotatsu are still widely used in both rural and urban areas in Japanese tatami rooms. They are no longer heated with charcoal; the kotatsu too has been electrified. It remains a favorite gathering spot in winter for family members and guests, and is often the only source of heat in such rooms.

January 15 Snow

Got up at seven.

For a wonder, it snowed! As though a white cloth the thickness of ten centimeters had been spread over everything, the whole surface of the fields and mountains is silvery. Once while I was still in school there was a sudden snowfall that piled thirty centimeters high, and I had to walk home without my boots.

About eleven the kangyō-san (ascetics) came again, making their way through the snow. I hope grandmother back home (kokyō)^a has not caught cold again. The carrots they come to sell every morning must have been affected by the cold, too; they are of such a bright color.

It is now eleven-thirty. The shoe store's dog is barking like anything. I wonder if someone came?

Grateful for the whole day,^b I went to bed.

^a The author is adopted, it will be remembered. Her natal house is in Mie Prefecture. Interestingly enough, this and the reference on January 18 to her grandmother are the only mentions of her family.

^b Ihinichi o kansha shitsutsu toko ni tsuita. Like many others of Vaeko's fine phrases, this is a cliché commonly found in diaries at the end of the day's entry.

January 16 Clear

Got up at seven.

Yesterday's snow has begun to melt. People going along the street walk with difficulty.

Father was able to get up today, at last. His cold this time seems to be of a bad kind, extremely difficult to recover from.

The sky does not look very promising. It may be there will be more snow.

Tomorrow at the inn there is to be a meeting of influential men of Upper Kuma. I think it's about the coming election.^a

At night, strong wind mixed with snow.

Went to bed at ten.

^a Meetings of men of affairs were routinely held at an inn or restaurant, which provided larger rooms than the ordinary house as well as food and drink. The custom persists today.

January 17 Snow

Got up at six-thirty.

Heaviest snow in 35 years. Automobiles are stopped; trains are delayed; in front of the inn bicycles tumble, clogs slip, and all kinds of things happen. I wonder how the Embrees feel about the snow in their thatched country house. Surely they have taken a lot of pictures.

Night fell, buried in snow.

No guests came.

Went to bed at ten.

Diet member Miyoshi of Kumamoto came.

January 18 Clear

Got up at seven.

The sun is shining weakly, but the snow, which has extended its influence as far as the eye can see, is not even beginning to melt. Even man, the highest of all things, can do nothing. Such is the mighty strength of snow.

When I was still in school, my sensations towards everything were keener. Now they have become dull. That is why I could do nothing more than make a snow daruma^a and a rabbit...

Wrote a letter to my grandmother.

At night the wind increased in violence, bending the bare trees and almost extinguishing the light.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a The equivalent of a snowman. Daruma is Bodhidharma, the Buddhist saint, usually depicted with a look of fierce concentration and without legs, which he lost as a result of sitting in meditation for so long. Here Yaeko is nostalgic for her youth. Snow is quite rare in southern Japan, and when it does fall, children do everything they can to make the most of it. Yaeko, less excitable now than when she was little, confesses that she was moved only to make the two most common snow-figures.

January 19 Clear

Got up at seven.

Someone awakened me. I was reluctant to get up, but finally got out of bed.

The snow is melting. It seems a pity that it should snow when the shoots of the wheat had just come up as though aflame.

They say that the snow was a meter deep at the Kume mountain pass. Think of the hardships of the people who must come from a long way off to do their shopping in Taragi!

Since the cold season set in, the chilblains have gotten worse day by day, and today my hands and feet are swollen and red. Because of the intense cold I didn't even do what I should have done, and night fell.

Taniue-sama^a came down from upstairs and talked until eleven-thirty.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a A guest at the inn.

January 20 Clear

Got up at seven.

Still the snow remains. Cleaned as usual.

At one o'clock went to pay the long-distance telephone bill. At the office, I chanced to meet my classmate Sotomura-san. As we had not seen each other for a long time, we were both happy. From the office, went directly to draw a lot for the premium, but as usual got only a consolation prize. Felt miserable at receiving only a box of matches, and went out into the wildly blowing wind. Took leave of Sotomura-san and returned home.

At three-thirty father and Taniue-sama went to Suze. How cold they must have been! They returned at six.

At night Iwasaki-sama came.

My heart was touched by the quiet cadences of a nō recitation^a coming from the radio next door.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a Yōkyoku, or utai, the text of the classic drama, sung by the performers and chorus.

January 21 Clear

Got up at six.

It was a day when the sun's rays were cold and weak. It was a day of my hands being frozen most of the time while cleaning.^a

Today was the drawing for the lottery. It was unreasonable to hope for the right one among the hundreds of balls. As usual, the right one did not fall to me.

Three more days and it will be the New Year by the old calendar. From the point of view of the weather, the old calendar seems to be the more appropriate one.

At night, sat in the kotatsu.^b

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Only cold water was used for laundry, washing dishes, scrubbing and mopping, all done by hand.

^b See page 30, footnote b.

January 22 Clear

Got up at seven.

Recently I do nothing but oversleep. Most of the time am awakened by guests. What a strange inn this is!^a

Happy that father has recovered from his illness, but now his tooth pains him. Hope it will not swell up again.

At night, Iwasaki-sama came. Talked until ten.

Because my chilblains are so painful, I cannot sit in the kotatsu and feel all out of sorts.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Strange because the staff of the inn by rights should waken the guests.

January 23 Clear

Got up at six.

This morning, for a wonder, I didn't have to be awakened. Hurriedly did the cleaning.

The maidservants' hands are swollen pitifully. I wish the cold season would end soon. All living things wish the same.

Today is the last day of the year by the old calendar and tomorrow is New Year's. The farmers are still marketing produce today. For the next three days they will not be coming to sell things,^a so I bought up various items.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Because of the New Year's holiday.

January 24 Clear

Got up at seven.

Today Tami-san said she would be going home.^a As I wanted to let her get away early, did the cleaning in haste. There were many guests, so it took until two o'clock. Without delay I let her have lunch and get ready. Dark-complexioned^b Tami-san is so pretty [dressed up] that she looks like a different person. She is such a docile soul that everything she does touches me. The hour came, so I told her to hurry to the rail station. Unfortunately, she was late and returned to the inn with a heavy heart. As there was nothing else to be done, decided to send her home by bus. She said that she would get car-sick and was very pale even before she left.

It seems very warm, and may rain tomorrow.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a She is from a nearby village where New Year's is observed by the lunar calendar. The maidservants at Kinokuniya, like domestic help and employees of shops and firms all over the country at this period, had only two three-day holidays in the year--New Year's and o-bon. See page 146, footnote a.

^b In prewar Japan a dark complexion, especially in women, was not prized and there remains some prejudice against it. Although Yaeko mentions dark skin color in two other entries (pages 109 and 155) her only negative comment is that the boy Kazuo (page 109) is so dark that none of the fabrics in the drygoods store where he works would look good on him.

January 25 Rain; later clear

Got up at seveno

As I predicted, it was raining. It poured from early morning. Felt fine to have rain after such a long time. Thanks to it, the snow on all the surrounding mountains is melting. The wind is warm. With this [change of weather], it may turn to spring. The rain stopped completely at one o'clock and the sky turned blue. The mist on the mountains makes them hazy, just as they are in spring.

At night, Iwasaki-sama came. Talked until nine.

Went to bed at eleven.

January 26 Clear

Got up at seven.

It is a beautifully clear day. With all things returning to life, I steeped myself in the feeling of the lunar New Year's.

At six, Tami-san returned by train.

For unknown reasons, the diary stops here and does not resume until June 1, 1936.

June 1 Clear

Got up at five.

Haven't awakened so early in a long time. Inhaled the clear morning air to my heart's content. At seven, the usual broadcast of the calesēhenics on the radio. I think it is delightful they have become so widespread.

Sewed all day long. Seeing how with each day the kimono nears completion, I feel I am compensated for my past toil and am happy.

About eight o'clock the dog in front [at the shoe store across the street] barked a lot. It is a wild thing and I am afraid it might harm another dog.

Went to bed at eleven.

June 2 Cloudy

Got up at six.

The sky, which was cloudy for the most part, cleared about eight o'clock and as I had planned, I started on the kimono.^a There were two haori (a short jacket) and one awase (lined kimono). As I had idled away part of the morning, I did not finish until five.

At ten o'clock father went to see Ohara-sama in Mendo. How lonely the children must be in a house with no parents!^b

Everything is wrapped in green leaves as far as the eye can see; summer is about to arrive. A caterpillar happened to lower itself from behind a leaf of a tree in the garden, causing a great fuss among the maidservants.

Dinner at six, then sewing.

Nishi-sama showed me a magnificent framed picture of bunka embroidery.^c

At eight, Iwasaki-sama came and talked until nine.

It felt like rain in the air, and sure enough it began to fall about ten o'clock. In this quiet rain, it seems that each and every household has gone to sleep.

It is just midnight.

^a Before synthetic materials and drycleaning were introduced, kimono were taken apart completely, the material washed and lightly starched, and stretched to dry on boards or long frames of bamboo splints with pins to hold the cloth.

^b Not at all clear. It is possible that the household is made up of grandparents and their grandchildren. The parents may have been employed in the city or the Kyushu mines.

^c Ella Lury Wiswell remembers that this kind of embroidered picture was very popular in Japan in the 1920s and 1930s. The work was done on a sewing machine by carefully stitching over a pattern printed on fabric. Bunka (culture), a fashionable word at this period, was often prefixed to the names of objects. It suggested the thing was advanced, modern, and (usually) that it was western as opposed to Japanese. In any event, framed embroidery pictures definitely are not a traditional art form.

June 3 Rain

Got up at six.

It rained all day long. Started sewing the yukata (cotton summer kimono) material that arrived.^a It seems to me the design on this cloth is smaller than that on our old ones, but it looks very refined. At five o'clock, finished the sewing I began last night.

In the morning, massaged father's legs for twenty minutes.

At last the kitten is starting to be playful. This lopsided, figured face^b that for the first time sees the light of the world--how startling it must be! The nobility of maternal love shown by the mother cat to its baby is something we humans might imitate. I am lost in admiration.

Dinner at five-thirty. The peas and bamboo shoots are so delicious because they have been in contact with nature in the countryside.

Two guests arrived at nine. At last the rain seemed to have stopped.

Went to bed at twelve-thirty.

^a Inns provide these garments for their guests. They are invariably of a uniform pattern, sometimes dyed to order but more often--as in the case of a small establishment like this one--bought at a drygoods store, ordered from a catalogue, or chosen from among the swatches brought by a salesman. Later entries reveal there are only 12 yukata, an indication of the small scale of business at the inno

^b The kitten had a pattern of mottled colors on one side of its face and none on the other.

June 4 Cloudy

Got up at six.

The multicolored cornflowers (yagurumasō) are blooming at last, which deepens the feeling of summer.

Sewed all day long. Felt sleepy and dozed occasionally. At five, finished sewing the fourth yukata. After dinner, started on the fifth.

At nine-thirty, the hairspring of the clock broke, so took it to Kamiya's to leave it for repair.

Shortly before ten, the apprentices of the bicycle shop were absorbed in practicing stunts on the unicycle.

The shoe store's wild dog across the street was on the point of biting the dog from next door.

The yukata I started sewing at eight is done except for putting on the collar. Think I'll leave it until tomorrow.

Went to bed at midnight.

June 5 Clear

Got up at six.

Had a number of guests today. Tamaki-sama of Hitoyoshi came, bringing his son's bride. Takeuchi-obāsama^a of Yunomae came with her four grandchildren. My, how busy we were!

During the morning, finished last night's sewing and started on the sixth yukata.

At eight, went to Kamiya's to fetch the clock. It cost one yen. Tsuyako-san^b seems to have gone to the movies. Tonight's film is "The Three Loves" (Mittsu no ai). It must be a good one.

Every house is sound asleep. Late at night, there is only the sound of the pen writing in this diary. Went to bed, grateful for the whole day.

It is just midnight.

^a "Grandmother," used as a term of reference and address for older women. Here the term reflects her position in the structure of the household, that of the senior woman.

^b Kamiya Tsuyako, elsewhere referred to as Kamiya-sama.

June 6 Clear

Got up at six.

It was a delightful, fine day. Sewed all day again, but because there were so many guests, had to be getting up and down^a all the time. Couldn't sew very well.

Changed the arrangements of cornflowers.

The onion plants in the back field have large round heads. In due course they will be ripening. The peas, too, will go to seed if they are not picked soon.

At seven, finished sewing the sixth yukata and started the seventh.

There are many fireflies. Unlike my childhood days, I cannot take a broom and go out to catch them any more. It is a sad thing to grow up.

My classmate Kamiya-sama came.

Went to bed at twelve.

^a It should be remembered that Yaeko was sitting on the floor while she sewed, making it harder to get up and down each time she was called away. The use of chairs in the home is a very recent phenomenon in Japan.

June 7 Clear

Got up at five.

Because it was so early I was terribly sleepy and felt as though my eyes would melt.

The maidservant went home because of illness there; today I worked all day. In summer, all kinds of sicknesses become prevalent. I suppose there will be children's dysentery again.^a

At six, Higuchi-sama came and was talking about going mountain climbing tomorrow.^b

It seems that one of the swallows has stopped coming. No doubt it has been caught somewhere. It is pitiful to see just one swallow so hard at work.^c

At eight the station telephoned and said they could change some money, so went and had 40 yen changed.^d The assistant stationmaster is a nice person.

About nine-thirty, father told me to pack his things for mountain climbing. I prepared everything from shirts to footgear without a hitch, so as not to be thrown into confusion tomorrow morning.

Earlier today received a postcard from Nakagaki-sama of Kurume. Their third son died on March 18 when the airplane he was piloting developed engine trouble and crashed. When I read it, I thought how extreme their grief must be.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a One of the most feared causes of the high infant mortality of the time. Yaeko later reports that some places have banned the sale of ices for this reason.

^b Mountain climbing" here and in subsequent passages is not a reference to a sport. Yaeko's father and his friends and associates are in the lumber business and travel to make preliminary surveys of mountain forest lands where there are to be timber auctions. John Embree encountered him on one such business excursion in the company of an official from the Suze village office, the ubiquitous Iwasaki-sama of Yaeko's diary. Embree's fieldnotes report that "He [Yaeko's father] and another man had bought about 100 standing trees for 600 yen some time ago and were now here to have them felled. They plan to remove the logs by horsedrawn wagon (basha) and ship them to Osaka, probably

making a profit by selling the tops and branches locally as firewood," the fuel commonly used for cooking and heating water for the bath.

- c One of a pair of swallows evidently has disappeared, leaving its mate to tend the nest. See page 75.
- d The inn needed to be able to make change, so exchanged larger bills for small denominations. There was no bank in Taragi that might have performed this service.

June 8 Cloudy; later rain

Got up at five.

In order to get up early because [father was going] mountain climbing, I set the alarm but did not hear it ring. In great confusion I finally finished the preparations at six. When father, Higuchi-sama, and Shimono-sama left, the sky was cloudy and it looked as though it might sprinkle. Finally it started to rain about noon.

Mother finished sewing the seventh yukata I had started. I began on the eighth one, finished it at five, and am now on the ninth.

Tonight there are no guests. How lonely it was, with only the three of us

"Everybody's favorite" kitten is still romping about.

Guess I'll go lock the doors and go to bed. It is just striking ten.

June 9 Rain

Got up at six.

The uneasy night is over, with only the three of us here. It is misty and the rain is pouring down. No guests.

Today I finally finished the tenth yukata.

Wrote a letter of condolence to Nakagaki-sama in Kurume.

Tomorrow is the drawing for the lottery. Hope I have good luck and win.

Played karuta at night. Called over Sueko-san and Nobu-san. We took out pictures of schooldays and looked at them. Sueko-san took five pictures home, saying she will frame them.

Fixed up the bunka embroidery.

At ten, tired from playing, finally went to bed.

June 10 Clear

Got up at six.

Last night's pouring rain has given way without a trace to the beautiful sun and it has become lovely weather. It must be a real relief to the mountain climbers.

At eleven, mother went to Hitoyoshi.^a How trying it was minding the place until she returned! I closed all the sliding glass doors in the back and stayed only in the front part of the house. Mother returned at two, and I was so relieved.

Father and the others came back at five-thirty. What an awful time they must have had!

As there were no guests, there were no dinner preparations. Did various things until ten-thirty.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a Thus leaving her alone to take care of things. Although one or both maidservants were undoubtedly there, Yaeko exhibits her dislike of solitude and unwonted responsibility.

June 11 Clear

Got up at six.

I was startled on being awakened. The morning air really feels wonderful. From morning it looked like rain, but only a few drops fell at dusk.

Today I fixed the cats' bed and had an awful time. While I was at it, cleaned the tokonoma^a and every corner of the room.

Since her legs became weak the mother cat has not caught a single mouse. That must be why, when I gave her a fishhead, she took it to her kitten and mewed, telling it to eat. Really, it was unbearably pathetic, even though the cat looks cheerful enough.

At night the street in front was bustling with the unicycle riders. The apprentices of the bicycle shop have become quite expert.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a The alcove in formal rooms, containing a flower arrangement, hanging scroll, and sometimes other ornamental objects. Apparently the cats' bed was in a "good" room where Yaeko could keep her eye on the kitten and its ailing mother. Ordinarily it would have been relegated to a less central location in the back of the house.

June 12 Clear

Got up at six.

Finished arranging flowers in the upstairs [guest] rooms.

At ten, father left for Minakami^a village. He is always kept so busy.

Took apart mother's kimono.

Starting at eleven, four people came in for lunch, one right after the other. Was on my feet the whole day long. Mr. Embree came in with his interpreter. They seem to have been on a research visit to the girls' school. They brought many presents, about which I feel badly [because it was so much trouble for them]. They left about five. When I saw the name "Embree" written on the wooden clogs in the entryway, I do not know why, but felt a great sadness.^b

Prepared dinner about six. It was noisy until eleven.

After taking a bath, went to bed at once.

^a Today pronounced Mizukami.

^b Like some of the villagers of Suye, where the Embrees lived, Yaeko here registers a common Japanese reaction to what they regard as the sore plight of foreigners living so far away from home. With none of their own kind to associate with, foreigners are thought to have a very difficult time with the language, food, housing, sleeping and bathing arrangements, and customs of Japan. Here showing her sympathy, Yaeko seems to feel the loneliness and isolation of the foreigner. For a similar comment, see page 115.

June 13 Clear

Got up at six.

While I was still in a deep sleep, the cat came and woke me up.

When summer comes there are so many insects it is annoying.

Cleaned as usual. Changed the water in the flower containers upstairs.

The chindonya^a advertising the new residential service offered by the freight agency (unsōten) was marching around all day, making it very noisy. From now on, if you telephone, they will send a man to your house to fetch your baggage to the station, and when you arrive, a man will be sent to take it to your destination. I am happy that it will become so convenient.

Kamiya-sama came about five. She said a student had brought a letter from Chihara-sama, so she brought it over to me. Chihara-sama tells me to believe in God. I know very well what faith is. However, when I am told about it afresh, a new perception [of it] is born in me.^b

Grateful for this day, went to bed at midnight.

^a A group of hired musicians usually dressed in period costumes who walk about to tout newly opened businesses or, as in this case, advertise new or expanded services.

^b This somewhat obscure passage deserves comment. We do not know who "the student" who brought the letter is or what school he or she attends. Chihara-sama appears to be a Christian, urging Yaeko to "believe in God." Chihara-sama may have been a lay Christian missionary worker, but there is no evidence that Yaeko was a convert to Christianity. Another possibility is that Chihara-sama belongs to one or another of the New Religions, such as Tenrikyō, Konkokyō, or Kurozumikyō, in which case the God referred to would be the chief deity of the sect.

June 14 Cloudy

Got up at six.

The whole long day was depressing. The laundry didn't dry thoroughly. The sky was mostly cloudy, and it looked as though it might start to rain at any moment, but somehow it seems to have changed its course. How beautiful the green of the tree leaves when summer comes! It looks as though a spirit might come out from the green at any moment and dance. I painted such a vision while gazing at the tops of the paulownia (kiri) trees.

Thus brought nearer to nature, I long for my classmate. This evening, gazing at the sky in the direction of Ōita, I long incessantly for my friend. Oh, friend--have much happiness always! Praying like this, my heart is full.

The children in the street are terribly noisy. Maybe it will rain again tomorrow.

Took apart mother's light seru^a kimono. Am thinking of washing it with a brush.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a This is one of two Japanese words, seru and sāi, usually rendered "serge" in English. The former, probably a loan word from Portuguese saraca, is ordinarily used in reference to a light wool kimono material. The latter, a much later borrowing from English serae, usually refers to the familiar sturdy woolen cloth for suiting.

June 15 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

As usual, cleaned everything beginning with the upstairs. There were so many guests for lunch I was busy in the kitchen until three o'clock. I am happy that I have improved considerably at preparing fish.

Ohara-sama of Menda came. He said they are intending to move to Taragi and if there should be a good house, to inquire about it.

Started making rice with beans (mame gohan) about five; it lacked salt a little.

Prepared mother's light serge kimono for brushing and washing. It is a sultry evening. The children in the street are noisy again.

Went to bed at eleven.

June 16 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

I was startled on being awakened. This morning the air certainly feels fine. The water for washing feels cold and seems to soak into the skin. Finished work in the kitchen early because there are few guests.

The silverberry tree (gumi) that has given so much joy year after year fell over. The face of Yuki^a at that moment... I guess the tree was infested with insects, for it broke off at the roots.

Ohara-sama of Menda came again. Went to look at the house they are planning to move into. The layout of the house is good, and it is spacious, but it is so dirty it probably will have to be cleaned for two or three days before they can move in.

The natsumikan^b was so delicious^ø

At night, watched the unicycle riding. Washed mother's light serge, happy it came out so clean.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a One of the maidservants.

^b A summer citrus fruit resembling a bitter grapefruit.

June 17 Clear

Got up at five.

Washed my hair today. It was very dirty, for I had not washed it for fifteen days.

Mother went to Ohara-sama's in Menda. I made rolled sushi for the first time in a long time, and forgot to drain the stalks of fuki,^a so it was a bit watery. Mother took five rolls to Ohara's, and the grandmother there seems to have been very pleased. Miyo-chan, who is five, sang a song for mother, who told me she had praised her excellent intonation. Mother returned on the one o'clock bus.

All the peas in the field have been picked. This year's crop has been good so far. I wish to offer thanks to the vegetable plants.

Had a nosebleed about four o'clock. A sultry evening. It probably will rain tomorrow. The radio is blaring away.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Butterbur; bog rhubarb. See Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan 2: 360.

June 18 Clear

Got up at five.

Put away my winter clothes and got out the summer ones. They are very gay. Wrote two inserts for the electric signs.^a Bought material for five summer zabuton (cushion) covers.

Rice transplanting has started far and near. The young girls, all lined up in a row, with their heads wrapped in towels, look particularly beautiful. The Embrees must have taken lots of pictures of rice transplanting.

It was said that the tsuyu^b would not come this year. Judging by the dry days recently, it may be true. It poured at the time of the wheat harvest, which is a bad time to have rain, so that quite a bit of wheat seems to have rotted.

Nishi-san of the insurance company goes around every day, diligently collecting from subscribers.^c

Since day before yesterday, Iwasaki-sama has been mountain climbing in Yourao. He must be greatly handicapped in fixing his meals, with his bad arm.

Have heard that my classmate Miyahara-sama is in the hospital at Hitoyoshi in a terribly weakened condition. How pitiful! It is said there is no hope of her recovery.

It is quite hot. What good sales the vendors of ices^d must be having!

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Probably for the lighted signs hung at the entrance to the inn. It seems odd that a young female member of the family was asked to write the name of the inn. Ordinarily the male head of the house would do it. See the next entry, page 63.

^b .Literally "plum rain" here referring to the rainy season. See Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan 1: 325-326 under "climate."

^c John Embree's fieldnotes provide the explanation for this passage: "Nagatake called to explain about his 'conscription' insurance. The company is Dai Ichi, the largest in Japan. It insures young male children or boy babies against passing the [mental and physical] examinations when they reach the age of conscription. If the boy is

accepted, one receives over four times the amount paid in premiums. He said strong boys are more likely to be insured simply because they are more likely to pass the physical examination. (The loss of a son for the period of service is a big economic loss to the family, hence the insurance.) Nagatake has been the agent in Suze and the surrounding region for five or six years. His brother Nishi has recently become an agent, too. Nishi gets no salary, but receives a commission of two percent of all premiums collected. Earned about 200 yen last year.^d

- ^d We are not sure whether Yaeko is referring to kōrigashi (ice confection) or aisu kyandē (ice candy), both fruit-flavored. The former was served in a small dish or cup and was soft enough to be eaten with a spoon. The latter, frozen around a stick, was rather like an American popsicle. See also pages 49, 95 and 103.

June 19 Clear

Got up at six.

Slept unusually soundly. Was startled by the sunbeams and jumped out of bed. Today is the day of the solar eclipse I have been anticipating for two whole months.

About two-fifteen the light began to wane and it was dark for about three hours. A guest from Tokyo happened to be with us and he smoked a sheet of glass with a candle to make it easier to look directly at the sun. It waned by degrees and just when it was 60 percent obscured, how beautiful it was! When seen from the earth, the sun looks about 20 centimeters wide. How it must have made the astronomers of the world stare in wonder! If today had been cloudy, it is said the loss would have amounted to several hundreds of thousands of yen. Fortunately, the weather was fine, so everyone's joy was supreme.

My inserts for the electric signs [in front] were so poorly written that Ohara-sama had to redo them.

Finished cleaning out all the closets.

The cat is listless. There seems to be an illness about. I wonder if it will be all right.

Went to bed at midnight.

June 20 Clear

Got up at six.

They say that Japan succeeded in photographing yesterday's solar eclipse. I feel awfully sorry for the professors who have come all the way from foreign countries.^a

My friend's parents came and stayed over.

My schoolmate Furuse-san, who has been ill for a long time, died at last. How deep must be her parents' grief!

Today I am wearing my kantan fuku^b for the first time. At last summer has arrived. Someone said yesterday he had heard the first cicada.

Worked late because there were many guests.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a The Japanese newspapers of June 19, 20, and 21 gave extensive coverage to the participation of the international scientific community in the observation of this eclipse. Here Yaeko refers to the bad luck of the British team stationed in Hokkaidō, where the sky clouded over just prior to the period of totality. A sympathetic account of their frustration appeared in the Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun on June 20, 1936.

^b A simple western-style shift worn as a workdress at home. The contemporary version is called hōmu doresu from the English "home dress."

June 21 Clear

Got up at six.

As usual cleaned everything beginning with the upstairs. The maidservant's younger sister came and brought a lot of hydrangeas. Put them in a vase at once. Those large blossoms, the depth of the blue...it is a beauty no words can express.

The kitten now eats anything. I suppose they will come soon and take it. Not knowing it is to be given away, it sleeps peacefully. I have named it Lily, but I wonder if they [the new owners] will call it by that name...

Although it was clear all day, it was somewhat depressing. All kinds of weeds are growing to the point of suffocation.

Takeuchi-sama of Shiiba^a came. He made merry at our place until about midnight and then went somewhere in a taxi. He returned about three in the morning. Mother, who was still clearing up, let him in.

Went to bed at three.

Later: This was our ancestor's death-day. The priest from Eishōji^b came and we assembled [for the memorial service]. How large and broad was this priest's back!

^a In Miyazaki Prefecture.

^b The Buddhist temple of which the family are parishioners. Although Yaeko uses the word jūji, which usually is translated head or chief priest, in rural areas it is the rare temple that has more than one.

June 22 Rain

Got up at five.

Mother was up all night without sleeping a wink. When I woke suddenly, I found all the shutters open. Last night's guests came back separately at two and three o'clock, so there was no time for her to sleep. Poor thing! Her eyes are swollen and red.

Started sewing mother's light serge kimono. I'd better finish my sewing soon, as I don't think I'll be able to do it when it gets hot. Iwasaki-sama seems to have two more kimono to do, and then she will be finished. She certainly manages well, with all those children.

Did a moribana^a with cornflowers, summer chrysanthemums, fox-glove, and two other kinds. I think I arranged them well.

Wrote a letter to Chihara-sama. At night, read King until about twelve.

Went to bed at twelve-thirty.

^a A style of flower arranging.

June 23 Clear; later rain

Got up at six.

It rained, after a long dry spell. The fields and mountains have revived. How the farmers must be rejoicing. I can hear their merry voices. The paddy fields in back are all finished.^a

Today is the fifth day of the fifth month by the old calendar, Boys' Day. The carp banners and streamers floating in the wind are beautiful. The fragrance of the sankirai^b leaves in which the dango (dumplings) are wrapped makes them really delicious.

I forgot to buy shōbu^c this morning, so went with the maidservant to look for some. What joy when we finally found one stalk under the cryptomeria! Promptly cut and brought it back to put in the bath.

In the afternoon, it turned to rain and the wind was strong.

At six, went to Iwasaki-sama's house on an errand. She was taking a bath, so I had to wait a long time. As I was leaving, received a gift of many dumplings wrapped in vine leaves.

At seven, the [shoe store's] dog bit a stray dog and there was a great fuss. That dog most probably is hopeless. A number of people pushed in to get a closer look, but no one could do anything with that wild creature and only exclaimed helplessly. The stray bled badly.

Finished putting the cotton batting in three summer cushions.

[Mother bought me] some lawn material for a kimono.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a That is, the transplanting has been completed.

^b A vine with glossy leaves resembling those of the oak. Elsewhere oak (kashiwa) leaves are used as the wrappers for these Boys' Day sweets.

^c Sweet flag. It was the custom on Boys' Day to put the leaves of this plant in the bath water. Sword-shaped, they were thought to ward off evil. See Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan 7: 154.

June 24 Clear

While I was still fast asleep, father came to wake me up. The mosquito net swaying in the breeze gives one a fine feeling. Only six days left of June. Time certainly flies. It seems only the other day we went to Suze on a New Year's visit.

Laundered four sheets. They were the large ones, so it took two of us to wash them. The place out back where laundry is hung to dry is much used by everyone. Have already washed three times and hung [it all] up to dry.

I am glad the days are longer. Some like the summer; others like the winter. Everyone is not alike. I like the summer. It is so green, and the trees are in bloom. When I think of the great amount of oxygen the plants give out, I feel really happy.^a Somehow summer makes me burst with vigor. It makes me feel like dancing.

Takeuchi-sama made merry until late.

At eleven, took a bath.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a This remarkable expression of gratitude for the bounty of nature takes a curiously scientific form, which Yaeko no doubt had learned in school.

June 25 Clear; later rain

Got up at six.

From early morning the day was not very clear. It was uncomfortably sultry and passers-by were out of breath.

Started sewing father's lawn kimono. Began at two, but because I was slow and lazy, did not finish until ten o'clock. The translucent cloth is really beautiful. I think it the best of all the light summer fabrics. Tomorrow I will start on mother's.

Felt dizzy and almost fainted. Had a headache.

I was thinking how nice it would be if it would rain soon, and about eight o'clock it started to fall gently. It is a nice rain. At last the rainy season (tsuyu) has begun. All the houses in the street seem to have fallen asleep.

Went to bed at eleven.

June 26 Clear

Got up at six.

Started sewing mother's lawn kimono. At first glance, it looks very easy because the material is so soft, but once started, it is very hard to manage. As the thread was badly twisted, I had to draw it through my hand countless times, so that the skin on my fingers peeled off. Finished at last at six o'clock. Women's things are all more than four shaku^a [in length] so they take a great deal of time.

At night, went to the drygoods store with the maidservant to buy a housedress (kantan fuku), but they didn't have any nice ones. A new stock will be coming in two or three days, so will get one after that.

The mother cat cries loudly. I wonder if she is calling for her baby. It seems too cruel, but maybe it is going to die. I feel an uneasy presentiment.

Honda-sama, the woman who lives behind the inn, has gone out for rice transplanting for about ten days. She must be terribly tired.

Ayu^b are beginning to appear. They say that last year, oayu from the Kuma River were presented to the emperor. The form and taste of ayu are equally pure.

Having no guests, got into bed at eleven and read a novel^c to mother.

Went to sleep at midnight.

^a 1 shaku = .994 foot. Kimono material is sold in standard single-garment lengths of 26 or 28 shaku (1 tan). Here Yaeko is referring to the length of the body of the garment. A man's kimono hangs straight and is at least four shaku in length from the bottom edge of the collar to the hem. A woman's is much longer, having a wide tuck at the waist, and thus requires the sewing of more material.

^b Sweetfish. Often translated "trout," ayu are smaller and tastier than the Japanese trout called masu. Their season is short by law and they are considered a great delicacy.

^c Probably a short story or installment of a serial from a magazine rather than a full-length novel.

June 27 Clear

Got up at six.

The lawn kimono I got year before last is not worn out, but has faded badly. Fortunately, had to dye something for the maidservant as well as father's cotton crepe kimono, so dyed mine with theirs. The maid's is dark blue, father's black. Both turned out beautifully. Mine is too dark, so I don't think it can be used for a real dress. Am thinking of making it into a housedress.

Four guests for lunch. Cooked eel for the first time.^a

It being the first anniversary of the death of the grandfather next door, received a gift of manjū.^b

The rain, which started to fall about five o'clock, doesn't look as though it is going to stop.

Took apart kimono [for washing] until eleven, after I finished making a housedress out of the kimono I dyed over.

Went to bed at eleven-thirty.

^a Broiled eel, a very popular dish during the hottest days of the summer, is believed to be especially nourishing.

^b A steamed bun stuffed with sweet bean paste. Such gifts are sent out by the bereaved household to those who assisted at the funeral and near neighbors.

June 28 Cloudy

Got up at five-thirty.

Woke up suddenly to the violent pounding of the rain. Oh, dear! Rain again today! All the things I had planned to do vanished in an instant.

Mother's light serge kimono, which I started on the other day, is finished.

I am anxious lest the kitten get too big, because if it is too old [when it is taken away] it will not settle down in its new home.

Started getting dinner at six. Fixed sōmen,^a but the broth was too thin and the taste was all spoiled. Father scolded me and I felt dejected. Next time I will try to make it right.

Two guests today.

Father went to the movies at seven and returned at ten-thirty. Talked about the period picture [he had seen]. It was very gay.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a A vermicelli-like noodle made of wheat flour, usually served cold. A popular summer dish.

June 29 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

Ever since I finished making my housedress, I have been wearing it. Mother says I must work twice as hard as anyone else.^a

Nishi-sama^b asked me to lend her my collection of poems (uta). She let me look at the supplement to the new Shufu no Tomo.^c

Intending to give the kitten away today, had father make inquiries first. Found out the Nakamuras were away doing rice transplanting, so decided to wait until tonight. At seven, hoping for the cat's happiness, I carried it over there in my arms. Even though I have heard they love cats, I feel anxious. The country roads at night are really wonderful. Carressed by a gentle breeze, I got there and found them warm and deep of heart, and felt relieved.

When I put the kitten down, how innocently, without taking fright of anyone, it ran right into the inner rooms. I wonder if kittens, too [like humans], have the heart to give up anything precious to them. Do not give way to feelings of resentment. Farewell! Most probably you will not be coming back to me again. Fulfill your duty so that you will not disappoint anyone. Life's sorrows come at times of separation...

In the morning I washed my hair. Mother and father took a nap. At night, went on an errand to Nishi-sama's. It was raining gently. Wore my silk linen (kinu asa) kimono for the first time. If I am not careful from now since the rainy season has begun, everything will be covered with mildew.

Cleaned the kitchen very thoroughly. Pleased how grand it looks.

Dinner at six. Finished the lawn kimono.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Presumably because she can move faster than those wearing kimono.

^b A woman, not the Nishi-sama of the insurance company, and probably a classmate. It is likely this is the same person who brought the bunka embroidery. See page 44.

^c A popular women's magazine, "The Housewife's Companion."

June 30 Rain

Last day of June. Looking back, I wonder if I performed even one good deed. It was a dull month. In spite of its being the rainy season, we have had continuous fine weather. It will rain in July, no doubt.

It seems my classmate Nagata-sama has been transferred to Kanagawa Prefecture. Her work is connected with the navy, so she is always near a naval port.

Started sewing on father's cotton crepe kimono. It came out pure black from the dyeing, and looks like new. I am glad. Helped the maid with her kimono.

At eight, mother and the maids went to the movies.

Kamiya-sama came, very jolly as usual. On her stout body the yukata looks as though it might burst.

I feel lonely without the kitten. It used to play with the thread while I sewed... I wonder if it is being petted.

Mother and the maids returned at eleven.

Went to bed at eleven-thirty.

July 1 Rain

Got up at five-thirty.

It felt damp, and finally began to rain. Now is the real rainy season. How mean^b The rainy season is supposed to end tomorrow.

Had wheat delivered for making miso,^a three to^b this year.

The mother cat keeps looking for her kitten. It is pitiful.

Stuck some chrysanthemum plants in the flower garden in front.

With this rain, they probably will do well.

Tamaki-sama of Hitoyoshi came to fetch something he forgot.

Sewed on father's kimono yesterday from ten until three. Wonder what I should do next.

There is a lot of noise in the vicinity of the shoe store in front. Seems to be a quarrel about something.^c

Enbutsu-sama of Ōmura came. He has an intellectual's face, so must be a great man. According to what he said, he will go via Dairen.^d What an effort that must be!

The four swallow's eggs have hatched. With only one parent, it is a busy time.

Rained heavily for a while. There has been no thunder yet, so I guess the rainy season is not really over.

Helped the maid with her kimono again. When will she ever get the hang of it? I am impatient.

Dinner at seven.

Went to bed at eleven, and could hear the sounds of the strolling shamisen^e player.

^a Fermented bean paste.

^b One to = 4.765 U.S. gallons.

^c During their early stay at the inn, John Embree wrote: "Last night the shoestore owner across the way got into a scrap with a man from Menda. Everyone rushed to the window and looked out. Eventually voices rose and glass crashed. Then things seemed to subside. They say he drinks but is not always quarrelsome."

^d The northerly port of entry for Manchuria.

^e A three-stringed musical instrument.

July 2 Rain

Got up at six.

Had a strange dream last night. I dreamed I was shot. There was a pistol thrust against my chest. In a cold sweat, I was watching for my chance [to escape] when a shot rang out and the bullet entered my chest. Mother was astounded and putting both hands against my back and chest said it was all right because the bullet had not pierced me. I thought it would be all right, too, as long as it was only a dream. Nevertheless, it still bothers me that the bullet was left inside and did not come out. Feels as though it is buried in my chest and I feel bad.^a

At ten o'clock brushed the cat. It must have felt very good, for she purred loudly. At eleven went to Nakamura-sama's to visit the kitten. It still remembered me and came running when it saw me. The poor thing! They said it didn't eat a thing for two whole days [after I brought it over].

At night the maids went to the movies. I washed the beans for the miso.

Went to bed at midnight.

Amayami de

Shigereru kigi no

Shita yukeba

Honoka ni awaki

Tsuchi no ka ga suru

When strolling under the luxuriant trees after the
rain has stopped,
Faintly the delicate fragrance of the earth.

Amayami no

Nochi no sugashisa

Kihada yori

Shiroki kemuri no

Tachinoboru miyu

How refreshing after the rain has stopped.
From the tree bark white smoke rising

- ^a A peculiar aspect of Yaeko's disturbing dream is the appearance in it of a pistol. She certainly would never have seen one, except perhaps in a film or a picture in a magazine.

July 3 Cloudy; later clear

Got up at six.

Cleaned everything, beginning with the upstairs. The paper of the shōji (sliding doors) is damp after the rain and it is dangerous using the duster on them.^a

Mother had some drygoods sent up from Kinokuniya Drygoods Store in Yunomae, and bought a piece of georgette material for herself. The design of yin and yang (inyō no gara), especially where it is made into a ropelike pattern, is really good. The gray material is somber but refined.

The rainy season seems to have ended at last.

Tomorrow I am thinking of wiping the tatami and everything else.

The grapes are heavier on the vine from day to day. They will soon be purpling. The peaches, too, will soon be ripe.

The rice transplanting at the [elementary] school is also finished. I wonder if the little hands of my younger sisters, who are in school, were able to do the job well. The fourth-graders seem to have made manjū for a variation of sanabori.^b

The malt was ready, so today we all made miso.

Four guests for lunch. As it is the season for eel, they all ordered it.

Nagatani-sama came. He shows no sign of correcting his Osaka accent.

The snapdragons are in full flower. As they grow near someone else's house, I took only a single stalk and put it in a glass.

At night, went to shop at Nakahara Drygoods Store. At seven, father and Iwasaki-sama went to the movies.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Because it is easy to punch holes in the paper of the sliding doors.

^b A party held to celebrate the completion of rice transplanting, a joyous occasion after some of the hardest physical work of the agricultural cycle. Manjū is a cake stuffed with sweet bean paste.

July 4 Rain

Got up at six.

Awoke suddenly to find the maids were already up. Last night I felt a little cold.

Thought the rainy season was over, but it is still coming down. The laundry is only half dry and feels awful. The storeroom is full of it.

From eight this morning I started on mother's georgette kimono and finished it at six o'clock. The design is even more beautiful on the finished garment.

Not one guest came.

I smell Asu^a being sprayed somewhere. The mosquitoes are really annoying and quite noisy.

About six, Honda-sama, who lives behind our house, came in for a talk. It must be hard to go out every day to work as she does. She really is good-natured.

At night, helped the maid with her kimono again.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Tradename of a disinfectant.

July 5 Rain

Got up at five-thirty.

In the morning, took a baby mouse to the kitten. At first, the kitten kept retreating and was frightened, but afterwards caught the mouse and ate it up. After all, though it is a baby, a cat's a cat. Nakamura-sama gave me a gift of eggplants.

Running with bare feet and putting in all one's effort is a wonderful feeling.

There is mildew on the folded kimono. Everything is covered with mildew, to the very corners of the rooms.

Sewed my awase (lined kimono) today. Am thinking of finishing all the winter things early.

The day before yesterday, the execution of Lieutenant Colonel Aizawa took place.^a When I think of his last words, "I have no attachment to the physical," and of his feelings at leaving behind his wife and child, I simply feel pity. Even though he is a devotee of the Zen sect, it must have been difficult to check the agitation of his heart at the thought of eternal separation [from them]. It is said that his widow will now devote herself to the education of their beloved child. In this pouring rain, before the spirit of the dead where the smoke of the incense rises unceasingly, how sad and painful must be the widow's heart! It is true "That which has life will surely die,"^b but just the same, it is a sad and lonely thing.

Prepared dinner at five. Made eggplant salad and cooked eggplant with kintoki (red beans). Didn't turn out too well.

At seven, began sewing again on my lined kimono. Helped the maid with her sewing until nine-thirty. Took a bath. A guest will be leaving by the first train in the morning, so set the alarm and retired. Hope I won't oversleep. Read a novel to mother in bed.

Went to sleep at eleven.

^a This account must have come from the newspapers and, since it is the only event of national importance mentioned in Yaeko's diary, calls for an explanation. On July 19, 1935, Lieutenant Colonel Aizawa Saburō assassinated Major General Nagata Tetsuzan. He became an

instant hero of the Young Officers of the army's Imperial Way Faction (kōdōha), for it had been Nagata's transfer of the Inspector General of Military Education, General Mazaki Jinzaburō, who represented the view of the hardline imperial loyalists of the kōdōha, that had precipitated Aizawa's act. The War Minister resigned and his successor yielded to pressure from the kōdōha and agreed to a public court martial, which opened on January 28, 1936. The Imperial Way Faction had gained an invaluable showcase for dissemination of their view that the army must be purged as the first step toward political reform. The trial generated a great deal of public support and sympathy for Aizawa, for the defense soon turned attention away from his deed to the purity and nobility of his motives. Meanwhile, the Young Officers were plotting a coup d'etat.

General Mazaki himself was scheduled to testify on February 25. So anxious were the plotters to have his testimony publicized, and for other reasons as well, the coup was set for the following day. This single most serious threat to parliamentary democracy in Japan is called the 2-2-6 Incident (niniroku jiken). The coup failed and the conspirators were jailed. Aizawa's public court martial had been suspended and a new one, secret this time, opened in April, 1936. He was sentenced to death and executed on July 3, 1936. Nine days later the first group of 15 condemned rebels also died by firing squad and on August 19, 1937, the second group of three was executed. All were cremated and the ashes of Aizawa were combined with part of those of the 18 conspirators and placed in a common grave in the Kensōji, a Buddhist temple in Tokyo. (This account is a highly abbreviated version of the fuller one given in Ben-Ami Shillony Revolt in Japan: The Young Officers and the February 26, 1936 Incident. Princeton University Press, 1973.)

The sympathetic tone of this passage in Yaeko's diary suggests the extent to which the conspirators and their righteous goal of the restoration of imperial power had engaged the sympathies of the press and public, who considered them admirably idealistic. Yaeko focuses on the human tragedy, but is silent on the political issues.

^b See page 29, footnote a.

July 6 Rain

Got up at five.

For a wonder, I heard the alarm ring and jumped out of bed. Hurried with everything, as the guest was leaving so early. Because of this, all the work in the kitchen was finished by eight o'clock. Ordinarily it would have taken us until ten. "The early riser gains a farthing" (Hayaoki wa sanmon no toku). I don't know who it was said this.

It thundered all day long. The roof began to leak, so father climbed up and placed nine leakage shields on it. After the rain stopped, there was a "general mobilization" of the entire family, and we all set to work.

Summer vacation for my old school begins on the twentieth of this month. Each student no doubt is cherishing some happy plan and everyone must be waiting impatiently to go home.

The morning-glory vine is growing long and thick. I hope it will bear pretty flowers again this year.

Put lighted charcoal in the hibachi (braziers) and placed one in each room. It might help take away a little of the musty odor.

The rain stopped at six. Thought it was over, but it began to pour again about nine o'clock.

No guests.

Went to bed at eleven.

July 7 Rain

Got up at five-thirty.

I am beginning to get disgusted. It is pouring as hard as ever. Bought cucumbers and eggplants in the morning.

Climbed up on the roof again at noon. The dripping of the rain that leaks through it is tragic. Why couldn't they have made this large building a little more perfect? It seems that the rooftiles have shifted because of the incessant rain.

Finished the lined kimono. Just looking at the winter things in summer is oppressive. But come winter we will wear jackets over the lined kimono and put on still more and more layers, yet shiver. It really is funny when one thinks about it.

About six, the rain stopped completely. The blue sky is peeking through for the first time in a long while.

One of the baby swallows fell to the ground. It must have been frightened at the downpour and dropped from where it was clinging to a wire. Mother held it to warm it in her bosom, and it recovered its energy. How happy it was when it was put back in the nest! The parent bird also chirped with joy.

The people next door seem to have caught a lot of eels. The rain must be good for eel taking.

Terrific thunder. At night, read a novel to mother.

Went to bed at ten.

July 8 Rain

Got up at five-thirty.

Today I was told to go pay a visit to Tanaka-obasama^a who is ill. So immediately after finishing cleaning the upstairs, I went. Her weakened body stretched out, she looked happy to see me. Being a very tidy person, everything was in perfect order.

Returned about twelve-thirty and just as I was about to change, Kamiya-sama came and visited until threeo She thinks a great deal about the futureo

Dinner at six. Bought the August number of Fuji.^b Read it aloud to mother. No guests.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a "Aunt," used as a term of both address and reference to older women.

^b A popular magazine.

July 9 Rain; later cloudy

Got up at six.

Just as I was thinking how good it was the rain was letting up, it stopped and I could see the dull rays of the sun. Took out all the half-dried kimono that had accumulated in the storeroom. Some of them have spots on the shoulder liners^o

In the afternoon, washed five or six kimono, as I will have many more to do tomorrow. Picked all the peaches, which had a lot of worms in them and quite a bit of resin seeping out. Offered one to the hotoke-sama.^a

The white cat is listless. It had a fight with some other cat and is covered with scratches.

Today had squash soup for the first time this year. The combination of the salty miso and the sweet squash makes a delicious flavor.

For the first time in a long while, I tried to draw. Drew two figures on one piece of paper, one a woman of the Genroku period^b and one of the present age. I think the one of the Genroku period is better.

At night, the maid from Shioya^c was practicing riding a bicycle. She'd ride for about five or ten feet and then fall, get back on, and fall again. She had a hard time managing, but with such perseverance she probably will become good at it. "Falling seven times, getting up eight times" (Nana korobi ya oki).

Took a bath at seven. It has been a long time since I took such an early bath, and when it was time to go to bed, I found I had perspired and so did not feel good.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a The ancestral spirits, whose memorial tablets are kept in the domestic Buddhist altar. It is the custom to offer fresh items just coming into season to the ancestors.

^b A brief period of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, known for the efflorescence of urban arts and fashion.

^c Another inn.

July 10 Rain; later cloudy

Got up at six.

The rain, which fell all morning, finally stopped around one o'clock and a rather strong sun came out. Finished quite a bit of the washing.

At ten, father went to Hitoyoshi. Going out on rainy days is not good. Clothing gets soiled and footgear gets wet. Furthermore, wherever one goes, one is hampered in one's movements.

Five guests for lunch. In view of the season, there were many orders for fruit.

At dusk, was scolded for always wearing a housedress and told to wear a kimono occasionally. It is not good when one still has to be corrected by others. I must set my mind on this with firmness.

Had various work to do until ten.

Tanaka-sama and his wife from Shimonoseki^a came. It was particularly unusual.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a A city on the southern tip of the main island of Honshu, just across the Kanmon Straits from the northwestern tip of Kyushu.

July 11 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

The weather has been splendid since yesterday afternoon, and the house is gradually becoming orderly again. The things that were spread out have all dried [and been put away again]. There is nothing left undone that might leave a feeling of regret. I have been able to air the very corners of the closets, so I feel as happy as though I have been restored to life.

The trees on the mountains and the grasses sing the joy of resurrection.

They say the mother of the family into which my friend married is very ill. I hope she will recover quickly. Because she is my friend's mother [-in-law], I cannot take the view of an outsider.

Have been thinking of dyeing father's light serge kimono, but because the weather has been so bad, I have unwittingly postponed doing it again. I am thinking of dyeing it while this good weather lasts. This is the first time I shall use an acid base dye. I wonder if it will take well. Am worried already.

Yesterday, Ohara-obāsama of Menda came to let me know that Kiyokosan has returned from Tokyo. Granting it was good of her to come back, I am still puzzled as to her real intentions in leaving her child behind.^a

At eight o'clock there was a farewell banquet for someone. Nine guests came. It is the cause of some confusion, when there is a banquet [after not having served one for so long]. It was gay and lasted until ten. After they finally left, it took us until midnight to clear up.

I was dozing even while writing in my diary.

Went to bed at twelve-thirty.

^a It seems likely, as Yaeko appears to suspect, that Kiyoko has left her husband or been divorced. If such was the case, it is highly probable that the husband's family exercised its legal claim to offspring of the union.

July 12 Rain

Got up at six.

Happy the rain had stopped if only for a moment. It began raining early this morning.

Redid mother's kimono collar lining.

Then I went to see the kitten, worrying how it would be. Unexpectedly, it was in high spirits and had grown. It remembered me and played with my apron. Poor thing! Perhaps because it is not yet used to the house, it doesn't eat much. They also have a dog, and much to my relief they told me that the kitten and the dog are very good friends.

At night, since there are no guests, I read Fuji aloud for everyone. There were a number of different things to read. It appears that in the olden days they were strict and upright in all things.^a

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Yaeko earlier was impressed with a similar sober lesson got from a film that she had seen. See page 17.

July 13 Clear

Got up at six.

Awoke suddenly and found that all the others were already up. Dressed in such a hurry that I discovered I had put on my clothes inside out. Laughed heartily.

Cleaned out the downstairs closets today. There was a lot of dampness and the quilt at the very bottom of the pile was ruined. How can such things happen when I take such pains to dry everything before putting them away? After all, the rainy season is bad.

About one o'clock, took a twenty-minute nap. When I got up I did not feel at all well, but about dusk felt much better.

The sunset was beautiful. Whenever I see a sunset, I at once see a royal prince and princess crossing a desert. I do not know why.^a In my mind, sunsets and royal princes and princesses are bound together and cannot be separated.

Dinner at six. Someone suggested going to see a play, but I decided not to go.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a There is more than one possible origin for Yaeko's association of sunsets, royal couples, and the desert. There is a popular song of an earlier period that begins: Sabaku ni hi ga ochite (The Sun Sets on the Desert) and concerns the travels of an Arabian prince and princess. It is even more likely, in our opinion, that she was inspired by an immensely popular song Tsuki no sabaku (The Moonlit Desert), the third verse of which goes, "In the saddle ahead was a prince, in the saddle behind a princess. The mounted pair alike were clothed in robes of white." Again, the desert is Arabian and the mounts are camels.

July 14 Clear

Got up at six.

From morning, with my eye on the splendid weather, I put the storeroom in order. Everything was covered with mildew. Looking at all the things being cleaned one after the other, I thought how remarkable it was they had all fitted into one small box. Because they had been pressed down as they were stored away in turn, they fitted well, but when they are taken out, they make quite a heap. When one goes shopping one buys things one by one, so one doesn't notice, but when they accumulate there are plenty of them.

About noon began to suffer from a headache, but it went away about three.

At last one must contend with the severe heat. One must take care of oneself and be careful about what one eats. Recently, tomatoes are abundant, so have eaten a lot of them.

One guest for lunch. Took trays to Masuda-sama. There were supposed to be four, but two more were added, to make six.^a

My classmate Shigenaga-sama returned today on the ten o'clock train. During our schooldays, she was slightly plump, but now appears to be thinner. It looks to me as though there must be many worries after all when one stands at the "battlefront of employment."^b

Dinner at six. As I was on my feet all day, my legs are tired. Read a novel to mother until nine. She likes historical novels better than contemporary ones, and is always pleased [to be read to].

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Masuda, who owns a lumberyard near the rail station, has ordered lunch for four to be delivered to his place of business.

^b Shigenaga-sama has been working in the city. Yaeko, who stayed at home following graduation from higher school, thinks of herself as protected from the rigors of going out to work. The "battlefront of employment" (shokugyō sensen) was a popular expression of the time, used especially with reference to the struggles of young women in the labor force.

July 15 Cloudy

Got up at six.

The firewood mother dried specially got wet in last night's rain. As it was still drizzling, I put on my sports hat of schooldays and carried some of it in. It wasn't all wet, so if I leave it in the storeroom it probably will dry out.

As general housecleaning (ōsōji)^a is drawing near, I thought I'd get a head start, so today did all the upstairs. While I was sweeping, I was bothered by the dust that got in my eyes. What a lot of it there was! It made me wonder if people really live here. Swept at a cobweb with the broom, but couldn't manage to dislodge it. Brought a step-stool and finally got the cobweb down with the tip of a long stick. The general housecleaning notice is sure to come within the next two or three days.

The sky was mostly cloudy all morning, and it looked as though it might begin to rain at any moment. I feel like praying: Please don't rain until ōsōji is over^b

In the morning there was a lot of noise out front, so I went out wondering what it could be. Looked like a crazy woman. They say she comes from Shiiba. It is said she suffered chi agari^b after childbirth and became like this. Twirling something that looked like a chain and two sticks, she was dancing and singing in an amusing tone. How pitiful! I wonder if her parents and brothers and sisters do anything for her. Judging from the way she looks when she is quiet, she must have been a beautiful woman before going mad.

After lunch I went out to weed the yard in back. How the weeds and grass grow! During the rains of the past several days the weeds spread as though the world belongs to them. They seem to be stretching out their hands. As I look at the amount of grass and weeds, I am reminded of the time at school when we had to write a composition on the subject of "Fighting Weeds." I guess weeds must have been hateful to that teacher, too. I can still see him in the schoolyard wearing a sports shirt. With his hands full of weeds, I can still hear him saying, "Look, Yamaji-san, how much I have conquered!"

It is vain to recall the dreams of one's schooldays. Now I stand in the world of realities. If one should take a wrong step, there is a bottomless ravine... It was easy during schooldays, for one could cling to the teacher's hand, but now one is alone. No matter what manner of thing it may be, one must handle it all by oneself. There was a time when I used to pursue bright dreams, but they have been pushed aside by the reality of this world. In those days, it cannot be known how melancholy I was, for it is said some place that youth never ceases seeking for beauty in all things. I think it is so.^c

At two o'clock went to pick shiso (beefsteak plant). There was quite a lot of it. The leaves they come around to sell are so dusty it is hard work washing them clean. In this respect those grown at home are better. Mother took out the green plums she had picked and prepared for me.^d

It drizzled off and on all day long. I hope tomorrow will be splendid weather, for I have a lot of work left to do.

At dusk, the red sunset promised a good tomorrow. Again, I recalled the royal couple in the desert.

About ten o'clock, Shigenaga-san came and brought me some material for a nagajuban (long underkimono) as a present from Kyoto. Her voice is much improved since our schooldays. It must be because of being knocked about by people.

Changed father's ice-pillow. His temperature was normal: 36.3 C. Mother's was 36.4 . Mine was 36.70, although normally it is two-tenths of a degree lower

Stayed up and did various things.

Went to bed at twelve-thirty.

^a Three times a year the authorities ordered a general housecleaning. Advance notice was given, inspectors made the rounds to check on each dwelling, and certificates were issued to those who passed inspection.

^b "Rising blood." The Nihon kokugo daijiten (Volume 13, page 304) offers the following definition: Too feel giddy from blood rushing to the head, a condition experienced by some women after childbirth occasionally resulting in shock and psychological disturbance.

- c The sentiments of this paragraph are typical of the youth of the time. Although she may not have encountered any of it directly, literature such as Young Werther was exceedingly influential in Japan.
- d They are preparing umeboshi, plums pickled in heavy brine and shiso.

July 16 Cloudy

Got up at five.

There was a guest who was to leave on the first train, so had to get up early. I always oversleep. My eyes just will not open. After a time heard a cock crow. It was worth getting up early, for I finished everything early in the day.

In view of the cloudiness, went out and weeded some more. The yard in back is now so neat as to be unrecognizable.

At dusk it began to drizzle. The grass I had so painstakingly pulled and spread out has revived and regained its color.

At night went to the vegetable market, but found it has been postponed until tomorrow. Went to the greengrocer and bought various things. The rain has stopped, but it is sultry.

Went to bed at midnight.

July 17 Clear

Got up at six.

Three more days and it will be doyō.^a At last the real heat is here. At noon it was 30 C. About three, the sticky-looking mercury rose to almost 33o. Extremely hot.

Father was able to get up at last. He appears to be quite weak.

At one, the plasterer came to examine the places where the roof has been leaking. Gave him an ice at tea time. When he came down from the roof his forehead was covered with beads of perspiration.

Went to the vegetable market tonight and bought eggplant, tomatoes, burdock, and onions. Even at midnight it did not cool off.

Went to bed at twelve-thirty.

^a The dog-days, the hottest period of the summer.

July 18 Clear

Got up at six.

Recently my eyes have begun to cause me trouble. Things blur and I cannot see clearly. When I asked Ohara-sama about it, I was told it might be malnutrition. However, I believe there is no one who takes as much nourishment as I. It must come from some other cause.

Took out the kimono to sew, but couldn't do it.

At night, went on an errand to where Nishi-sama is lodging, but he had already retired.^a

Had Kamiya-sama bring some plums for me. She is really a nice person.

The alumnae meeting is drawing near. I wonder what I should talk about at the class meeting. My turn always comes round so that I must start worrying about it now.

The general housecleaning inspection is set for the twenty-third. Must start cleaning gradually.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a As there is no gender in Japanese, it is difficult to tell if this is the Nishi-sama of the insurance company, a man, or the woman who borrowed Yaeko's book of poems. From the context we take it to be the former.

July 19 Clear

Got up at six.

Started ōsōji. Today did only the downstairs rooms. Tomorrow I'll do the upstairs.

A sultry day. Great confusion because of ōsōji. Discovered a number of school compositions and recalled those bygone girlhood days. Felt especially sad. Put the textbooks in order, with gratitude for the ten and some years represented by the high pile of books. I was so sweaty and covered with dust I felt awful, but took a bath and recovered completely.

Went to visit Shigenaga-san. The obasan, who has recently given birth, seems to be feeling much better.

It started to cloud up at dusk, but after a while cleared again. Heard fierce thunder during the day.

Went to bed at eleven o

July 20 Clear

Got up at six.

Did ōsōji of the kitchen today. As there are only three general housecleanings in a year, dirt and dust accumulate in heaps. One cannot clean the shelves dressed in an ordinary way. Equipped with towels wrapped around our heads and masks we all turned out. The dust erased our smiles, and everyone worked with a serious face. Sweeping down the cobwebs and lifting up the tatami, I think everyone did a good job.

Father went to the Kurohiji mountain. Today it appears that the prominent men of Kumamoto Prefecture are to meet. They say much attention is being paid the mountain because there will be bidding on the timber there. Father returned at three. The auction will be held tomorrow. Today they were only making preliminary inquiries. It must have been very hot.

Went to bed at midnight.

July 21 Clear

Got up at six.

This was the day to call the priest to conduct the memorial service for the ancestors, but as father was going out for the timber auction, I went in the morning to tell the priest not to come. We intended to have him up-date the kakochō,^a and it would have been inconvenient without father there. I asked the priest to come in the evening instead.

The inspection for ōsōji is on the twenty-third. Because this house is so large, it takes a long time. Today, cleaned upstairs, toilet, and bath. What a wonderful feeling when it's finished!

Father returned at one o'clock, earlier than expected. I went to the temple to ask the priest to come, but he was just leaving to go fishing with about 30 children. A priest taking life! I could not help laughing at the contradiction. Perhaps he found it funny, too, for he gave an embarrassed laugh. He promised to come at dusk.

Went home, and placing various offerings in front of the butsudan,^b we waited. He came at six and wrote in the kakochō. About eight, he started reciting the sutras and offered prayers for the safety of the family. Perhaps I was overcome by the spirit of the occasion, for during the ceremony I became calm and was able to concentrate my mind. After the sutras were finished, we served him an assortment of delicacies.

As I was seeing the priest back to the temple, I carried his change of clothing^c and the package [of gifts we had prepared for him]. It was nine-thirty when we left our house. Saw him to the temple and when the maid and I were walking down the dark steps, I heard in the stillness the rustling of the trees. Remembering the buppōsō birds of Kōyasan,^d I was deeply moved. Also, I remembered the priest Saigyō of Hase temple.

After we got home I looked in the kakochō again. When I think that the spirits of the ancestors of many decades are named here, a feeling of closeness comes over me, which is different from reverence.^e At eleven o'clock, I took the dishes down from the altar and purified them by washing.

Went to sleep at eleven-thirty.

- a "Book of the Past" in which are entered the names and death-dates of household members. It would be "inconvenient" without Yaeko's father because as the head of the family it is he who can provide the information needed.
- b The domestic Buddhist altar that contains the ancestral tablets.
- c When a priest goes out to conduct services at a private house or participates in a public ceremony he wears the ordinary black or white garment of his order. He carries with him, wrapped in a cloth (furoshiki), the ceremonial robes appropriate to the occasion, changing into them immediately before the rites begin, and removing them as soon as they are finished.
- d The broad-billed rōlder, a kind of jay. The call of this bird is said to sound like "buppōsō," the words for "Buddha, the Law, the Priesthood," so it is sometimes called the sangha bird. Kōyasan, headquarters of the Shingon sect, is located in a densely forested mountain area.
- e The ancestors whose names appear in the kakochō are not really hers, but those of the house into which she has been adopted. Yaeko feels they are her ancestors as well, for she probably will take an adopted husband to carry on the Yamaji line, hence the closeness of her feelings toward them.

July 22 Rain

Got up at five.

The cat's loud cries woke me suddenly. It was a little earlier than usual, but I thought I'd wake the maids. Went to their room, but they were up already.

The rain, which started as a morning drizzle, felt miserable. Tomorrow is ōsōji inspection; it is too bad it has to rain. Swept down the sooty cobwebs at the entrance to the dining room and all around the house. Tomorrow I will have only the daily cleaning to do.

About three the wind began to blow fiercely. Turned into a severe storm. How rough the open sea must be! The glass door of the umbrella shop across the street fell. People were trying to prop it up, but first one pane broke and finally the whole door fell.

Went up underneath the roof of our house. It was leaking again, so came down and got the protective shield and went back up to the roof. While I was up there a gust of wind blew a chunk of clay chinking from the tiles, which hurt me when it hit me in the back. Covered with soot and perspiration I came down again. Somehow, the leak seems to have stopped.

There were no guests tonight, so closed the doors early. In the streets, all the doors are tightly closed and the houses look frightened.

The lights went out. Complete darkness. Feeling my way, I put batteries in the two electric-light signs in front as a precaution. Hurriedly closed the door behind me and crawled back to bed in total darkness. As soon as I was in bed the lights came on again and I gave a sigh of relief. In haste, I wrote in my diary.

It is just midnight.

July 23 Rain

Got up at six.

Heavy downpour. Everyone feels dejected. They say the Nakatsuru Bridge here in Taragi has been swept away. In Hitoyoshi, it is said, 800 houses are flooded, 300 completely under water and 500 with water about 3 inches deep in them. The emergency alarm sounded, the firemen were dispatched, and the whole area around the Nakatsuru Bridge is under guard. When I heard this, I was so happy I almost cried. The flood is the worst on record and was totally unexpected by the people.

At night, Kamiya-san came and said she had gone to see the flood. Her light-hearted face was as jolly as ever. The yukata with the design of sprays of water becomes her.

Went to bed at eleven.

July 24 Rain; later cloudy

Got up at five-thirty.

Cleaned everything, beginning upstairs. The stairrails were dreadfully dirty. What a wonderful feeling it is, after cleaning each one carefully! When viewed from the entrance it looks airy; that's all I can say. When I finished the flower-arrangements upstairs, two guests arrived for lunch, so it worked out just right.

All kinds of goods are now on display in front of the shops.^a

It seems an epidemic caused by ices is spreading. The danger is so great, it is said, one city has banned them altogether.

Recently, fabrics containing rayon have come into vogue. No matter of what high quality a thing is said to be, there is sure to be rayon woven into it, unknown to anyone. It is in the warp sometimes, sometimes in the weft. One cannot but admire how wonderful these fabrics are, even though they contain synthetics.^b

At night, went to the vegetable market with Shigenaga-san. There were many seasonal items on display. Bought burdock and tomatoeso

Fixed some tears in the [inn's] yukata and some other things.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a In good weather Japanese merchants display their wares on racks and tables on the street in front of their shops.

^b Rayon, a new and inexpensive material, was much admired when it first appeared. This innocent passage hardly suggests the sounding of the death-knell of the silk industry, so important to the farmers of this region.

July 25 Clear

Got up at six.

Just as expected, the ōsōji inspector came around in the morning. We hadn't left even one spot untouched, so it was all right. As always, he handed me the white certificate [for having passed inspection]. What joy! At once, I pasted it on the post of the front gate.

At three, Kazuo-san of Miyazaki^a came. He has grown much taller since last year. Maybe it is because he has been using his head a lot. He has chosen a commercial school, as he intends to go into business, but there is something of the artist about him. He seems to have wanted to study music, but it was a little too late. I comforted him by saying he can leave that until he graduates. But I don't suppose his dream will be realized, for when he graduates, his mind no doubt will shift to his special line of business. He told various stories and I understood how important a place Miyazaki [Prefecture] is in our Yamato.^b

Enjoyed the cool air until eleven-thirty.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a A city in southern Kyushu. For more on Kazuo, see below.

^b An ancient name for Japan, much used in this period of patriotic fervor. Miyazaki does occupy an important place in the Japanese myths. When the sun goddess dispatched her grandson to earth, he and his retinue descended to Mount Takachiho in Hyūga, now Miyazaki Prefecture, in eastern Kyushu. It was from the palace erected there that his descendant Jimmu, the first emperor, set out on his long journey to establish his court at Yamato, now Nara Prefecture.

July 26 Clear

Got up at six.

Cleaned everything from upstairs. Changed the water in all the flower-arrangementso Aired all the bedding. As the weather was fine, managed to hang it out in the sun.

About eight, received a phone call from the rail station saying they could exchange some money for us. Kazuo-san and I got 50 yen changed there. The assistant stationmaster really is a nice person. He always has a smile on his gentle countenance. I have heard he can dance and sing in the nō style, and do all kinds of things.

From about ten o'clock, everyone in the household participated in a grand dance party. When I danced the popular "Hill of the Camellias" (Tsubaki no oka) everyone applauded and I felt embarrassed (hazukashiō). It is a quiet dance because it is accompanied by a song. "Thinking of Manchoukuo" (Manshū omoeba)^a is a good dance, but it does not ring true and I do not like it so much. Although my dancing, which I learned at school, is crude, it is of use at such times. Most people know "Humoresque" very well, so that whenever I perform it, there is sure to be someone who will follow me. I was taught "Gondola," "Evening Primrose" (Tsukimisō), "Cossack," and several others, but now have forgotten all of them.

How impatient I used to be for the dancing period at school to come! To meet the clear eyes of Nagao-sensei (teacher) used to make me happier than anything else. The teacher's small body, stepping ever so lightly in perfect rhythm with the music of the piano--at those times we were the happiest people on earth. They have all become memories now, but when distressing things happen in this world of reality, they always console my heart.

Alas! All my classmatesø Where are they now? How are they? Where are the teachers, always so kind? One after another they cross my mind.

Went up to lay out the puffed-up bedding,^b which filled the closet, because I thought I could not go to sleep unless I had cooled it off [before going to bed].

Four guests made merry until late.

Went to bed at one.

^a One of many popular songs dealing with China or Manchuria. Manchoukuo was the name of the puppet state established in the latter after 1931. Why Yaeko felt this particular one "does not ring true" we do not know. Perhaps it resembled a popular dance form the Japanese call "folk dance" more than the others which, as their names suggest, belonged to the category of more refined dances learned at school.

^b Earlier she had spread it out to air in the suno

July 27 Clear

Got up at six.

Cleaned everything, beginning upstairs. Changed the water in the flower-arrangements.

It has been arranged with Kinokuniya Drygoods Store in Yunomae that Kazu-chan^a will go there as an apprentice during the vacation. He attends a commercial school,^b and it seems those who wish to may go to work as clerks in shops in town during the summer vacation. The personal experiences obtained there are to be written down and shown to the teacher [when school begins]. At first Kazuo-san seemed unwilling to go, but then, as though he had made a resolution, he said, "Nē-san,^c I think maybe I'll go..." Tomorrow I must take him there.

When going to bed he looked up at me and said uneasily, "Nē-san, only for 10 or 15 days. All right?" As I answered "Yes," I had an indescribable feeling. It was all I could do to say, "From now on you must become a member of society. What hardships that will bring!"

He is sleeping peacefully beside me.^d The amulet (omamori) from the temple of Narita Fudō^e had slipped out, so I softly tucked it back in.

It is just midnight.

^a Kazu-chan is the diminutive of Kazuo-san.

^b Vocational and technical education at the secondary level was offered at institutions called jitsugyō gakkō. These trade schools offered specialized training in commerce, agriculture, fisheries, industry, and colonial activities, but nothing in the liberal arts. The length of the courses ranged from two to five years, depending on the level of the school.

^c "Elder sister." This term is also used in addressing or referring to a slightly older woman, but internal evidence suggests that Yaeko and Kazuo are siblings and that she is in fact his elder sister. We learn later that he will graduate from commercial school next year, so he is probably between 14 and 16 years old by western reckoning.

^d The strongest evidence that they are siblings. Until the spread of western style architecture in Japan, with its permanent walls, hinged doors, wooden floors and beds, it was common for two or more people to spread their comforters out on the tatami mats of a room and sleep

side by side. Indeed, sleeping alone was uncommon and the villagers of Suze were horrified to learn that the Embreesó two-year-old daughter Clare slept alone during the brief time she was in the village with her parents. This passage is the clearest suggestion that Yaeko and Kazuo were sister and brother, for co-sleeping of an unrelated 18-year-old and a younger teenage boy would have been strongly disapproved. See Robert J. Smith and Ella Lury Wiswell, The Women of Suze Mura, University of Chicago Press, 1982, pages 213-15.

- ^e The amulet is worn on a cord around Kazuo's neck. The temple referred to is the famous one at Narita, site of Japan's new international airport, which serves Tokyo. Fudō-myōō (Acala, the God of Fire, whose name means literally the Unmovable God) is enshrined in countless places in Japan. A fierce deity, he is believed to represent the wrath of the Buddha directed toward demons and those who deny his teachings. In popular religion, Fudō-sama, as Yaeko calls him, is a protective figure with multiple powers. In a later entry we encounter a belief that he can cure illness (page 166)^e See Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan 5: 291, "myōō."

July 28 Clear

Got up at six.

Immediately after having breakfast, got ready to go to Yunomae. Kazu-chan, as though reluctant to leave, played on his harmonica. At last, by the second train, I set out with the temporary clerk. I was happy at mother's thoughtfulness in congratulating him this morning. We arrived in Yunomae at nine-thirty. It being my first time there, I did not know where the Kinokuniya Drygoods Store was. After walking for a bit, however, saw a landmark on the left and found the store right away.

Went inside to meet the master of the shop, an acquaintance, and said all the usual things. The shop jacket worn by all the clerks was put on Kazu-chan at once and the "instant clerk" was complete. He seemed happy. The notebook in the breast pocket of the jacket, placed there so he would not miss anything, was touching. Had a bus called so I could go back home. While waiting for it, watched how he was learning [his job]. Kazu-chan was sent to deliver some cotton to a place about a block away. It is really good he knows how to ride a bicycle.

Kazu-chan told me to ask ojisan^a to come visit him in about five days. He is so clumsy! His complexion is dark, so that although he is a clerk in a drygoods store, none of the things displayed in the window would suit him at all.

The bus came, so took my leave. Got home at ten o'clock. Gave a sigh of relief, my mind at ease. Was free until four. This fierce heat makes it very hard.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a "Uncle," probably a reference to Yaeko's foster father. It will be recalled that she is adopted and that the Yamajis are her uncle and aunt. She calls them father and mother, but if Kazuo is her brother who has been adopted by another family, Yaeko's foster father is his real uncle. (The term ojisan, like many other kinterms, is often used as a general referent or term of address for an older male.)

July 29 Clear

Got up at six.

Today emptied out all the chests of drawers (tansu) and aired their contents thoroughly. The odor of mildew is gone, and I am really happy.

In the morning, Kazu-chan came by bicycle on business in Taragi. He had made a mistake in the name of the people he was to find and couldn't make out the purport of his errand. I made inquiries by phone. When I found out what he was to do, I told him carefully. I also told him to think of absolutely everything as a test by the gods.

At night, went to the vegetable market and bought burdock, tomatoes, and cucumbers.

Iwasaki-sama and Matsuba-sama came. Talked until about ten; finally went home.

Went to bed at eleven.

July 30 Clear

Got up at six.

Put all the guests' quilts in order. With all of them hanging out, the drying place out back was filled up completely.

At ten, received a gift of many plums from Kaku-san, who lives across the street in front of our place. They give us some every year. It seems they have quite a large tree. I think he looks like General Nogi.^a Indeed, he has a frugal and simple nature. With all his heart he desires the development of Taragi town.

My classmates Nakata-san and Kuramae-san came. Kuramae-san seems somewhat dejected. I wonder why. They came to collect donations for Kannon-sama.^b

Kazu-chan came to Taragi again on business for Kinokuniya. I wonder if he had too many hardships in childhood. Unlike those days, his perception is dull, and he doesn't seem to comprehend things quickly.^c He came back again at three o'clock. He says the shopmaster and all the others are very nice people. I think that's better than anything.

Father, who had left about nine o'clock to go to Tsuiji [in Menda] on business, returned at one-thirty wringing wet with perspiration. How hot it must have been!

At night, Roku, the dog from the Honda's behind our house, came over. When we tried to touch it, thinking to pick off ticks, it became very angry. I wonder if it doesn't mind, even when it itches so much. We wanted to take them off, but...

Took a bath at ten.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Nogi Maresuke (1849-1912), perhaps the most famous military personage of the Meiji period (1868-1912). Upon the death of the Meiji emperor, General Nogi committed seppuku and his wife Shizuko killed herself. Symbol of patriotism, imperial loyalty, bushidō, and the austere frugality of the samurai, his life and the manner of his death were celebrated in the textbooks used in the ethics and morals (shūshin) courses in the schools. Unfortunately, we know nothing more of Yaeko's neighbor Kaku-san, but she pays him a supreme compliment by likening him to General Nogi.

- b The Buddhist goddess of mercy. There is to be a festival on August 4.**
- c More evidence that Yaeko and Kazuo are sister and brother. Because they were separated when young, she has not watched him grow up and finds him very different from his childhood.**

July 31 Clear

Got up at six.

July, the most beautiful month in nature, ends today.

Cleaned everything with special care, beginning upstairs.

It seems the Women's Association^a will sponsor a movie tomorrow. [It is the Gion Festival.] Four of the technicians are staying at the inn. They played all sorts of records for us. It is amusing how each person is born with a different personality. These four guests are all in the same profession, but each displays his respective characteristics. It is very interesting.

At night, Iwasaki-sama and Izawa-sama came.

Tomorrow is the Gion Festival.^b What crowds of people will turn out!

Received a summer greeting-card^c written in touching style. Remembered a special sadness.

Had various chores to do until ten.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Fujinkai. Probably the Taragi branch of the national organization. Established by the government to involve women in local and national affairs, to the limited extent deemed appropriate to their sex of course, these associations were designed to promote austerity in the domestic sphere, patriotic sentiments, and certain charitable activities. For a fuller account of the fujinkai in nearby Suze, see Robert J. Smith and Ella Lury Wiswell The Women of Suze Mura. University of Chicago Press, 1982, pages 23-37.

^b Kyoto's Gion Festival, held from July 17 to 24, is the most famous in Japan and has become a major tourist attraction. It centers on the Yasaka shrine, mentioned below, which is dedicated to Susanoo no Mikoto, his wife, and their eight children. The shrine in Taragi appears to be a branch, whose festival dates differ from those observed in Kyoto. For details of the latter, see Helen B. Chapin "The Gion Shrines and the Gion Festival" Journal of the American Oriental Society, Volume 54, Number 3 (September 1934): 282-289.

^c As at the New Year, when greeting-cards called nengajō are sent out, the Japanese exchange greetings at mid-summer as well. John Embree mentions receiving a card from Yaeko, and we have found it in his files (see page xi). It reads:

Midsummer greetings. I hope you all are well. My family is fine and everyone here is in good health. I wonder how you are finding the summer in the Japanese countryside. I hope you have been taking many interesting pictures.

When the weather turns cooler I am planning to pay you a visit. I have been keeping my diary although I think you will find it quite unworthy.

Please take care of yourselves, as this hot weather will intensify as summer goes on. July 28, 1936

We reproduce it here because it is the only sample of Yaeko's handwriting we have. Her calligraphy is more like that of a woman in her thirties or forties, rather than a girl of 18 or so. This may mean that Yaeko writes more often than most young women of her age, and we know that she likes to write letters and keeps a diary. Also, because she occasionally writes waka, she is obviously sensitive to the intimate association between poetry and calligraphy. It is likely that she prides herself on her writing and must have received compliments on it, for as we shall see she was given the task of writing names on the bicycle lanterns her father sold (see pages 126 and 127). She writes in a semi-"grass style" (sōsho) which appears to be one she devised herself, for it does not conform to the usual patterns of this running hand. We may be forgiven for suggesting that it is not first-rate calligraphy.

The prose and grammatical usages are quite typical of a formal postcard. She makes no errors in the use of characters (kanji), which are numerous and difficult enough to reveal her level of education. However, there are places where the local dialect appears to have slipped in. She writes omoi orimasu (I am thinking; planning) rather than omotte orimasu, and nikki kagashi naku kaite orimasu, for nikki kakasazu kaite orimasu, which is the standard form.

August 1 Cloudy; later rain

Got up at six.

Today is the Gion Festival. Since last night I have been praying for good weather, but the sky was mostly cloudy and it looked as though it might start raining at any moment.

At five o'clock, Mr. Embree and his interpreter came to town for the festival. Thinking they must certainly be getting wet in the rain, which had started by this time, I sent the maid to them with umbrellas. When I think how inconvenient everything must be for a person who comes from a foreign country to such a place as this, I cannot but feel sorry. At six, they returned to the inn for dinner. The food [apparently] was unpalatable and did not suit his taste. I could only ask for pardon. After dinner they again went out to the festival, and returned to the inn about eight before going back to Suway.^a

It is still raining outside. Tomorrow I shall hang up a teru teru bōzu.^b

Went to bed at eleven.

^a John Embree's fieldnotes contain a report of this visit. "At Kinokuniya [Sano-san and I were] greeted by the same two cheerful little maids in kimono. Yaeko-san appeared in a western-style dress, looking five years younger. Her mother was also wearing a dress. We ordered dinner for later and went on to the Yasaka shrine. As nothing was doing yet, went back to the inn and had dinner." At the festival, mochi (glutinous rice cakes) were thrown to the crowd. White and pink, some had prize slips inside for watches, cloth, and the like. "It began to rain and the maid from Kinokuniya brought us two umbrellas. When a storm suddenly blew up, we returned to the inn, where they served us cider [saida--a sweet carbonated drink]. Sano-san gave Yaeko-san three mochi he had caught. She, with her usual schoolgirl manner of great surprise and delight, exclaimed over them, and looked to see if they contained a prize slip. Then she ran off to give one to each of the maids."

^b When there are plans for an outdoor event such as a picnic, outing, fair or festival, children make this paper charm to be hung up under the eave of the house. They sing: Teru teru bōzu, teru bōzu. Ashita tenki ni shite okurebō (...make tomorrow's weather fine!). It is the exact equivalent of "Rain, rain, go away! Come again some other day!"

August 2 Rain

Got up at six.

Unceasing rain from morning. The Gion Festival was a failure. It was no good yesterday and I was so looking forward to today at least. I wonder if this might be an admonition from the gods to the people of Taragi town. Thinking about it, even if it hadn't rained, on the whole the festival of Yasaka shrine is a festival in name only. Actually, aren't there too many people who look forward only to getting drunk and passing out? It must be the strict admonition from the gods, who are unable to remain mere spectators. It is necessary to reflect deeply on this.

A number of guests came at eight. Arranging trays for 12 people keeps one quite busy.

Went to bed at midnight.

August 3 Clear

Got up at five.

It was a jolly morning, as the crowd of guests stayed over last night. In the morning washed twelve yukata and pillow covers. Drenched with perspiration. I do not have such a strong heart and at times mother and father tell me not to exert myself too much. However, no matter how one is born, I think it is possible to recover from an infirmity through one's state of mind. There are times when I feel really miserable at having to take so many kinds of medicine.

By chance, I got Mitsuko-san's address in Ōita. I cannot possibly say what a grudge I have borne against her, for I have heard nothing for a year and a half since our separation. But today, when I finally got her address, all that vanished without a trace. I shall entrust to a letter all the feelings of that year and a half and send it to her.

Went to bed at eleven.

August 4 Cloudy

Got up at six.

Today is the festival of Kannon-sama. The sky was mostly cloudy and it looked as though it might rain. Just as at the Gion Festival, it started to pour about eight. Why can't the people of Taragi enjoy the favor of the gods? There is sure to be a storm whenever there is a festival. I believe their worship is insufficient.

Repapered the shōji upstairs this morning. They have become bright, as though reborn.

It being the festival of Kannon-sama, I was told to go to worship at least, so at nine o'clock went with Honda-obasan and nē-san, who live behind our house. On the way, it started to sprinkle and made me anxious, but it soon stopped. We arrived at the small dō^a where they were showing a movie about the secret key to understanding the Kannon sutras, but it appeared to be too difficult to grasp, so we came home.

Enjoyed cooling off until midnight.

^a A small chapel, rather than a temple.

August 5 Rain

Got up at six.

Cleaned upstairs and all. Washed yukata and my silk linen kimono. Feeling reproachful towards the rain, which kept stopping and starting up again, I took the laundry in and out of the storeroom several times. It still feels damp, but nothing can be done about it.

Wrote summer greeting-cards to Sadako-san, Ogawa-san, and Iwaide-san. Sadako-san is still a student of the girls' school, but the others are all out working, so their writing is serious. Sadako-san's is touching, like that of a little girl. How lovely it is when she turns up her face to me and calls me nē-san. I suppose she will move to Taragi before long.^a

The rain hasn't stopped yet.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a A few days after this entry in the diary, Yaeko notes that her father has been over to help the Oharas (Sadako's family, who live in Menda) lay the foundation for their house in Taragi. See page 128.

August 6 Rain

Got up at five.

Up early, as there are many guests. Helped them to depart, one after the other.

From the morning onq it was a day of headaches. An oppressive, uncomfortable day. Nothing I did was interesting. It is now just about eight o'clock. I was told to take my medicine and go to bed, and think I will.

Went to bed at eight-thirty, holding my aching head.

August 7 Clear

Got up at six.

Last night was startling. Went to sleep early, holding my aching head. It was about three o'clock, I think, when I suddenly awoke. Heard something like the sound of someone in agony throwing up in the lavatory. At the very instant I realized this, my head began to throb painfully. However, it was no time for headaches.

Heard a succession of gasping, despairing cries. "I'm vomiting blood! I'm vomiting blood!" Calming myself, I looked over at the bed of my mother and father. It was empty. The voice sounded like that of the guest in Room Number One who, since last evening, had been taking stomach medicine. Just as I was thinking his condition must have suddenly become worse, making him throw up blood, mother came and told me to telephone Dr. Yamamura.

The sound of the ringing bell, which seemed to make the small hours of the morning shiver, gave me an awful feeling. No matter how many times I rang, there was no answer. At last on the eighth try, perhaps because she could not stand the din, a sleepy-voiced nurse answered. Told her of the sudden illness and that the guest said he had once been told by Dr. Fujikawa that his case was hopeless. In an earnest voice, the nurse told me that unfortunately Dr. Yamamura wasn't well. Impatient to ring off, I next telephoned Dr. Okagawa, although he lives far away. We have never called him in even once before. I half believed it would be of no use, but he consented to come to see the patient. Said it was ulcers. Even though it was four o'clock in the morning, father went out on a bicycle to fetch the medicine.

The day has dawned. The guest says he feels much better now. I think that's better than anything.

There were many guests for lunch and I was on my feet the whole day long.

Finally, at eleven-thirty, took a bath and went right to bed.

August 8 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

Today is the beginning of autumn. It may be my fancy, but it seems even the wind rustles with autumn-like coolness.

At eight o'clock father left for Kurohiji mountain.

Cleaned upstairs and all. At first I thought the work [in the inn] would be hard, for I was not accustomed to doing anything, but it is not that bad when one gets used to it. When I was small, I never even imagined [a place like] an inn. I thought it would be good to go one's own way with whatever confidence one has, but society did not grant me that. Instead, I have gone whichever way I have been dragged along, and inadvertently have become content with my present lot. Had I been able to go the way I believed in, I would never have left that path until I had reached its end. Nothing is so ugly as a person who, after setting one's mind on something, is satisfied to stop half-way toward the goal. Although I know it is useless to regret such things, it affects me just the same.

At eight o'clock, took a bath that was almost too hot.

Went to bed at eleven.

August 9 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

Had many guests last night. Put one thing after another in order, so I finished sooner than I had expected.

Went to visit the kitten. It is in good spirits, but very thin. When it saw me the poor thing leapt towards me. After all, it remembers me still. The freshwater fish I brought for it vanished in an instant. They [the Nakamuras] gave me some flowers when I left.

Received a letter from Mitsuko-sama! She is the same person of former days. Her style of writing is brief and to the point. During schooldays, she was not so skillful in composition, but now her style is splendid. She asked me to let her know how the rest of our classmates are getting along. I do not see the others at all of late, so cannot give her a precise answer.

Dinner at six.

On the radio they are broadcasting [musical] pieces from Ogawa^a-- "The Gorge" (Tanima), "Time to Turn on the Light" (Akari tomosu koro).....

Went to bed at eleven.

^a A village in Shimomashiki County, Kumamoto Prefecture.

August 10 Clear

Got up at five.

There was a person who was to board the first train, so got up early.

Today is the Seishōkō Festival.^a It was worthwhile praying for good weather, as it turned out to be a fine day. At ten, went to worship with mother. Had let the maids go at seven o'clock, so they would be coming back when we were about to leave. They came back completely out of breath, saying they had seen a movie. A large crowd turned out, so that the road was packed full for about a block and a half [in front of the shrine]. There was no need to walk, for one made excellent progress just being pushed along by the people.

There were plenty of stalls. The cries of the vendors were amusing. There were such edibles as ame^b in a glass case. They come in such a variety of colors that one wonders how it is possible to make so many of them. Those with too many colors [mixed together] are disgusting to the eye. The stalls selling toys, tsurikire,^c and vegetables appeared to be the busiest. Entered the [shrine] grounds and prayed. Went into the movie, but it was obvious that we would not be able to see a thing, so came right out again. Bought several things at the Asada Drugstore. It was eleven when we returned home.

Father in a bad mood.

Ohara-sama of Menda has moved here to Taragi.

Went to bed at two.

^a Festival in honor of Katō Kiyomasa (1562-1611). One of the seven great warrior-heroes of the period of Japan's civil wars that ended with the victory of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. In recognition of his service, Hideyoshi made Kiyomasa Lord of Higo. He built his castle at Kumamoto, today the capital city of Kumamoto Prefecture. Kiyomasa took part in Hideyoshi's ill-fated attempt to conquer Korea and died under suspicious circumstances after attending a meeting with Hideyoshi's son, Hideyori, and Tokugawa Ieyasu, founder of the Tokugawa shogunate. Seishō is the Chinese-style reading of his name. Like many powerful men, upon his death he was deified and worshipped by the people of the domain he had ruled in life.

- b Candy made of the gluten of one of several grains. Here Yaeko probably refers to fanciful figures of animals, flowers, and humans fashioned of the material, often mounted on a stick, like the American sucker.
- c Once again Mrs. Kawamura Reiko (see page 19) came to our rescue. Upon her return to Tokyo, she sought out an elderly neighbor who comes from Kumamoto Prefecture, where Taragi is located. The following is her account: "At the time of Ebisu festivals (he is one of the seven gods and goddesses of fortune who are especially worshipped by merchants), the kimono shops (gofukuya) displayed remnants of kimono material, hanging them out in front of their stores. These remnants were sold to make small items, such as handbags and kimono vests (chanchanko), but were also hung up for the eye-catching decorative value in attracting customers. It is possible that remnants were also sold on other festival occasions from stalls at the night markets." The etymology of this word appears to be tsurusu (to hang) and kire (fabric; material).

August 11 Clear

Got up at six.

We are blessed with a fine day and the festival is very gay.

Crowds of people turned out today, too.

From morning, had headaches.

The maids weeded the yard in back until noon.

Sadako-san came and asked me to sew her a housedress. It seems to be her assignment for summer vacation homework.^a I took the measurements and sewed it for her. She cannot do a thing for herself, but looked on as I worked and kept making some quibbling remark or other. I felt put upon and provoked. Finished all the basting for her about five o'clock. The sight of her joy made me happy.

Went to the kitchen at six.

Had four quite noisy guests. Had intended to go to the festival again at nine, but couldn't get away.

Wrote names on the electric lanterns until midnight.^b Everyone is sound asleep.

^a And so Sadako should not be asking someone else to do it for her. Summer homework assignments were given in almost all courses; this one is for sewing class. Kazuo's assignment for one of his courses in commercial school was to keep a record of his experiences as an apprentice at the drygoods store, it will be remembered. See page 107.

^b From John Embree's fieldnotes: "The inn is doing a new and flourishing business in electric lanterns. Yaeko-san writes the name of the purchaser on them in lacquer, in well written characters. They retail for 2 yen 50 sen. Nishi the shopkeeper retails them in Suze as Kinokuniya's agent. They are a combination of a bicycle lamp and a Japanese lantern. Stock now exhausted (March 19, 1936); they are getting in another hundred."

August 12 Clear

Got up at six.

Because I was up so late, I can't help feeling terribly sleepy. While I was dressing, even my hands felt sleepy.

The miso soup this morning was salty. It is the season for myōga^a from which all kinds of dishes can be made. I am becoming good at making the vegetables that go with sashimi and am very happy about it.

It sprinkled occasionally, but the sun came out and dried things out again.

Mother got a severe headache about five o'clock and went to bed. Got some ice at Sotomura's and put it in the ice pillow for her. Knowing the agony of headaches, I really sympathize with her. She is a treasured veteran of life. Her head is twice as keen as anyone else's. It gives me a feeling of pride. When mother is ill, everyone in the house is very quiet. Somehow, it seems as though the light has gone out. I hope she will recover soon.

At night, took an electric lantern to Tanaka's. On the way home met Kura-san. Said she was not feeling well, and so had come home to recuperate. She is extremely tall.

Ohara-obāsan came and visited until late. She always works very hard.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a A kind of ginger.

August 13 Clear

Got up at six.

After finishing the upstairs cleaning, wrote a letter to Mitsuko-sama. I am surprised that in her letter she says during the year and a half she did not forget me, even in her dreams. She asks me to write soon. We were classmates from elementary school onq so our friendship is something special.

Mother is still in bed, so it will be awful if I am careless. I can feel my heart throbbing.

Father went to Ohara's to help make the foundation.^a He was black when he came home. He didn't have to do it, but being an impatient and obliging person, he could not refrain from pitching in.

Mother got out of bed about five. She seems much better.

At night, enjoyed the cool of the evening. Holding their fans, the geisha of Kagetsu^b and others passed by. I thought them pretty.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Neighbors are expected to assist in putting up new buildings, but here Yaeko's father's participation is occasioned by the longstanding relationship between these two former business partners.

^b A restaurant in Taragi. According to John Embree's notes these "geisha" are prostitutes.

August 14 Clear

Got up at six.

Sewed on mother's unlined summer kimono this morning.

At ten, went to the Masuda lumber company. Dropped in at Shigenaga-san's place on the way home. She split open a watermelon for me, but it was not ripe. Nonetheless, I was happy at her kindness. I had forgotten about Chihara-san's letter, so took it with me today. However, she had already heard about it from Ishiwara-san in Nakahara, to whom Chihara-san had sent a similar letter.

At one o'clock, went to the Marketing Cooperative (shukka kumiai)^a office to get some money changed, but they were out.

Father visited at the drygoods store until ten-thirty.

The maid complained of a stomach ache, so let her go to bed early. At eleven o'clock, just when I was thinking of going to bed, it got worse, so took her to Dr. Fujikawa and had her examined. He said it was nothing serious, and we felt relieved. Received two kinds of medicine and returned home.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a Forerunner of today's ubiquitous Agricultural Cooperative (nōgyō kyōdō kumiai), which like the rail station would have had cash on hand.

August 15 Clear

Got up at six.

Autumn has set in, but in name only. When I was washing my face, I was surprised at the coldness of the water. Whose poem is it that goes:

Aki kinu to

Me ni wa sayaka ni

Mieone domo

Kaze no oto ni zo

Odorokarenuru

When autumn sets in,

It does not appear distinctly to the eye,

But one is startled by the sound of the wind.^a

I think it is so. If I am absentminded, time passes and the seasons change. If I am idle, I will be left behind by this world.

Finished sewing mother's unlined kimono. Went on to sew a juban (underkimono).

The watermelon we cut today was very ripe. Just like its name, "silver watermelon" (gin suika), it was fresh and gleamed like silver. It would have been impossible even to try to paint it. The man who came here selling them is from Nakashima of Taragi. Once every two months, an assistant extension agent from the prefectural office comes to lecture on agriculture and various crops. These lectures are given in this man's house and the new crops are planted in his experimental fields. No wonder such things grow well there.

At night many guests came one after the other. The kitchen was bustling for a while.

Father went to see a movie at night.

At eleven, everyone was sound asleep, so it was very quiet.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a The poet is Fujiwara no Toshiyuki (d. 907), one of the Thirty-Six Poets. This waka is from the imperial anthology Kokin waka shū, ordered compiled in 905 A.D. by the Emperor Daigo. Editors' translation.

August 16 Clear

Got up at four-thirty.

I had been asked to get up as early as possible, so I did. Being half asleep, didn't understand anything said to me. Since I went to bed late last night and got up early, it's only natural. Poor things--the maids looked sleepy all day long.

Today we swept the ceilings. The dirt all vanished without a trace, and I am happy.

Eleven o'clock: The guest who left this morning must have reached his destination by now. There was something different about him--he is a mining engineer

Ohara-obāsan came over and talked for a long time. Tomorrow is the raising of the ridgepole of their new building,^a so I have been told to make mochi (glutinous rice cakes). Bought the rice in a great hurry and made preparations for tomorrow.

At night, Miyoko-san danced for me. She is quite good.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Called muneage shiki, this rite, which is performed when the ridgepole of a new building is set atop the frame, is vaguely comparable to the "topping off" ceremony under similar circumstances in the west. A full account of one observed in 1975 appears in Robert J. Smith Kurusu: The Price of Progress in a Japanese Village, 1951-1975. Stanford University Press, 1978, pages 141-143.

August 17 Clear

Got up at six.

Today was the ridgepole ceremony at Oharaōs. Did everything for them from pounding the mochi to fixing the dinner trays. When I got there, the place was so full of things there was hardly room to set one's foot down. I prepared several kinds of dishes. Ohara-obāsan made 17 rolls of sushi, cut them one at a time, and arranged them on plates. For the first time, I was on my own, and doing everything by myself made me very tired latero

Picked up two mochi at the ridgepole ceremony.^a

It was eight when I returned from the Ohara's. Took a bath and felt relaxed for the first time today. Sent Tami-san to restore everything to order there and she came back at nine-thirty. When I asked if it hadn't been a hard job, she said it was not. She really is a nice person.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Mochi are thrown down from the top of the house frame at the end of the formal ritual, conducted by the carpenters and the owners of the building. These rice cakes are thought to bring good luck, so the people below scramble for them.

August 18 Clear

Got up at six.

At nine, went to the post office to pay the long-distance telephone bill and send a parcel. It must be hard on the people who work there in all this heat. I am filled with gratitude towards the members of the postal service.

At ten, Takeuchi-sama of Shiiba came and played some records for us. At five, father, Takeuchi-sama, and Iwasakiesama took a car to Kume. I guess they will be back late again.

Played records and was merry. About 12 people gathered to listen and went away very pleased.

Went to bed at eleven-thirty.

August 19 Clear

Got up at six.

It seems that father and the others got back about two this morning. Mother opened the door for them.

Finished sewing mother's yukata. Before it was made up, the design of the material didn't seem so good, but when it was finished it looked fine.

There was a movie today at the Eishōji. Mother and the maids went to see it. They came back at nine-thirty, saying it was good. I believe it was a benefit showing for something.

Iwasaki-sama talked until nine. His little girl was sulky and had refused to go to the movie. At my wit's end trying to soothe her, [finally coaxed her to come for a walk]. The musician^a told me to come on in, but I hadn't told them at home [we might go to the movie]. Besides, as I told him, I had no money with me. He urged me to come in anyway, saying that as I was an acquaintance, no money was needed. No matter how well one knows a person, I dislike being let in free of charge [as a favor]. Besides, he is disloyal to the promoter [who loses the admission fee].

Came home and while watching the house [while mother and the maids were away] with Sadako-san, sang songs and passed the time.

There weren't many guests, so went to bed at eleven.

Five more days and it will be the seventh--Tanabata-sama.^b

^a Evidently a member of the small orchestra that plays the accompaniment for the silent film.

^b The Star Festival. Yaeko is referring to the lunar calendar. In five days it will be the seventh day of the seventh month.

August 20 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

Went directly to the elementary school for radio calisthenics. There were about a hundred people in all. I was surprised at the elementary school children, who did the exercises without a mistake.

Returned at seven. Because I had exercised this morning, breakfast was delicious!

Cut paper for Tanabata.^a From now on, I will pray for clear weather for the festival. How Princess Tanabata (Tanabata hime) must have been waiting! Some say the magpies turn into the bridge over the Milky Way. Others say Ame no Wakahiko no Mikoto puts on a wide-sleeved kimono.^b

Nakamura-san [owner of the kitten Lily] brought some dahlias. Arranged them in the nageire style. They are very pretty.

It is already time to call Kazuo-san back from Yunomae. Also, I must look over his summer homework report.

At night, Sadako-san came over. She played on the Taishō-goto^c and went home.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Colored paper was cut into various shapes, most commonly oblong strips like poem-cards (tanzaku) or squares. Once one of the five great seasonal festivals (discussed in U.A. Casal The Five Sacred Festivals of Ancient Japan. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1967), Tanabata has become a day celebrated chiefly by girls and young women. Edward Norbeck wrote of the occasion in a fishing village in Okayama Prefecture in 1950: "Children write little poems, names or wishes on strips of colored paper and attach them to bamboo branches which are set up in the yards. The decorated branches are allowed to remain there until evening and are then thrown into the sea. Older sisters or mothers frequently help the very young children, and the preparation of the Tanabata bamboos is now very frequently done at school by children of the lower elementary grades" (Takashima: A Japanese Fishing Community. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1954, page 151). M. Fujisawa, in an article in a popular magazine ("Tanabata, the Star Festival" Travel in Japan, Volume 4, Number 2 (1938): 4-8) offers a valuable insight into the continued popularity of Tanabata. He notes that the observance of the festival lapsed after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 (it having been a favorite of the discredited shogunal house). "However, when in 1927 a large-scale celebration of the Tanabata was held in the city under the auspices of

the municipal government of Tokyo, the example was enthusiastically followed by most of the primary schools of the city. Since then, the picturesque observance of the Star Festival has gradually been revived in the primary schools of the entire country, and apparently it is going to be a delightful annual event to be celebrated by school children throughout Japan" (page 8). Contrary to the testimony given above, we have good evidence that at the period of Yaeko's diary males as well as females tried their hands at calligraphy at Tanabata. The festival is also associated with improving one's ability as a seamstress.

- b The popular legend associated with the Star Festival, which is Chinese in origin, concerns the stars Vega (shokujo - the Weaver) and Altair (kenkyu - the Ox-Herd). The story, which we have adapted from Casal, is as follows: Shokujo, daughter of the Celestial Emperor, was called the ~~Weaver Maiden~~ because she sat at her loom day and night weaving cloth for the gods. When she grew up her father chose the Ox-Herd for her husband (alternatively they are said to have fallen in love and her father agreed to the marriage). They were so deeply in love they dallied for a long time on their honeymoon and as a result the ox grew thin from lack of care and the gods complained of a shortage of cloth. The Celestial Emperor was so angry he punished them by condemning them to live forever on opposite sides of the Milky Way, known to the Japanese as the River of Heaven (Ama no kawa). She continued to live in her father's palace on the east embankment and he on the west, but they were allowed to meet once a year on the night of the seventh day of the seventh month. In order that she might cross over the river to meet her husband, compassionate magpies flock to form a bridge with their outstretched wings. Therefore, on this night alone there are no magpies on earth. Should it rain, however, the birds cannot fly so far and the couple are doomed to wait another year. When they do meet, they weep at each parting, which explains the summer rains.

So far so good, but Yaeko's reference to Ame no Wakahiko no Mikoto is somewhat puzzling. This deity appears in the Kojiki (Records of Ancient Matters, compiled in 712 A.D.), where his story is given on pages 123-128 of the translation by Donald L. Philippi (Kojiki. Princeton University Press, 1969). His chief claim to fame, Philippi remarks on page 460, is that he is the only deity mentioned who is never called kami ('god') or mikoto ('augustness') in the Kojiki. Thus Yaeko is understandably in error in adding no Mikoto to his name. The mystery is, however, that there is absolutely nothing in the account of his mission, irresponsibility in its discharge, and subsequent death, to connect him to the Star Festival. Jean Herbert (Shinto at the Fountainhead of Japan. London: Allen and Unwin, 1967, pages 467-468) does say that the lovers are Ame no Tanabatahime no Mikoto (who appears not in the Kojiki but in the later Kogoshūi) and Hiko-boshi, the Star Prince. Again he has no title of respect; perhaps the hiko (prince) of both names suggests a linkage, but we know of none. It is just possible that Yaeko was reflecting some effort to Shinto-ize the Chinese legend, an undertaking perfectly consistent with the policies of the

period that claimed indigenous origins for all kinds of imported things, and she may well have learned a revised version of the tale in primary school.

- ^c A stringed instrument invented in the early Taishō period (1912-1926) with "keys" much like those of a typewriter, numbered to indicate the pitch of the scale. The keys are depressed by the fingers of the left hand while the metal strings are strummed with a plectrum held in the right hand. The instrument, which is made of wood, lies flat on the floor or table. See Nihon kokugo daijiten (Volume 12, page 571) for a description and illustration.

August 21 Clear

Got up at six.

As a guest arrived by the early train, mother and the others were up early. I didn't hear a thing.

The priest came today and worshipped the ancestral spirits (hotoke-sama) for us. He is a nice person, always smiling. He is quite attuned to recent times and is very modern.

Last night at 12:50 my classmate, Miyahara Mitsue-san, passed away. Consulted with my friends and we decided to send a pair of lanterns for the hatsubon.^a Kamiya-sama is away in Hiroshima, so I will have to let her know. All in all, am quite busy. Healthy Mitsue-san! Athletic Mitsue-san! I can only widen my eyes in astonishment. When I think she does not exist any more in any part of this world, I feel an indescribable sadness.

On graduation day she sang "Serenade" (Yoru no shirabe). Suddenly I remembered the words: "This may be the eternal parting..." For Mitsue-san, who at the time was already suffering from pleurisy, those words may have seemed appropriate. It was in a field where the snapdragons were in bloom. Nagao-sensei was with us, too, and a crowd of classmates. Now we are separated from one another. Even the addresses of some are unknown. And this despite our vows never to part throughout our lives.

Kazuo-san complained of a headache about six o'clock. There was great confusion until eleven, calling the doctor, and getting ice. His temperature seemed to have gone down by midnight.

Went to bed at twelve-thirty.

^a This first o-bon following a person's death is the occasion for directing special observances toward his or her soul. It is a poignant time, for it marks simultaneously that person's clear separation from the living (and is thus a sad occasion) and his or her reunion with the ancestral spirits of the household (and is therefore an occasion for joy).

August 22 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

Cleaned upstairs and all.

I wonder where they come from, these hairy insects about a centimeter long. They hurt a lot when they bite. Something like a blister forms and the skin smarts. Maybe they crawl out from underneath the roof, as there are many on the ceiling. Even spraying Asu didn't help. Only when we poured undiluted disinfectant on them did they stop moving. There must have been about 50 of them.

Rearranged the flowers upstairs. The one called scarlet fan (aka ōgi) lasts a long time. Counting today, it has kept for about ten days, and still looks fresh.

This evening went to buy the lanterns we are sending for Mitsue-san's hatsubon. There was a modern kind that has been newly patented, but since they may not know how to assemble it in the country, we bought a pair of ordinary ones. They are splendid, with five tassels.

Kazuo-san has recovered, and I am glad. Tonight he played his harmonica for us, skillfully as ever.

Went to bed at eleven.

August 23 Clear

Got up at six.

It was nine o'clock when I finished in the kitchen

Shigenaga-san came and said our old teacher Nakamura-sensei would be coming. It has been six years since we parted. How good of her to come! She stopped on purpose to see us on her way to Kagoshima on business. She hasn't changed a bit from former days, and was smiling as usual. How I used to disobey her, and was always getting into mischief. At the time of the school's athletic meet, having misunderstood what she had said, I was eating my lunch [at the wrong time] and got a severe scolding. When I reminded her of this, she said, "Phoo!" and laughed. Even now, though, I can feel myself blushing. On that occasion the whole first-year class was present, so she must have been really angry.

Went to the station to meet her. Visited Kose-san's grave. Went on to the school by the back way. There, tea and cakes had been prepared. I left before the others, because we were having a busy time at the inn and the tea looked as though it might go on for quite some time. She left on the six o'clock train. She is now the principal of the Senda Elementary School and must be extremely busy. I prayed for her good health in this heat.

At nine, went to draw for the lottery premium, but got only seventh and eighth prizes. I was embarrassed at having people look at me.

Went to bed at midnight.

August 24 Clear

Got up at six.

At eleven, the mailman brought a letter from Kamiya-sama. She does not yet know of Mitsue-san's death. She asks me to criticize her poems, of which she enclosed six. She is a person who prefers city life, and says she likes red spotted crepe. Her plump face is charming beyond words, and her eye-teeth, which show a little, make her even prettier.^a Even so, she writes that she likes poems that sing of nature. Somehow, there seems to be something contradictory in her attitudes towards things.

She has gone to Hiroshima to nurse her older sister, who is ill, but writes that she is such an easy patient she has only to cook the rice for her. I suppose she will be coming back to Taragi presently.

It seems that Tsukigi-sensei will be returning [to his home] for o-bon,^b so went to ask him to take charge of delivering the lanterns to Mitsue-san's family.

Lent Hinode^c to Miyamoto-san. It made her happy.

Enjoyed the cool until midnight and went to bed.

^a The Japanese think the eye-teeth, called itokiriba (thread-cutting teeth), particularly attractive, especially when they show when a person smiles or speaks.

^b By the lunar calendar the thirteenth to the fifteenth days of the seventh month. It is believed the spirits of the ancestral dead return to their earthly homes at this time, which with the New Year is one of the two great national holidays.

^c "Sunrise," a popular magazine.

August 25 Clear

Got up at six.

Helped Kazuo-san with his summer assignments. He finished two landscape paintings. I think the coloring of the house on the low hill is really well done. Kazuo-san has improved considerably. He progresses, aiming at getting top grades in writing and everything else, so it is natural that he improves day by day.

At six o'clock, mother and the others went to the movie. It must have been interesting. It was "The Asoka Flower" (Muyūge).^a Although it is an old film the place seems to have been packed. It has been shown here three times already. The heroine, Kujō Takeko had little happiness in life.

Enjoyed the cool until eleven, and went to bed.

^a An account of this film and the tragic life of its subject is given in Robert J. Smith and Ella Lury Wiswell The Women of Suze Mura. University of Chicago Press, 1982, pages 16-17.

August 26 Clear

Got up at six.

Helped clean from upstairs. Changed the water in the flower-arrangements. If you don't change the water every day in summer it becomes too warm. Obāsama^a brought some pretty flowers for arranging, in which she is very skilled. It is rare in an old person.^b

Helped Tami-san make a sash (obi). It appears she is very happy to be going home for o-bon.^c She must be imagining it and smiling to herself about wearing her new kimono with the summer obi. This year is hatsubon at Tami-san's, and I am thinking of letting her go early.

Went and bought lanterns for Kanazawa-san's family and Tami-san's family. It is said that the souls of the dead return at o-bon, and they will be returning here as well.

Thinking of letting Kazuo-san return [to Miyazaki] around tomorrow. He has finished all his summer's school composition assignment. When I look at his joyful face, I think with all the more sadness of his pitiful plight

Went to bed at midnight.

^a Identity undetermined. Probably Ohara-obāsama.

^b Few old women of this rural area would have been trained in such genteel arts as flower-arranging. It would have been Yaeko's generation--or her mother's at the earliest--who learned some of these domestic arts in school. The old woman referred to here may have come from a city or larger town, where the middle-class and elite women would have such training, or she may have served as a housemaid to an urban family in her youth. It was the hope of many rural families who sent their daughters out as servants that in partial compensation for their extremely low wages and hard work they would learn the finer points of etiquette and deportment from the women of the families who hired them. For rural girls of the time such experience in the houses of their "betters" was the equivalent of today's "brides' schools," for they were sent back able to clean and cook, and perhaps with a touch of polish that improved their chances in the marriage negotiations.

^c Maids got only two holidays a year, at New Year's and o-bon.

August 27 Clear

Got up at six.

A postal card came from Kamiya-sama. She deeply mourns the death of our friend and asks to be included in the hatsubon condolence. Although all are equally friends, everyone's feelings are different. Some are perverse and will not even join in sending the condolence gift, while others think of it as something personal. Can there be such differences when we have all studied under the same teachers?

Sadako-san from Ohara's came over, and when I said I was sending Kazuo-san back tomorrow, she felt very sorry at parting. She told him to come back as soon as he graduates next March. Kazuo-san said he would like to come back to consult about his future, and tears glistened in his eyes.

He implored me to play one game of hyakunin isshu^a as he has been practicing it. I thought it somehow unsuitable for summer, but since it was a special request, spread the cards out on the floor. Kazuo-san has become rather good at it; he always manages to find the matching card. The maids were soundly defeated.

Played until eleven and went to bed.

^a One Hundred Poets/One Hundred Poems. A card game usually played at New Year's. The game consists of a person reading out from a deck of cards on each of which is written a complete poem. Another deck, bearing only the latter half of each of the poems is scattered face up on the floor. As the reader begins to read out the poem, the yers vie to snatch up the appropriate matching card from among those on the floor. The one who picks up the most cards wins. See Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan 3: 248-249.

August 28 Rain; later clear

Got up at six.

Kazuo-san left today. In the morning I cut open a large watermelon and gave him some to eat. Eating a piece as large as his face, he said, "Next year again, huh?" Saw him off on the second train. He has a student's discount ticket, so the fare is comparatively cheap. Tears glistened as the train pulled out. Waving his cap, he was carried further and further away. By this time he must be thinking about Taragi.^a

Have a slight cold and my head aches

Went to bed at ten.

^a That is, he must be missing Yaeko already.

August 29 Rain

Got up at six.

Last night went to bed with a headache^q so this morning I feel out of sorts. My head still hurts and I am coughing.

At one o'clock, took a chūgen^a present to Ohara's. When I returned there was quite a fuss making manjū. The red and white cakes look delicious.

~~Honda~~-obasan from behind our house gave us some dumplings wrapped in myōga leaves. They were very well made.

At last, from tonight it is o-bon. Seeing the lanterns flickering with their sacred light, all sorts of pictures come to my mind. When I gaze steadily at them, I see images of deceased persons in my mind's eye. Among my classmates three have already passed away. Kometani-san, who was good in reading aloud; Miyahara-san, the athlete; Shimokawa-san^q the reticent one. All are sleeping peacefully in their graves. The faces of these three come to mind now, one after the other...pretty against the green leaves of the paulownia. Kometani-san would go off alone to read during recess. Miyahara-san would call for her friends^q always with a tennis racket in one hand. Shimokawa-san would gaze fixedly at the treetops in silence...all has become a tale of those who have departed, never to return.

Set off fireworks at night.^b

Went to bed at midnight.

^a The 15th day of the 7th month by the lunar calendar, the last day of o-bon. This is one of the two occasions in the year for formal presentation of gifts to those from whom one has incurred (or wishes to incur) an obligation--shopkeepers to customers, subordinates to superiors, and so on. The other occasion is seibo at the end of the year. See Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan 1: 312.

^b Hand-held sparklers, rather than firecrackers.

August 30 Rain

They may not be able to set off the special fireworks for o-bon for it has been raining continuously since yesterday. The altar is splendidly decorated and looks very peaceful with the various offerings.

At night, Ohara-obāsama came to chant hymns (goeika). She cannot read [the characters in which they are written down], but having made the Kyushu pilgrimage^a three times, has learned all the hymns by heart. She has a good voice.

Tami-san has gone home for hatsubon. She thought she was suppressing any sign of her happiness, but her face burst into smiles of its own accord. It was charming.

Cleared up in the afternoon, but my joy was short-lived, for it began to pour again. This is deplorable. Tomorrow, I promised to go to the fireworks display in Hitoyoshi, but it may be postponed if the rain doesn't stop.

Enjoyed setting off fireworks until midnight.

Went to bed at twelve-thirty.

^a A circuit of 33 Kannon temples each enshrining one of the deity's 33 manifestations. There are several such pilgrimage circuits in Japan. Here Yaeko may be referring to a full-scale one in nearby Fukuoka Prefecture or to the local one in Kuma county mentioned by John Embree: "It is said that one of the lords of Sagara many years ago decided that in Kuma thirty-three Kannon dō should be built, scattered all over the region. Then during Higan pilgrims could make a visit on foot to all of them, the trip usually taking a week" (Suge Mura: A Japanese Village. University of Chicago Press, 1939, page 116).

August 31 Clear; later rain.

Got up at six.

Helped with everything, as we are short one maido

The weather was fair in the morning and I was happy, but it began to rain again in the afternoon. It seems that only Ohara nī-sama^a and Sadako-san went [to Hitoyoshi to see the fireworks]. He had said he would take her, but when it began to rain he told her they would not go. It then appears she burst into tears. If a promise is once made, unless one is compelled by circumstance [to break it], a promise, especially one made to a child, must be kept. That is because, without being aware of it, a child otherwise will contract the bad habits of adults.

They returned by the afternoon train and stopped by for a visit. When I said, "I hear you cried," Sadako-san laughed and said, "Phoo!" We played hyakunin isshu until ten-thirty. When I said the game was unsuitable for summer, she said she was already practicing, so as not to let me take up a single card at New Year's. She is quite shrewd.

Shortly before eleven, we went to Nakatsuru Bridge to see the setting adrift of the boats bearing the souls of the dead,^b but it was already finished.

The Kuma River, flowing green as though a cloth were being spread out, extends endlessly. Green ricefields as far as the eye can see... the lonely plain of Kuma! Compared to life in the city, what a placid abode this is. It has been a long time since I came into contact with the spacious atmosphere of night, and was able to harmonize the poetry in my heart with my feeling of gratitude toward nature.

On our right was the house of a member of the town council. A platform, "Chamber of the Wind,"^c has been built out over the river and seems to hang suspended there. On it, two people were sitting and talking. To the right of the platform the golden chinaberry trees, the pines, and the large, tall cryptomerias tower loftily... On the grounds, although they cannot be seen distinctly at night, there are several varieties of trees that suit this house, planted one to three meters apart in a nice arrangement. The light from the main house shone through the trees...

In that instant, I recalled a lord's mansion I once saw in a movie, with a masked intruder stealing in [to the grounds]. Crossing the thicket, he creeps near the shōji of the lord's room and as he listens intently, there is a sudden sound of someone inside getting up. Just as he is about to call out, "Crooked fellow!"

the owner of the house, Shiiba-sama, called out to me and startled me back to my senses. He was inviting us to stop in, but as it was already late, we said goodbye.

Walking slowly, we did not reach home until midnight. Decided to have Sadako-san stay overnight. Sadako-san, who can sleep while walking..., as soon as I spread out the bedding for her, she fell sound asleep.

Went to bed at twelve-thirty.

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- ^a Elder brother. That is, Sadako's elder brother, a young man of the right age for Yaeko to refer to him by that term as well.
- ^b On the night of the third and final day of o-bon it is the custom in many parts of Japan to send back the spirits of the dead who have been visiting their kinsmen on earth. Small boats are made, laden with offerings of food and flowers and decorated with lanterns or candles, and set adrift on the river or the sea.
- ^c Lacking access to the original diary we do not know the Japanese for "Chamber of the Wind," the rather poetic name of this structure. Such names are commonly given to pavilions, tea rooms, garden houses, and the like.

September 1 Clear

Got up at six.

The great earthquake of Tokyo occurred thirteen years ago today. Throughout the country, people will abstain from drink to commemorate the tragedy.

After the ancestral souls have left, even the altar is quiet and lonely.

Washed the covers for the summer quilts. They were very dirty. Yuki-san has been all by herself. She must be very tired.

Tami-san returned at three. She was pale, for she does not like riding in automobiles. Because there were many guests, however, there was no time to let her rest, and she went right about her work. How sweet of her to bring gifts!

About six, got another headache. Perhaps I am catching cold.

Life is a difficult thing. No need to borrow the words of Natsume-san:^a "Let intellect guide your actions, and you become harsh. Pole along the stream of emotion, and you will be swept away. Be obstinately self-willed, and you will be narrowly confined." (Chi ni hatarakeba kado ga tatsu; jō ni sao saseba nagasareru; iji o tōseba kyūkutsu da), for I have begun to understand this for myself. Let me proceed in a direction I have faith in! It will be good, so long as it is right.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916) was one of the great literary figures of the Meiji period. This quote, known to all educated Japanese, is from the opening of his novel Kusamakura (Grass for a Pillow), published in 1906. Editors' translation.

September 2 Clear

Got up at six.

In low spirits all day long. I have a cold and am not feeling well. Since guests came without interruption there was a lot of noise.

At one o'clock, went to the river with Tami-san to wash natane (rape) leaves. She is a gentle person, and told me about her trip home for hatsubon without leaving out a thing. With all the gestures and mimicry, it was fun [listening to her]. Her face, which looks as though she is crying, made it all the more interesting.

It already feels as though it is the beginning of autumn. The cool breeze is penetrating.

Tonight I listened to a man who was speaking in the street. Seemed to be a fortune-teller. He was very eloquent, but looking at him carefully, I found he had only one eye. After all, he must be a person sunk deep in sin.^a

I was looking at the bookmark my schoolmate sent me and tried to envision a person who lives in Habunominato village on Ōshima.^b It is a place I have never seen, but somehow I long for it. I wonder what kind of job has taken her to such a [remote] place. Perhaps she is some kind of guide.

At nine, the apprentices of the bicycle shop were again absorbed in riding the unicycle.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Among the itinerant peddlers, beggars, performers, pilgrims, and fortune-tellers on the roads of Japan at this period were, of course, many quite respectable persons forced by circumstance to wander in search of a living. (For an account of some who passed through Suze, see Robert J. Smith and Ella Lury Wiswell, The Women of Suze Mura, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982, pages 260-264.) Yaeko's discovery that this man has only one eye causes her to assume he is less than respectable--"sunk deep in sin." Two fundamental beliefs merge to produce her harsh judgment. The first is the conception, basic to Japan's indigenous religious beliefs (usually called Shinto), that physical imperfection of any kind is abhorrent. A deformed or physically handicapped person is in a state of pollution and therefore barred from the precincts of the gods' shrines. The second belief is fundamental to the Buddhist concept of karma (gō). Although the Japanese seem never to have embraced the doctrine fully, they do

assume that affliction and ill-fortune may well be evidence that the victim is paying for sins committed in an earlier life. An ordinary man telling fortunes would offer little cause for comment; a one-eyed fortune-teller inspires both wariness and pity.

- b The six island groups of Ōshima administratively are part of Tokyo Metropolitan Prefecture. They are regarded as a somewhat exotic place, famed for fine silk, camellia oil, semi-tropical vegetation because warmed by the Japan Current, and resort hotels.

September 3 Clear

Got up at six.

Cleaned upstairs and all.

At nine, went to the stream in back to wash natane leaves. The feel of the cold water on one's hands brings to mind autumn. The hotarugusa^a blooming along the banks has particularly attractive blue blossoms.

The Shigenagas went to Suyama to worship at the Kannon temple there.^b It must have been very tiring in this heat.

Went to see Lily the kitten at two o'clock. Took it some raw fish. It hunts frogs every day, but is still very thin. The kitten devoured the fish greedily and looked at me as though it was not enough. No one was at home; the Nakamuras must have gone out to work. On the way home saw them visiting at Shinbori-obasan's place and stopped by for a moment to tell them I had just been to their house. They were very happy about it.

At six, broiled some funa^c that I had gotten to feed to Lily and asked father to take it over.^d

The municipal hospital probably will be completed before long.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Firefly grass; a kind of hare's ear.

^b For a detailed account of just such a pilgrimage, see Robert J. Smith and Ella Lury Wiswell The Women of Suze Mura, University of Chicago Press, 1982, pages 55-57.

^c Crucian carp; roach. See Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan 2: 52.

^d It would have been unheard of for a girl to ask her father simply to run such an errand for her. He must have been going that way on business of his own.

September 4 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

Did housecleaning in the morning.

Shortly before noon Takeuchi-obāsama of Yunomae^a came with Yoshiko-san and two of the grandchildren [Miya-chan and Mina-chan]. She does love to talk! All day long she was talking to somebody or other. In her youth she suffered many hardships, so she has plenty of topics of conversation. Her facial expressions are very comical. After lunch she announced that she and Mina-chan were going to stay, and Yoshiko-san and Miya-chan went home.

Tonight Mina-chan asked me to teach her origami.^b I did so, thinking what a bother it was. She is quite clever. Although she is only six years old, whatever she does, she does well. She told us two old tales. About eight she did various dances for us, performing for about an hour. Being a child she is very artless. Finally she leaned against the thego board and seemed to be sleepy. I made her bed and she joyfully tumbled in.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a She is the grandmother of the family that owns the drygoods store where Kazuo worked as a temporary summer clerk.

^b Paper folding.

September 5 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

Awoke suddenly to find everybody already up. Father had gotten up at five.

Mina-chan was awake early and every time I passed in the garden [by the room where she had been put to bed] she would say something to me. Her face, plump in the lower part and dark-complexioned, is sweet. Finally let her get up at eight o'clock. Although only six, she is not peevish at all and has good table manners.

Today the Kinokuniya Drygoods Store in Yunomae is closing for the day, for an outing to the Kuma River. It seems they were very busy with o-bon, so this is a reward for all their hard work. The master of the store has a bright face. Mina-chan is his daughter. Comparing her with her father I can see how she comes by her intelligence.

Takeuchi-obāsan and Mina-chan left by the ten o'clock train. It seems they are going to look after the store while the others are away on their outing. They urged me to come along by all means, but being busy I could not.

Went to bed at eleven.

September 6 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

Jumped out of bed, as it seemed to be light already. The maids were up and it was the electric light they had turned on.

Today Ohara-nē-sama arranged shion^a for us. As she has studied for six years the arrangement was splendid. It is quite stable and does not move at all; it is arranged in good order. Nine leaves and tall flowers of refined color--everything is harmonious and beautiful. Tonight she came to check it, anxious lest it had wilted, but replaced only one leaf.

Tomorrow is the meeting of the alumnae association (dōsōkai). I think I can go for sure. Sadako-san returned the girls' school insignia [I had loaned her to copy]. She sent me a little girl's thank-you note, with a sweet article in it.^b She is charming.

Went to bed at eleven-thirty.

^a Aster.

^b Presumably a gift.

September 7 Clear

Got up at five.

Up early, I finished everything early.

Today was the meeting of the alumnae association.^a About one hundred came and it was very jolly. Of those from my class, only Nakata-san, Makimura-san, Miyamoto-san, and Baba-san came. It was disappointing, for about 15 were supposed to attend. Had a group picture taken in the schoolyard. Everyone was dazzled by the glaring sun. I doubt it will turn out well.

The dances by the little girls were pretty.^b Kumatani-san and Mori-san were especially good. Segawa-sensei [their teacher] is absorbed in choreography. The youngest person was a first-year elementary school pupil; the oldest a fourth-year pupil. They all danced well.

At night arranged two containers of flowers. Sadako-san came for a visit. Am thinking of asking her to take the money for the group picture [when she goes to school] tomorrow.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Of the kōtō jogakkō (girls' higher school) of which Yaeko is a graduate and that Sadako now attends.

^b This reference is something of a puzzle. The little girls are elementary school pupils, not students at the girls' higher school. It may be that they had been brought by their teacher, Segawa-sensei, to entertain the alumnae association.

September 8 Clear

Got up at six.

The morning air was chilly. The dew, which is collected on the flowers of the hagi,^a is lovely and makes them even more beautiful. Going along the path, I saw the wind crossing the green ricefields. In each separate blossom is the unmistakable feel of autumn. Oh, autumn is here at last! When I think about this, things of old come back to me strongly and make me sad.

Akioka-san has recovered completely and I am glad. Wrote a letter to Kamiya-san to tell her about the alumnae association meeting.

Tonight Sadako-san came over. Miyo-chan danced for us. She is five, but is precocious and does everything well.

It seems an electric power station is to be built in Minakami [now Mizukami] village. Two of the people transporting the machinery for it are staying at our place. They say it will take about a month. I guess the whole town will reverberate with the noise of the tractors.

The cat gave birth to two cute kittens with three-colored fur--white, black, and brown.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Bush clover. One of the "seven autumn grasses" (aki no nanakusa). These plants are widely used in literature and the graphic arts to symbolize the season. (There is another group of "seven spring grasses.") For details on the former see the informative article by Karen L. Brock, "Autumn Grasses" in the lavishly illustrated exhibition catalog Autumn Grasses and Water: Motifs in Japanese Art, New York: Japan House Gallery, 1983, pp. 26-29. For hagi see Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan 3: 75-76.

September 9 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

Because there was a guest who was to leave early, I rose early.

Today is the Jizō Festival.^a It was held near here in the grounds of the Eishōji, so I went to worship. There weren't many people. They were showing movies, too. Under the pretence of worshipping Jizō many people go just to see the movie. It was crowded. Returned at ten-thirty.

I really enjoy watching the kittens. They cry nyao nyao in tiny voices and are very cute. I wonder what I should name them. I must again be the nazuke oya.^b

Took a nap for the first time in a long while. Slept an hour. How foggy my head was after I woke up!

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Jizō is the bodhisattva Ksitigarbha, popularly regarded as the protector of children. It is this compassionate bodhisattva who assists the souls of dead children in their transit from this world into paradise.

^b Literally "naming parent." At the naming ceremony for the baby, which in this region takes place on the third day after birth, the nazuke oya assumes the role of godparent. In many other parts of Japan the ceremony is held on the seventh day after birth.

September 10 Clear

Got up at six.

Father went with some others early to inspect [the timber on] the mountain.

Cleaned upstairs and arranged three containers of flowers.

Selected the slender parts of the juzudama^a for two of them. The other was of shion. The juzudama were kindly picked for me by Tami-san when we went to play by the river. The dog followed along and as soon as it saw the water waded in to cool off its stomach. Dogs must be hot, too. When I scolded it for chasing frogs it made a queer face and looked up at me. Compared to a cat a dog has a much bigger heart (kokoro).

After coming home, gave it some ochin no arare (dog biscuits). When I see it sitting up with both its paws together, I cannot help but give it some. Dogs are really cute.

Tonight went on an errand to Honda-obasan's place in back. In the electric light, her face gleamed yellow and black.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Job's tears.

September 11 Clear

Got up at six.

Hearing the ticking of the clock, sprang out of bed. It was a beautifully clear day.

The swallows have come already. I guess it will be gay again for a while. Before long higan^a will also be here. I suppose there will be many worshippers going to the Kannon-sama at Suyama.

The figs are ripe, waiting for someone to pick them. The persimmon are all glossy. Here and there, one can see leaves on the trees that have reddened already. There are voices of many kinds of insects, which swarm in the grass and sing. I painted a picture and was at a loss to know where to throw away the waste water. When human footsteps sound the singing of the insects stops suddenly. Perhaps they do not wish to be heard by humans.

At night, about seven, four people came from Takeuchi-sama's. Perhaps they had come to view the mountains, with plans to stay for seven days. I thought it too early [because the autumn foliage was not yet at its height] and sure enough they did not have very good reports. They must be tired.

Tonight enjoyed the cool on the ~~summer~~ bench set out in front.

Received a letter from Shiotsuki-san.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a The equinox. Here, the autumnal equinox, September 20-26 by the new calendar. The middle day, September 23, now called shūbun no hi, at this period was called shūki kōreisai. Special offerings are made to the ancestral spirits. ~~This week was also a favorite time for pilgrimages to Kannon temples and chapels.~~ See page 147.

September 12 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

Because there were so many guests, got up early. Cleaned upstairs and all. Put the arranged flowers in order. Bought some fresh ones, including kikyō^a and the feeling of autumn deepened.

At noon Takeuchi-sama's group ordered ayu from Kagetsu and held a banquet. They were very noisy, playing some game called Kuma-gen^b and left about five o'clock to go somewhere.

Tonight Sadako-san came over for help in drawing a poster for the autumn athletic meet of the girls' school. Racked my brains, but it was very hard to draw. At last I thought with some pride I had drawn something clever quite well--the moment when the tape is broken [at the end of a footrace]. But it looked rather like a dance pose and we burst out laughing. Finally, finished redrawing it [so as to give the feeling that] the race was being broadcast over the radio. Sadako-san said, "Nē-san's radio must be a cheap one." This after I had drawn with all my effort! I felt a little angry.

Father called in a massuer.

Tomimatsu-san's son came and talked until eleven. His name is Kōjirō-san. In his conversation he seems slightly dull. This may come from also being good-natured.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a Chinese bellflower. Another of the "seven autumn grasses."

^b A local gambling game.

September 13 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

Drank in the morning air before getting out of bed. The world on a chilly morning... If one could walk barefooted on the ground it would be a wonderful feeling.

Put all the flower arrangements in order. Cleaned upstairs and all. Took a half-hour nap. Because of lack of sleep, I feel drowsy every day and am absentminded.

Father goes out every day. He is tired and seems to have hurt his hip. He went to bed in the afternoon.

Tonight Sadako-san came over. I helped her to draw the poster, which is pretty well completed. Said she will put in the colors tomorrow and went home happy.

Heard Ohara-obāsama found her eyeglasses. That is fortunate. It is not a good thing to bear a grudge against other people without having searched well for something misplaced.

Went to bed at ten-thirty.

September 14 Clear

Got up at six.

There was a great deal of laundry to be done today, so I helped. The weather has been fine for a long time now. It is dangerous, though, for one must beware of fire. It seems it had been predicted this would be a dry year, but on the contrary it has been very wet.

It will not be long before we see the golden harvest in the paddy-fields. They say the harvest will be a good one. The farmers must be greatly pleased. The 210th and 220th days have gone safely by, and now there remains only the 230th to be passed.^a I pray it will come and go peacefully.

Yanase-sama seems to have neuralgia and has gone to Dr. Yamamura. [She] is always doing such hard work^b It brings on all kinds of ailments.

In the afternoon father and some others went again to Kume mountain. They seem to have met with showers along the way.

Sent some food to Yanaginoyama.^b I hope it will arrive without delay, for the workmen must be waiting for it with craning necks.

Went to bed at midnight.

^a Reckoned from risshun, the onset of spring by the old Japanese calendar, which falls around February 4 by the new. The 210th (September 1 or 2) and 220th days of the year are believed to pose the most severe threat to the rice harvest, for typhoons are thought to be especially likely to occur then. If the ripened rice is blown down, it will be extremely difficult to harvest. Yaeko's concern for the 230th day may reflect a local belief; we have not encountered it elsewhere.

^b This reference is unclear, but it seems likely that some men are cutting timber for Yaeko's father and the inn is sending their meals up to the mountain.

September 15 Cloudy

Got up at four-thirty.

The drivers of the tractors were going to work early, so got up early, too. As I retired at midnight and rose at four-thirty, I was unbearably sleepy.

Father and the others went up to the Kume mountain again. It must be hard to work in this drizzling rain that continues to fall.

The maids were rustling about here and there. It is amusing.

Iwamoto-sama's wife came from Kagoshima^a and brought us some famous Sakurajima radish (daikon) pickled in miso. The radishes, about 30 centimeters in diameter, are well aged in the miso and taste very good. What a pretty color they are! On the whole, Kagoshima people seem to like miso, which is probably why they do not pickle things in kasu.^b

At one o'clock, while I was arranging flowers, mother told me to go take some fish to the kitten. I went down the road in the hot sun, which had come out in the afternoon, wiping perspiration from my face. The kitten is all right but very thin. The poor thing ate most of the fish greedily. I left the rest on the wooden floor for it. Everybody was out, so I wondered if Lily is always there all alone. Suddenly I felt my eyes grow hot. "You poor thing, this is your destiny," I thought. When I stroked its head, as if saying this to the kitten, it was delighted and cavorted around me. To leave it, knowing it had to be alone all day, was intolerably sad, but it was getting to be dusk and I went home. By now it must be sleeping on the grandfather's lap there.

The flowerarrangements are well preserved and look beautiful.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a A city in southern Kyushu.

^b The lees from sake manufacture, widely used as a pickling agent.

September 16 Clear

Got up at five-thirty.

I was awakened and jumped out of bed. Just as expected it was a beautiful morning.

A bird whose name I do not know came to the keyaki tree^a and startled a sparrow perched on it. They say it was a nekodori^b or something like that. It stayed for about an hour and then flew away, no one knows where. It had large round eyes.

Father's hip is paining him. Called an acupuncturist, and he seems to feel much better. Ohara-obāsama said if one heats a stone picked up at Fudō-sama's,^c and strokes the painful place with it, it will become well. She brought the stone over. I cannot believe in that kind of thing at all. I think all illness comes from ki.^d If one keeps thinking one is ill one falls sick.

The two kittens have grown a lot. Yesterday their eyes seemed on the verge of opening and today they are open for the most part. They are in good spirits.

Nakata-san from Menda dropped in. A cheerful face as usual.

Honda-obasan is very skillful in flower-arrangement. She does agaribana beautifully. It seems she picked some flowers down by the river when she went down there to do her laundry.

Dinner at seven.

Went to bed at eleven.

^a Zelkova.

^b Initially we thought this an error for umi neko (sea cat), a kind of seagull, which would have been a rare sight in landlocked Kuma county. However, according to the Nihon kokugo daijiten (Volume 15, page 622), it is another word for owl.

^c See page 108, footnote e.

^d Depending on the context this word means spirit, soul, mind, heart. Yaeko subscribes to the notion that physical ailments have psychological causes.

Momikida Kameo-sensei

August 6

Miyahara Mitsue-san

August 20

These are their death-dates. The year is different but the fact they died one right after the other may be because of an affinity between Mitsue-san, who liked shūshin^a while in school, and the principal, Momikida-sensei.

This note is in the back of the diary.

- ^a The morals and ethics courses, whose texts were designed to instill the virtues of filial piety, imperial loyalty, patriotism, frugality and perseverance. Yaeko's note implies that the principal and her classmate shared an enthusiasm for these materials.

EPILOGUE

So we have come to the end of Yaeko's diary. Originating as a semi-public document, it is long on the comings and goings of people, activities at the inn and in Taragi town, and personal but scarcely private reactions to the ebb and flow of everyday life. In many ways it may be taken to be a model Japanese woman's diary, replete with observations of seasonal change, flowers and birds, kimono, and comments of the sort one might expect to be made by any teenage graduate of a girls' higher school in the 1930s.

If her diary is typical, there are nevertheless some ways in which Yaeko herself is not. She differs from most young women her age conspicuously in that she is an only child--and an adopted one. Only children were a rarity in Japan at this period.¹ Lacking the companionship of siblings, Yaeko must depend on the children from next door, the little maids, a handful of former classmates who live in Taragi town, and her beloved cats. As an adopted daughter Yaeko is probably destined to marry a man brought into her foster family as the designated heir and successor to its headship. Yet there are two puzzles in her comment to Ella Embree that her real parents will arrange her marriage when she reaches twenty-five. We have already noted that the first circumstance is highly unusual. Furthermore, twenty-five was a rather late age for marriage at this period.² Was Yaeko indirectly only expressing the hope that she could delay marrying so long? We do not know.

¹Although we lack firm statistical evidence to back up the assertion, we believe that a substantial proportion of only children were in fact adoptees like Yaeko. Adoptions were common enough, but only a small proportion of them involved taking in a small child; the Japanese, then as now, preferred to adopt sons or daughters after they reached adulthood, usually at the time of their recruitment into permanent slots in the family structure.

²In 1935, 91 percent of rural women between the ages of 15 and 19 were still single, 40 percent of those aged 20 to 24, and only 9 percent of those 25 to 29. Rural men married somewhat later, the comparable percentages being 99, 80, and 30. Rural is defined as those living in gun (counties) as opposed to shi (cities). See Irene Taueber, The Population of Japan. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958, page 211.

Yaeko is also atypical of girls her age as a consequence of being the daughter of an innkeeper. In that capacity she is given much more responsibility than would have been normal for a town-dwelling young woman of the time. It was the custom, or at least the hope of families to shield their daughters from the world, insofar as that was possible, until their marriage could be arranged. A common expression used in referring to such young women is hako iri musume, "a daughter kept in a box," like a valuable art object or perhaps a doll in a case. It was considered a distinct advantage to be able to claim in the marriage interviews leading to the making of a match that the young woman had no real knowledge or experience of the world outside her home. Such daughters, thought to be particularly well trained for the role, were prime candidates for the position of a thoroughly domestic wife and mother.

Clearly, an inn is no place to be shielded entirely from the outside world, on whose custom it relies, and Yaeko played a major role in the family enterprise. She had a hand in supervising and working with the younger maids. It is she who is assigned to take Kazuo to the shop in a nearby town where he will work as an apprentice for the summer. She is sent to the market, to get change from other places of business in town, and serves guests at the inn. If asked to characterize the essential difference between a young woman brought up in such an environment on the one hand and her peers of the more protected variety on the other, most Japanese would say that even today the former are "used to dealing with people" (hito narete iru), and more direct and efficient than an ordinary daughter of the house, raised to give at least the appearance of being excruciatingly shy and profoundly inarticulate in the presence of strangers. Such a young woman would have been of little help in the business of running an inn, and Yaeko's diary shows her dealing with, listening to, and waiting on many more kinds of people than a teenage girl ordinarily would have come into contact with.

Many of her former classmates were off "on the battlefield of employment," but Yaeko seems not to have traveled beyond the nearby towns of Kuma county. Perhaps that is why she sees such a sharp contrast

between her life and theirs, finding herself inexperienced and protected. Her remarks about her friend's being knocked about by others show she felt a buffer between herself and society these other young women--living away from their families and in strange surroundings--did not enjoy. Yet, as we have remarked elsewhere, Yaeko must have been witness to a considerable amount of real-world behavior while helping her mother and the maids, for male guests (and there were rarely any other kind, except for the occasional couple on a trip) at country inns like Kinokuniya have ever been noted for their lack of restraint. As the Japanese proverb has it: Tabi no haji wa kakisute meaning roughly that one can slough off the shame accumulated on a journey.³

But there were all kinds of inns in prewar Japan and we feel obliged to say something about them in order to put Kinokuniya in proper perspective. Yadoya and ryokan offered overnight accommodations with meals and--as was the case with Kinokuniya--served meals to parties who made advance arrangements for special occasions. There were also ryōriya (restaurants), like Kagetsu in Taragi town whose "geisha" Yaeko thought pretty. As the translation of the word indicates, these were places that served food primarily, but at this period and in places like Taragi ryōriya were most likely to be thinly disguised houses of prostitution, employing their own women and permitting customers to stay overnight with them.

Some inns permitted male guests to bring in women, including "geisha" for the night and in some of them the maids were really prostitutes. Kinokuniya emphatically was not such a place, we think, on the basis of internal evidence in the diary and the Embreesé field notes. The Yamajis were not professional innkeepers at all, but rather a family that had been engaged in another line of endeavor before starting up this business. They do not really belong, therefore, to the demi-monde of the professions providing entertainment and amusement--the world of tea-houses, theaters, geisha, and the like. Indeed, had they been of that

³Literally, "Scratch away the journey's shame."

world it is extremely unlikely their daughter would have been sent to girls' higher schools. Furthermore, the photographs of Yaeko, her mother, and the maids give us no reason to believe them other than what the diary plainly shows them to be--women who worked very hard at making a living, like hundreds of thousands of other wives, mothers, and daughters of equally ordinary, respectable families. Both the diary and her photograph bear out the accuracy of the word used by Ella Embree to describe Yaeko's appearance at their last meeting--demure. Her kimono and the way she wears it, as well as her hair style and makeup, are all like those of the daughter of the house in any small town in Japan in the mid-Thirties. John Embree who found her pretty and charming, remarks that her behavior was like that of a schoolgirl.

Readers concerned with the movement for women's rights in prewar Japan will have been disappointed but surely not surprised to find no hint of it in these pages. In the far-off cities, principally in Tokyo, small numbers of women, many of them educated in the United States and linked to Christian groups, had begun working for equality more than fifty years before.⁴ The cause of birth control had been taken up in direct contravention of government policy, following some success in making improvements in women's education and certain areas of the law. In the 1920s socialist women had concentrated on working conditions and encouraged women to take active roles in labor unions and political parties. All these activities, including the movement for women's suffrage, pass quite unremarked in the pages of Yaeko's diary.⁵ It is highly unlikely that Yaeko was even aware of their many campaigns or that she knew the names of her distant champions. Indeed, had she known of

⁴See the useful narrative account of the women's movement between the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and the end of World War II in 1945 by Dorothy Robins-Mowry, The Hidden Sun: Women of Modern Japan. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983, Chapter 2.

⁵They were in any event effectively brought to an abrupt halt in 1937 with the invasion of China and the resulting tightened government controls over all disapproved activities of a political and cultural nature.

them it is hard to see how she could have made a connection between their goals and her prospects.

Yamaji Yaeko lived very far from the centers of political and commercial power of her society, in a small town of no consequence, helping her mother run an inn no bigger than a large house. On internal evidence, we find her an appealing but hardly exceptional young woman, very much a product of her time. What then is to be learned from this fragment of her diary? We think it valuable chiefly for the insights it offers into her attitude toward life and woman's fate. Yaeko exemplifies virtually the entire catalogue of maidenly virtues of prewar Japanese society--acceptance of her lot in life, forbearance, resignation, generosity of spirit, and eagerness to improve her skills and capabilities. From time to time she finds herself less than perfect and chides herself for failing to do a task well or exhibit behavior appropriate to her chronological age; she is predictably pleased when recognition is given her for some job well done.

Casting a shadow over these expressions of positive attitudes, however, is a pervasive melancholy and palpable sense of regret. We have mentioned her acquaintance with death, a recurring subject in the diary; Yaeko is painfully aware of the transitory nature of happiness and life itself. Beyond that somewhat premature recognition of the evanescence of this world, however, there is a deeper pain. It is clear that in her late teens she has already given up her dreams of another kind of life altogether. She wrote, "There was a time when I used to pursue bright dreams, but they have been pushed aside by the reality of this world." And later, "When I was small, I never even imagined a place like an inn. I thought it would be good to go one's own way with whatever confidence one has, but society did not grant me that. Instead, I have gone whichever way I have been dragged along, and inadvertently have become content with my present lot. Had I been able to go the way I believed in, I would never have left that path until I reached its end."

We are not told what Yaeko's dreams were or what goal she would have striven toward had she been allowed to choose it for herself. We

have, of course, asked ourselves what her ambition might have been. One possibility is that she wanted to write--although not necessarily to have become a writer. She likes to correspond with former classmates and others, did agree to keep a diary, wrote poetry, and had a fair hand mature for her years. There would have been many models for her to emulate--Hayashi Fumiko, Okamoto Kanoko, and Yoshiya Nobuko among others --who had shown that writing could be done in the odd hours left free from a woman's other, more routine duties. It is more likely, we think, that Yaeko had dreamed of becoming a teacher, for it was virtually the only respectable career for a woman in the Japan of her time. It is obvious she enjoyed music and liked to dance. She expresses admiration for her women teachers of dance and physical education; perhaps that is the path she would have followed until she reached its end, had society granted her that dream.

In the Japan of the 1930s very few women, or men for that matter, enjoyed the luxury of setting their own life goals. There being little chance to exercise options in that society, some tried to escape it to pursue their dream by emigrating, particularly to Brazil, perennial land of the future for its own people and successive waves of immigrants from many nations. Some went out to the colonial territories of the emerging Japanese empire. But most stayed, and pursued goals set for them by others. For a young woman in 1936 an arranged marriage was a virtual certainty. Once married it was then her duty to serve her husband and children as a good wife and wise mother.⁶ The very few women who had real careers generally remained unmarried, for the Japanese definition of the homemaker, only now beginning to change significantly, precluded the possibility of serious engagement in any outside activity.

Bright dreams and self-defined goals were merely girlhood enthusiasms to be set aside, not without pain and perhaps never to be forgotten entirely, in later life. It was woman's place to acquiesce in

⁶See Robert J. Smith, "Making Village Women into 'Good Wives and Wise Mothers' in Prewar Japan," Journal of Family History, 8, 1 (1983): 70-84.

the decisions of others that would shape her life, and it was left to her to find what measure of happiness and contentment she could within the framework of her duties and responsibilities. The Yaeko of the diary strikes us as the kind of person certain to have come to terms with what she called "the reality of this world," for there is an unmistakable air of realism in her observations and comments that strongly suggests she will make the best of what life brings her. In this, as in much else, she embodies the womanly ideal of her society--and thus through her diary speaks for her generation.

PERSONS MENTIONED

Akioka	★	158
Baba	Classmate	157
Chihara	★	56, 66, 129
Enbutsu	Visitor at inn	75
Fujikawa	Physician	121, 129
Furuse	Classmate (deceased)	64
Higuchi	Father's associate	49, 51
Honda	Family living behind the inn	70, 79, 111, 118, 146, 160, 166
Ishiwara	Classmate	129
Iwaide	Classmate	119
Iwamoto	Visitor at inn	165
Iwasaki	Father's associate from Suze	21, 26, 36, 38, 41, 44, 49, 61, 78, 110, 113, 133
Iwasaki	★ (female)	66, 67
Izawa	★	113
Kaku	Family living in front of inn	111
Kamiya	Shopkeeper	46, 47
Kamiya Tsuyako	Classmate	15, 47, 48, 56, 74, 84, 96, 102, 138, 141, 144, 158
Kanazawa	★	143
Kazuo/Kazu	Brother(?)	40, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 126, 135, 138, 139, 142, 143, 144, 145, 154
Kometani	Classmate (deceased)	146
Kumatani	Elementary school pupil	157

Kura	*	127
Kuramae	Classmate	111
Makimura	Classmate	157
Masuda	Lumberyard owner	90, 129
Matsuba	*	110
Miyahara Mitsue	Classmate (deceased)	61, 138, 139, 141, 146, 167
Miyamoto	Classmate	141, 157
Momikida Kameo	School principal (deceased)	167
Mori	Elementary school pupil	157
Nagao	Schoolteacher	105, 138
Nagata	Classmate	74
Nagatake	Insurance agent	61, 62
Nagatani	*	78
Nakagaki	Family whose son is killed	49, 52
Nakamura	Family who adopts kitten	73, 76, 80, 123, 135, 153
Nakamura	Schoolteacher	140
Nakata	Classmate	111, 157, 166
Naraki Tami	(See Tami)	
Nishi	Female friend; classmateo(?)	44, 73
Nishi	Insurance agent	61, 62, 73, 96
Nobu	Child from next door	17, 19, 52
Ochiai	Classmate	15
Ogawa	Classmate	15, 119
Ohara	Family who moves to Taragi	44, 58, 59, 60, 63, 96, 119, 124, 128, 132, 146
<u>Ohara-nī-sama</u>	Male member of family, older than Yaeko	148

<u>Ohara-obāsan</u>	Grandmother of Ohara family	87, 127, 131, 132, 143, 147, 163, 166
Ohara Kiyoko	Daughter of Ohara family	87, 156
Ohara Miyoko/Miyo	Granddaughter of Ohara family	60, 131, 158
Ohara Sadako	(See Sadako)	
Okagawa	Physician	121
Ozaki	Classmate	15
Sadako	Daughter of Ohara family	15, 116, 119, 126, 134, 135, 144, 148, 149, 156, 157, 158, 162, 163
Sato	Classmate	15
Segawa	Schoolteacher	157
Shigenaga	Classmate and her family	90, 92, 97, 103, 129, 140, 153
Shiiba	★	149
Shimokawa	Classmate (deceased)	146
Shimono	★	51
Shinbori	★	153
Shiotsuki Mitsuko	Classmate	25, 57, 117, 123, 128, 161
Sotomura	Classmate	36
Sotomura	Shopkeeper	127
Sueko	Girl from next door	52
Tadaomi	Child from next door	17, 19
Takeuchi	Man from Shiiba	65, 68, 133, 161, 162
<u>Takeuchi-obāsan</u>	Grandmother of Takeuchi family	47, 154, 155
Takeuchi Mina	Granddaughter of Takeuchi family	154, 155
Takeuchi Miya	Granddaughter of Takeuchi family	154

Takeuchi Yoshiko	Mother of Mina and Miya	154
Tamaki	Guest at the inn	47, 75
Tami	Maid at the inn	15, 16, 40, 42, 132, 143, 147, 150, 151, 160
Tanaka	Guest at the inn	86
Tanaka	* (female)	84, 127
Taniue	Guest at the inn	35, 36
Tomimatsu Kōjirō	*	162
Tsukigi	Schoolteacher	141
Yamamura	Physician	121, 164
Yanase	Classmate	15, 164
Yuki	Maid at the inn	17, 59, 150

*Unidentified.

PLACES MENTIONED

China	106
Dairen	75
Fukuoka Prefecture	147
Hiroshima	138, 141
Hitoyoshi	15, 47, 53, 61, 75, 86, 102, 147, 148
Hokkaidō	63
Honshū	86
Kagoshima	140, 165
Kanagawa Prefecture	74
Kōchi	22
Kōyasan	99, 100
Kuma (county)	147
Kumamoto	25, 33, 125
Kumamoto Prefecture	19, 98, 124
Kume (village)	35, 133, 164, 165
Kurume*	49, 52
Kurohiji (village)	98, 122
Kyōto	92, 113
Kyūshū	25, 86, 104, 147, 165
Manchuria (Manchoukuo)	75, 105, 106
Menda (village)	15, 44, 58, 59, 60, 75, 87, 111, 119, 124, 166
Mie Prefecture	31
Minakami (village)	55, 158
Miyazaki	104, 143
Narita	107, 108
Nishi (village)	16
Ogawa (village)	123
Ōita	25, 57, 117
Okayama Prefecture	135
Ōmuta	75
Ōsaka	49, 78

Ōshima	151, 152
Senda*	140
Shiiba	65, 91, 113
Shikoku	22
Shimonoseki	86
Suyama*	153, 161
Suye (village)	15, 16, 25, 26, 36, 49, 55, 62, 68, 108, 113, 115, 126, 151
Takachiho	104
Taragi	15, 16, 20, 35, 50, 58, 102, 110, 111, 113, 116, 118, 119, 124, 125, 128, 130, 145
Tōkyō	25, 63, 87, 108, 125, 136, 150, 152
Upper Kuma (district)	20, 32
Yanaginoyama*	164
Youra	61
Yunomae	47, 78, 107, 109, 135, 154, 155

*Location undetermined.

