

AN OUTSIDER AND INSIDER'S OSAKA: OSAKA IN TANIZAKI JUN'ICHIRO  
AND ODA SAKUNOSUKE'S LITERATURE

by

RAN WEI

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Student: Ran Wei

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This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures by:

Rachel DiNitto	Chairperson
Jeffrey E. Hanes	Member

and

Sara D. Hodges	Interim Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
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Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

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## THESIS ABSTRACT

Ran Wei

Master of Arts

Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures

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Title: An Outsider and Insider's Osaka: Osaka in Tanizaki Jun'ichirō and Oda Sakunosuke's Literature

This thesis looks at the representations of Osaka from the 1920s to the 1940s in Tokyo writer Tanizaki Jun'ichirō and Osaka writer Oda Sakunosuke's literature. I examine how Tanizaki and Oda approached issues of local and national and responded to the changing power relations between the local and the national order, as well as Osaka's gradual subordination into a greater national entity. I argue that the Osaka outsider Tanizaki and the Osaka insider Oda's literary responses to Osaka's changing relation with the nation share certain similarities and differences: the similarities lie in their awareness of the changing power dynamics between Tokyo and Osaka, and their attempt to accentuate Osaka's uniqueness, in addition to their treatment with the wartime censorship in the 1940s. The differences lie in the era they wrote of, their positions via and attitudes toward Osaka, and their focus on different social classes.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Ran Wei

### GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene  
Osaka University, Osaka, Japan  
Peking University, Beijing, China  
Dalian University of Foreign Studies, Dalian, China

### DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Arts, East Asian Languages and Literatures, 2018, University of Oregon  
Master of Arts, Japanese Literature, 2015, Peking University  
Bachelor of Arts, Japanese Language and Culture, 2012 Dalian University of Foreign Studies

### AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Osaka Literature  
Literary Narratives  
Sino-Japanese Literary Exchange

### GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Graduate Teaching Fellowship, East Asian Languages and Literatures, University of Oregon, 2016-18

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In 1927, Tokyo writer Tanizaki Jun'ichirō lamented the absence of representative Kansai writers and looked forward to the flourishing of Kansai literature in his essay “Kansai bungaku no tame ni” (For the sake of Kansai Literature). Tanizaki admitted that “if an Osaka literary magazine was founded, it would, no doubt, be at first despised by Tokyo and even from within Osaka,” but he continued to write that Osaka writers should “rise up with enough enthusiasm to conquer Tokyo,” “How about someone trying it?” (Tanizaki 1927, 221-23).<sup>1</sup> Thirteen years later, in 1940, Osaka writer Oda Sakunosuke became established in the Tokyo mainstream *bundan* (literary establishment) with the publication of *Meoto zenzai* (Sweet beans for two, 1940). Oda's success with this novella drew the nation's attention to the local Osaka again, after the earlier popularity of Tanizaki's Kansai stories—*Manji* (Quicksand, 1928-30), and *Tade kuu mushi* (Some Prefer Nettles, 1929). In Oda's literature, he constructed an Osaka with a distinct local order, and delved into issues of national and local, modern and traditional, as well as West and East, which also concerned Tanizaki. Tanizaki and Oda approached these paired groups of dichotomies in their literature through their case study of Osaka, to explore the changing of power relations between the local and national order, and trace Osaka's gradual subordination into a greater national entity, but not with the same results. Tanizaki and Oda's attempts to present the local Osaka and bring Osaka to the national stage not only indicated Osaka's emerging prominence in the national discourse, but also contributed to the literary formation of Osaka literature, or representations of Osaka in Japanese Literature.

The concept “Osaka Literature” differs from that of “Osaka in Japanese Literature” in that “Osaka Literature” restricts the language and writers' background, meaning it should be about Osaka, by Osaka writers, and in Osaka language. Although using dialect and talking about the city in his Osaka stories, Tanizaki is not a native Osaka

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted and translated by Andrew Murakami-Smith (1997, 285).

writer and he presents it from the perspective of an outsider, so his literature of Osaka does not strictly fit in the realm of “Osaka Literature,” rather, it is a representation of Osaka in Japanese Literature. In comparison, as an Osaka native, as well as an Osaka insider, Oda narrates Osaka through the local dialect, and his literature of Osaka belongs to the ideal of Osaka literature.

Tokyo’s position as the nation’s political center led to its cultural homogenization, and its cultural importance made it receive much scholarly attention in English language scholarship. In comparison, modern Osaka writers have been dismissed and marginalized in American academic discourse. Burton Watson (1990) notes in the introduction to his collection of translated short stories that Oda is less known outside the Kansai (Kamigata) region and is little studied in the United States. However, in the past years several scholars have focused on Osaka literature, especially on Oda’s writings. In his dissertation, James Shields (1988) approached Oda’s literature and situated Oda’s writings within the Osaka literary tradition and the modernization of Meiji literature. Instead of simply attributing Oda’s works to the genres of modern, dramatically inspired novels, Shields compared Oda’s style with that of Osaka frivolous-style narrative (*gesaku*) writer, Ihara Saikaku (1642—93). By doing this, Shields defined Oda’s narrative writings as the remnant of premodern Kansai narrative, which had its origins in Japanese poetry (*waka*) lyric, rather than drama in Western narratives. Concerned with issues of dialect and place in modern Japanese literature, Andrew Murakami-Smith (1997) situated dialect in relation to spatial issues and linked it with textual elements and the authors’ oeuvre through a close examination of Osaka native writers including Oda. Drawing on Shield’s scholarship, Murakami-Smith concluded that the writing style of *haikai* (linked verse) and speaking skill of oral arts such as *rakugo* influenced Oda’s writings tremendously, which is latent in Oda’s frequent leaps in sentences and interpenetration of dialogues. Observing the construction of nationality in modern Japan from the 1920s through the 1950s, Michael Cronin (2017) explained how influential works of literature and cinema produced in

this period imagined Osaka as a distinctly local order—of space, language, everyday life, gender and so on—as an opposition to its Tokyo counterpart.

Drawing on this Osaka scholarship, this thesis looks at the representations of Osaka in modern Japanese Literature, more specifically, in Tanizaki and Oda's selected works from the 1920s to the 1940s. Centering on the issue of national versus local, this thesis looks at how these two writers approach Osaka and its relation to the nation from the perspective of an outsider and an insider; and how these two writers responded to the changing of Osaka's subordination into a greater national entity.

The timeline of the 1920s to the 1940s was significant because of its importance in Japanese history, and to the two Japanese writers. The year 1923 saw the disaster of the Great Kantō Earthquake, which devastated Tokyo and called into question the hierarchical relationship between the nation's capital and its blooming second largest city Osaka. The 1940s witnesses Japan's imperial expansion and the empire's transcendence of the local order. Simultaneously, the 1920s to the 1940s was the period when both Tanizaki and Oda were active in the Tokyo *bundan*, and wrote stories about Osaka.

Tanizaki projected his yearning for the West and his nostalgia of the Japanese traditions onto Osaka, and exoticized Osaka as an "Other" via his Tokyo standards; Oda's works responded to Osaka's gradual subordination within a national entity by asserting a strong localism. Disappointed at the earthquake's destruction and the blind modernization of Tokyo, Tanizaki relocated to Kansai in 1923 and presented the cosmopolitan Osaka not only as a place influenced by modern Western culture, but also a locale with its own unique conventions of merchant, comic, and oral cultures, which all have their roots in traditional Japanese culture. Oda's work did not adhere to the Tokyo-centered tradition of modern Japanese narrative. Rather, he sought to connect with the pre-modern narrative tradition of Kamigata through a conscious imitation of Ihara Saikaku and Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1725)'s style, as a way to rebel against the conventions of the modern realism of Tokyo mainstream literature. In the

1940s, both Tanizaki and Oda had to write under the strong wartime censorship and think of the local vis-à-vis the national. At that juncture, Tanizaki and Oda's positions to and perceptions of Osaka manifested a huge difference in their treatment of Osaka in their literature, Tanizaki presented an Osaka with a well-preserved but fading tradition, and lack of economic productivity in *Sasameyuki* (The Makioka Sisters, 1943-48). Different from his previous treatment of Osaka as a location of prosperous traditional arts and robust merchant culture, in this story, together with his characters, Tanizaki also accepted the precarious fate of Osaka traditions and embodied his reconciliation with the national ideology through the representations of the Makioka characters.

In comparison, Oda secured a safe space of writing Osaka, and vibrant and tough local Osaka where its people strived to serve the nation in *Waga machi* (My town, 1942) by catering to the censorship on the surface. Tanizaki made his characters surrender to the overwhelming national discourse and capitalist economy, Oda used his characters' voice to question the national discourse's influence on common people's lives and implied a rift between the national and individual interests and embedded his subtle criticism of the Japanese militarism.

Regardless of their outsider and insider positions, a similarity between Tanizaki and Oda's writings is that they both responded to the national dictates and adhered to the wartime censorship in the 1940s. During the wartime, when colonial development was pursued, writers were encouraged or forced to support the empire's war efforts and expansionism in the form of *kokusaku bungaku* (literature of national policy) and various government-led literary organizations. In Oda's *Waga machi* and Tanizaki's *Sasameyuki*, they both depicted the national ideology and militarism's permeating influence on the Osaka characters' lives, and adjusted their narrative tones to the wartime censors' standards. Moreover, in both of their stories, there exists a local and national time. In Tanizaki's *Sasameyuki* and Oda's *Waga machi* and *Meoto zenzai*, they both portrayed Osaka as a somewhat backward and nostalgic place, which is out of

synchronism with the national time. In *Sasameyuki*, Tanizaki's characters leave Osaka for Tokyo to look for the economic productivity. However, Oda's characters never think of going to Tokyo for a better life, or Oda never thought of offering Tokyo as a solution for his character. By contrast, Oda's conscious ignorance and de-emphasis of Tokyo manifests his rejection to legitimize Tokyo's cultural and political hegemony, and showcases his determination to advance Osaka's importance to the nation.

### **Osaka in History**

Situated at the mouth of the Yodo River on Osaka Bay, Osaka is the largest component of the *Keihanshin* (Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe) Metropolitan Area, the second largest metropolitan area in Japan. Currently serving as a major economic hub for Japan, and historically a merchant city, Osaka has also been known as the “*tenka no daidokoro*” (the nation's pantry), and served as a center for the rice trade during the Edo period.

In 1496, Jōdo Shinshū Buddhists established their headquarters in the heavily fortified Ishiyama Hongan-ji, located directly on the site of the old Naniwa Imperial Palace. Thereafter, Toyotomi Hideyoshi constructed Osaka Castle in its place in 1583, and Osaka became the political center of Japan at the end of the sixteenth century. As Murata states, after Tokugawa Ieyasu took over the power from the late Hideyoshi, the Tokugawa leadership realized the importance of Osaka and “rebuilt the castle and reorganized the city's merchant quarters,” “governed by local representatives of the central government, the city became the shogunate's administrative center for western Japan.”<sup>2</sup> Because of the shogunate's permission to the local merchants to repair and expand the city's canal system, Osaka won its fame as “Capital on the Water.” Osaka's role in linking East (Edo) and West (Kyoto) Japan and transport products brought it another epithet— “the nation's pantry.” In the Edo period, Osaka's flourishing merchant economy lead to its thriving merchant culture, urban culture, and merchant literature. At its height, Osaka saw the birth of its famous and beloved literary figures—Ihara

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted and translated by Michael Cronin (2017, 5).

Saikaku and Chikamatsu Monzaemon. These two established early-modern writers consistently influenced and shaped the writings of numerous modern and contemporary Osaka writers and writers who wrote Osaka, including Oda and Tanizaki.

After the Meiji Restoration (1868), with the emperor's relocation to Edo (renamed Tokyo) and the new Meiji government's highly political and cultural centralization of Tokyo, Tokyo signified the national space and became the national cultural center. Osaka's gradual subordination into the national entity, makes Osaka a privileged site for examining the tension between the city and the nation. According to Jeffery Hanes, the modern Tokyo-Osaka rivalry started in the mid-1910s, when Osaka's economy flourished. In the 1910s, Osaka's city space expanded, which included the development of the Hanshin district (Osaka-Kobe area), which can be seen in Tanizaki's Osaka stories—*Manji*, *Tade kuu mushi*, and *Sasameyuki*, where the bourgeois families' live. When the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923 hit Tokyo, it called into question the hierarchical relationship between the nation's capital and its second largest city (Hanes 2004, 229-48).

The 1910s to the 1930s was a golden era for Osaka's development, which also accounts for its attraction to the Tokyo writer Tanizaki, in both life and literary choices. As Hanes states, "Osaka's preeminence peaked in the age of Dai-Osaka, or 'Great Osaka,'" when the mayor Seki Hajime "expanded the city to absorb several villages on its outskirts, increasing the city's area from 56 to 181 square kilometers and its population from 1,430,000 to 2,210,000 to become Japan's largest city—larger than Tokyo, and the sixth largest city in the world."<sup>3</sup> However, by 1932, with Tokyo's recovery from the earthquake's devastation, Osaka lost its preeminence: the city size and population, as well as economic productivity.

In the late 1930s and the early 1940s, Japan's imperial project prompted a more accelerated political and economic centralization and cultural homogenization in Tokyo, "as well as Osaka's concomitant subordination" (Cronin, 6). The nation attempted to

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Michael Cronin (2017,6).



control every aspect of the society, including the literary *bundan*, which was embodied through a strong literary censorship and permeating national ideology. When serving the nation became the priority of the whole country of Japan, and locality and regional cultural diversity were crushed by the national apparatus, Osaka grew into a more subsumed entity of the Japanese empire. At that juncture, Tanizaki and Oda dealt with Osaka's gradual subordination into the nation by embodying it in their literature: Tanizaki emphasized Osaka's fate of fading tradition and localness, and admitted its economic and political inferiority to Tokyo. In comparison, Oda accentuated Osaka's unique cultural prominence and advanced Osaka's importance to serve the nation. Osaka's combination of premodern Kamigata cultural traditions and its modern subordination, makes it a privileged site for examining the tension between the city and the nation. It is critical to understand how Osaka literature constitutes a regional literature and connotes a challenge to the cultural hegemony of Tokyo-centered literature.

### **Chapter Outline**

Aiming to explore the literary representations of Osaka in Japanese Literature to uncover a comprehensive “outsider and insider’s” Osaka, this thesis looks at selected works of the Tokyo writer, Tanizaki, and the Osaka writer, Oda, during the 1920s to the 1940s. Consisting of two case studies, this thesis deals with paired groups of issues of local and national, traditional and modern, as well as East and West, standard language and Osaka dialect, to see how these two writers construct a local Osaka and how they perceive the relationship between Osaka and the nation. This thesis looks at Oda and Tanizaki's perceptions and treatments of these issues and traces their changing views towards Osaka's gradual subordination into a greater national order.

Chapter Two examines Tanizaki's *Manji*, *Tade kuu mushi*, and *Sasameyuki* to elaborate how the image of Osaka in Tanizaki's literary works shifted from the 1920s and the 1940s. This chapter argues that the representations of Osaka in Tanizaki's stories progressed from a place of exoticism and decadence in the 1920s, to a site

overwhelmed by the national ideology in the 1940s, when Osaka's traditions were undermined by the incorporation of the Tokyo modern culture and crushed by the dominance of wartime national ideology. In Tanizaki's Osaka stories, more specifically, in *Sasameyuki*, the characters' gradual acceptance of the national order and Tokyo's economic productivity manifests their reconciliation with modernity and the waning importance of local Osaka traditions.

Focusing on *Meoto zenzai* and *Waga machi*, Chapter Three examines Oda's response to Osaka's gradual subordination within a national entity and his efforts to stress Osaka's vibrant local culture and customs. This chapter argues that from *Meoto zenzai* to *Waga machi*, Oda's way of emphasizing Osaka's locality shifted from a conscious ignorance of the national discourse to an implicit comparison between the local and the national. In *Meoto zenzai*, by drawing on the historical and literary heritage of Osaka between 1915 and 1935, Oda presented a "Osaka realism" that centers on common people's life and the local culture without treating serious topics such as politics, as a means to reject the Tokyo mainstream literary trend and the country's promotion of national ideology during war time. In *Waga machi*, by constructing a character who adheres to both the wartime national ideology and an Osaka spirit of toughness, Oda found a balance between the national ideology and Osaka's local culture. However, simultaneously, Oda implied the rift between the individual and national needs by using a character to voice his question of sacrificing the self to serve the nation, and indicating the empire's mistreatment of the Osaka character—Takichi. In the 1940s, both Tanizaki and Oda had to calibrate their writings to the standards of the wartime censorship. Tanizaki attempted to make *Sasameyuki* less nostalgic to avoid criticism, and incorporated militarism's influence on Osaka people's life in the story. In *Waga machi*, Oda obeyed the censorship on the surface, by criticizing the American colonialism and creating a character loyal to the national ideology; however, deep down, Oda indicated the discrepancy between the individual and national needs, and implied the imperial project's damage to ordinary people's lives.

## CHAPTER II

### AN OUTSIDER'S OSAKA: LANGUAGE AND NARRATIVES IN TAKIZAKI'S *MANJI*, *TADE KUU MUSHI*, AND *SASAMEYUKI*

After the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake, disheartened by the traumatized and disorganized Tokyo and disappointed at its slow recovery, Tanizaki relocated to Kansai and set many stories there. Tanizaki incorporated his understandings of Kansai people and culture and completed a series of stories including *Manji*, *Tade kuu mushi*, and *Sasameyuki*, and featured the Hanshin region of Kansai. As Tanizaki claimed in his essay, he no longer considered himself “as a son of Tokyo,” and struggled to be “completely assimilated into Kansai,” “as much as possible” (Tanizaki 1966, 21:26).<sup>4</sup> Observing Kansai through the eyes of an immigrant from Tokyo, instead of as a man who no longer considered himself a native there, Tanizaki realized the exigency to search for a new home and a sense of belonging in Kansai. However, assimilating into a new and different culture was difficult, and this rendered Tanizaki into an ambiguous stance in front of Kansai: on the one hand, Tanizaki constantly judged the things around him according to his Tokyo values, and exoticized Osaka’s people and culture in his earlier stories of the 1920s; on the other hand, prompted by his desire of assimilating into Kansai, Tanizaki relentlessly strived to reconcile with a new and unfamiliar culture and discover its value. Gradually, Tanizaki felt attached to Kansai through his discovery of Tokyo’s past and the familiar landscape of his childhood there; and became attracted to the Kansai culture through his exploration of the mysterious, elegant, and well-preserved Japanese traditional culture in the region. In the 1940s, although he still indulged in Kansai’s cultural traditions, Tanizaki realized their unavoidable fate of loss, especially in the face of the overwhelming national ideology.

Tanizaki’s relation with and notions of Kansai shifted from 1923 to 1948, as reflected in these three stories respectively. By listing paired dichotomies of the East and the West, Tokyo and Kansai, modern and traditional, and shuffling and reshuffling

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<sup>4</sup> Translated and quoted by Ken Ito (Ito 1991, 110).

these distinctive concepts in his literature, Tanizaki approached Kansai from different spatial and temporal scales, and established a kaleidoscopic image of Kansai with multiple layers.

Focusing on the presentations of Osaka in Tanizaki's stories, this chapter argues that, through the 1920s to the 1940s, Tanizaki's Osaka image developed accordingly with his search for a cultural identity. Tanizaki yearned for a sense of belonging outside of the devastated Tokyo, so he chose Kansai and hoped to be assimilated into the culture (Tanizaki 1968, 21:26). Not originally from this region, Tanizaki approached the new Kansai culture through a learnt knowledge, Tokyo standards, and acknowledged the difference between Tokyo and Kansai from the perspective of an outsider. Tanizaki's outsider stance to Kansai led to his literary treatment with the region, portraying Kansai as the "Other." This chapter argues that Tanizaki's Osaka image progressed from a place of distinguished exoticism (as seen in the abnormal sexual relationships, dialect, and culture) in *Manji*, to a locale of mixed vulgarity, familiarity, and unfamiliarity in *Tade kuu mushi*, and to a site with overwhelming national ideology and dying local traditions in *Sasameyuki*. In the 1940s, with the nation's emphasis on the wartime ideology and the development of modernity, Osaka witnessed the loss of its local traditions. In *Sasameyuki*, the characters' gradual acceptance of the national order and Tokyo's economic productivity, manifest their reconciliation with the robust Tokyo modernity and the waning Osaka traditions.

### ***Hanshin—Between Modern and Traditional***

Tanizaki intentionally set his Kansai stories, *Manji*, *Tade kuu mushi*, and *Sasameyuki* in the *Hanshin* ("Osaka-Kobe") suburbs rather than Osaka's merchant center, Senba, for Hanshin's mixed aura of modernity and tradition perfectly matches his imagination of the stories' settings—a place of decadence, richness, pleasure, sexual possibilities, and daring ideals. Different from Senba, which is deeply rooted in a more solid and stagnant merchant culture, Hanshin's great acceptance of modernity and tradition gave rise to its spirit of cultural inclusiveness and integration. Tanizaki chose

the Hanshin region because it was associated with a more modern, productive, and efficient way of life, and simultaneously, it still maintained certain traditional aspects. Tanizaki explained Hanshin's traditional characteristics in his essay "Watashi no mita Osaka oyobi Osakajin (The Osaka and Osakans I saw, 1932)," and he embodied it in his later story *Sasameyuki*.

As Plath states, the Hanshin region runs for around some twenty miles from Osaka to Kobe on the commuter suburbs between the Mount Rokkō range and the Osaka Bay (Plath 1980, 18-22). According to Ito, similar with the west of Tokyo, the Hanshin region owed its development to the private railways built in late Meiji, especially the Hanshin and the Hankyū lines, both of which connected Osaka to Kobe. The construction of the suburbs began as soon as the railways were in place, but they were as much a product of the Taishō and early-Shōwa progressivism (Ito 1991, 115). With the development of the Hanshin region, in 1909 there emerged an advertisement which promoted that area as "a new model of neighborhood design, a new ideal in residential development, and a perfect example of suburban life rich in pastoral pleasures" (Iwai et al. 1975, 95).<sup>5</sup> As Ito notes, "much of the development was aimed at prosperous Osaka merchants who had the money to build luxurious homes still visible in the area" (Ito, 115). Furthermore, Hanshin's modern aura was enhanced by the proximity of Kobe. As the second biggest port city in the country, Kobe provided its residents and neighborhood with the import of the latest Western trends and ideas.

In *Manji*, Sonoko and her husband Kotarō live near Kōroen Station on the *Hanshin* Line. Mitsuko lives near Ashiyagawa station on the Hankyū line. Both of these neighborhoods lie in the Hanshin-kan, "the stretch of commuter suburbs between Osaka and Kobe developed by the two railway companies beginning around 1909, when pollution, fear of disease, and a new discourse of environmentalism prompted an exodus of merchant and middle-class families from inner Osaka" (Cronin 2017, 26). In *Tade kuu mushi*, the protagonist Kaname lives in the Hanshin suburbs with his wife

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<sup>5</sup> Translated and quoted by Ken Ito (1991, 115).

Misako, and their son, Hiroshi. *Sasameyuki* is mainly set in the suburb of Ashiya, which is located to the west of Osaka; and focuses on the Hanshin-kan region. By setting these stories in the Hanshin region, Tanizaki tackled with the issues of traditional and modern, East and the West, and local and the national. Different from Senba, the Hanshin region was open to the cultural influence from other regions such as Kobe. The dynamics of different cultures brought this region a spirit of inclusiveness and modernity, which corresponded well to the bourgeois suburban life-style of the characters.

### ***Manji*—An Exotic and Bizarre Osaka**

Tanizaki's treatment of Osaka dialect, culture, and narratives in *Manji* manifests his stance as an Osaka outsider. On a language scale, Tanizaki attempted to approximate an "authentic" Hanshin dialect to let the Osaka narrator speak. Despite his efforts, from the perspective of native Osaka writers, Tanizaki's use of Osaka dialect is not authentic because it lacks variant and richness. On a narrative scale, Tanizaki aimed to exoticize Osaka by giving the narrative voice to a female Osaka storyteller, and featuring a world of abnormal sexual desires, lies, and pleasure. Tanizaki also set up multiple layers of deception in the story and led both the Tokyo listener — "Sensei," as well as the "author" in the story, to question the Osaka storyteller's credibility and comment on her decadent life-style. Moreover, Tanizaki made the "Sensei" cast a judgmental gaze on the Osaka narrator's taste and values and consistently comparing Osaka culture and customs with its Tokyo counterpart. On the one hand, by juxtaposing Osaka with Tokyo, and oral dialect with the written standard language, Tanizaki drew a clear division between the local and the national order, and incorporated his judgement of Osaka into the perspective of the "Sensei." On the other hand, by listing the judgmental comment of the Tokyo "Sensei" on the Osaka protagonist's decadent life-style and free spirit, Tanizaki indicates "Sensei's" implicit attraction to a world of desires and sexual possibilities.

In *Manji*, the protagonist Kakiuchi Sonoko narrates her love triangle story with one woman and two men to a person she addresses as "Sensei." The Osaka merchant-class

daughter Sonoko attends art classes at a local woman's school and finds herself attracted to a woman named Mitsuko. Subsequently, their intimate lesbian relationship is complicated by the appearance of Mitsuko's lover Watanuki Eijirō and the involvement of Sonoko's husband Kotarō. In the end, Sonoko, Mitsuko, and Kotarō decide to commit suicide together but Sonoko fails and ends up finding herself alive. *Manji* was serialized during the years 1928 and 1929 in *Kaizō* (Reconstruction) and is presented as a mixture of Sonoko's oral narratives and the written "author's notes." There exist two layers of narrations in this story: Sonoko's love stories told in Osaka dialect; some brief and intermittent written comments from the "author," provided in the Tokyo standard language.

The Osaka dialect presented in Sonoko's storytelling attracted many scholars' attentions as they consider how Tanizaki's use of this exotic local language perfectly matches the world of sexual possibilities. As Ito points out, "the most arresting feature of *Manji* is the way Sonoko's story is told" (Ito 1991, 123). Murakami-Smith argues that this dialect strengthens the "exoticism" and "expressiveness" of Sonoko's confession and accentuates the dynamic of exhibitionistic/voyeuristic pleasure between the speaker Sonoko and the listener "Sensei" (Murakami-Smith 1997, 229-41). Cronin states that Tanizaki's opposition to the *genbun itchi* movement, which advanced the written language's conformity with the colloquial language, especially to its threat to dialect's unique beauty and strength, was reflected in his determination to create *Manji*. In this story, he presented and broke the unbalanced power relation between the Osaka dialect and Tokyo standard language by making Osaka dialect the main body of the narration (Cronin 2017, 23). Moreover, by tracing Osaka's urban development in *Manji*, Cronin says that Sonoko's voice "dramatizes Osaka's own history in the face of its relativization to the Tokyo-centered nation" (Cronin 2017, 27).

Tanizaki's choice of the dialect is worthy of notice. As Cronin and Ito note, the language Sonoko uses is not the conventional Osaka dialect, but an exotic suburban variant that developed in the Hanshin region, and was also influenced by the Kobe

language. The language Tanizaki makes Sonoko speak echoes her identity as an Osaka merchant-class daughter who lives in the Hanshin region. Kōno Taeko's explains the development of the Hanshin language as follows: "the upper classes of Osaka who had abandoned the inner city first moved to the Mikage area, between Osaka and Kobe, in the mid-Taishō period (around 1920) and they had maintained 'standard' Osaka speech. By the early Shōwa period (from 1927), the same families were moving to the east, closer to Osaka, to the area around Ashiya, Shukugawa, and Kōroen Station, where, after mixing with families who had moved there from the Tokyo region, they began to speak a new, suburban variant of Osaka language."<sup>6</sup> As Ito elaborates, with the development of the Hanshin region, a lot of people from Kantō and other areas moved there and settled down. Thus, this new Hanshin language was also a result of the mixture of the Osaka vernacular and other languages such as the Kobe language (Ito 1991, 119).

Tanizaki strived to approximate a perfectly authentic Hanshin dialect, and he even employed two young female students from the English department of Osaka women's college to help him with the dialect. Initially, Tanizaki presented Sonoko's narration in the first and fourth installments in Tokyo standard language. The amount of Osaka dialect started to appear in the third chapter and kept increasing until the ninth chapter, in which a narrative entirely told in Osaka dialect. Afterwards, Tanizaki unified the narrative by rewriting the earlier chapters when the book was about to be published. Tanizaki did not start to present Sonoko's narration in Osaka dialect until the second installment. However, by the second half of the third installment, "both the dialogue and Sonoko's narration are written in dialect," however, in the fourth installment, Tanizaki used standard Japanese for Sonoko's narration again. Kōno Taeko assumes that Tanizaki might have prepared his manuscripts in standard Japanese, and then asked these two "dialect consultants" to translate them (Cronin 2017, 36).

Despite Tanizaki's efforts in carefully presenting Hanshin dialect in this story,

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<sup>6</sup> Translated and quoted by Michael Cronin (2017, 26-27).



sensitive readers, especially certain Osaka native writers, were critical of his treatment of the dialect. These writers clearly acknowledged Tanizaki's stance as an Osaka outsider, and picked up on the linguistic "authenticity" Tanizaki attempted to achieve. Kōno Taeko concludes that the Hanshin dialect Tanizaki used is "inappropriate and inelegant to Sonoko's age and situation," and she even listed Tanizaki's mistakes in using the Hanshin dialect.<sup>7</sup> Decades earlier, Oda Sakunosuke commented on Tanizaki's choice of the dialect in his essay "Osaka no Kanōsei" (Osaka's Potentiality, 1947). Oda recognized Tanizaki's success in representing the story in Osaka dialect but he also noted Tanizaki's failure to acknowledge the variation of the language. From Oda's perspective, Tanizaki's Hanshin dialect is too standard and it is not the rich and authentic style of language Osaka people used in daily life. Speaking of the nuance of a dialect, in his essay "Osaka-ben zatsudan" (Ramblings on Osaka dialect, 1930), Osaka painter Koide Narashige expresses his discomfort in speaking standard Japanese and states that the standardization of language brings a consciousness of the performativity of speech (Koide 1987, 100), which surely drifts apart from daily life and would have killed the variant and vitality of a local language.

These Osaka writers' questioning of Tanizaki's use of the Hanshin dialect proves their desires to label Tanizaki as an Osaka outsider. Their skepticism indicates their discomfort seeing an outsider's mastery of the local dialect, which is expected to be only intelligible to people in the same "imagined community." Besides, these Osaka writers may have felt uncomfortable about a Tokyo native's agency of and commercial success in narrating their hometown. Despite the writers' harshness, Tanizaki's ignorance of Osaka dialect's nuance and variants, and his arrangement of the narratives in this story add to his outsider stance. Through the exotic language, Tanizaki invented a vulgar and abnormal Osaka of sexual desires.

In this story, Tanizaki constructs a world of deception, desires, and decadence. By presenting self-contradictions in Sonoko's narratives, Tanizaki destroys Sonoko's

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<sup>7</sup> Translated and quoted by Michael Cronin (Cronin 2017, 36).

credibility as a narrator. As Ito notes, “the cycle of deception and self-deception creates a world where truth and fact cease to matter. A fascination with dissimulation takes over, and the characters, as well as the reader, are ensnared in a web of lies” (Ito1991, 130). Chiba Shūnji points out that Sonoko’s narration involves a strong subjectivity and consists of a cumulative layering of events, some of which later turns out not to be true (Chiba1994, 37). For instance, regarding the same issue—Mitsuko’s earlier marriage proposal—Mitsuko and Watakuni’s testimonies contradict each other. Here are the paralleling narratives of Mitsuko and Watakuni, both quoted by Sonoko:

As we were eating lunch, Mitsuko began by saying that it was the director himself who started those malicious rumors. Of course I’d found it irritating, the way he kept coming into the classroom and embarrassing me before everyone, and I couldn’t help feeling he was up no good. But when asked why on earth he wanted to spread a rumor like that, she said that the whole thing was aimed at *her*, that one way or another he wanted to damage her reputation. And the reason for that was talk of a marriage proposal, a proposal from the young man who was heir to the fortune of the M family, one of the richest and most famous families in Osaka.

Mitsuko said that she herself wasn’t interested, but her own family was very much in favor of the match, and the other party seemed equally eager to have her. But apparently the daughter of a certain municipal councilman had also been offered for marriage to this Mr. M, which meant that she was in competition with Mitsuko. Even though Mitsuko had no desire to be a rival, the councilman’s family must have felt they were up against a formidable enemy. Anyway, the young Mr. M was enthralled by Mitsuko’s beauty and had even sent her love letters, so no doubt she was a formidable enemy (Tanizaki 1994, 15-6).

However, Watakuni’s narrative contradicts Sonoko’s. According to him, it was Mr. M who rejects Mitsuko:

What this Watakuni told me was that while Mitsuko was still living in Semba, around the end of last year, he and Mitsuko had fallen in love

and had even intended to be married. However, this spring the talk of marriage with M had come up, and they were afraid their own plans were doomed. Fortunately the rumor of a lesbian affair had the effect of breaking off M's proposal (Tanizaki 1994, 69).

Regardless of the authenticity of their confessions, Sonoko's spread of this controversial hearsay ruined her own credibility and led to "Sensei" questioning her narratives. In Sonoko's narrative, Mitsuko said that the reason she rejected the prominent Mr. M's marriage proposal was because she was not interested. Although a certain municipal councilman-family daughter competed with her to marry Mr. M, and Mr. M was enthralled by Mitsuko's beauty and had even sent her love letters, she did not choose him (Tanizaki 1994, 16). However, in Chapter 10, when talking about the same issue—Mitsuko's engagement to Mr. M—Watakuni's testimony overturns Mitsuko's narratives: according to Watakuni, the reason Mitsuko did not marry Mr. M was not because she rejected him, rather, it was the other way around—Mr. M heard of rumors of Mitsuko's lesbian affair with Sonoko, and decided not to marry her.

Sensei's judgmental gaze towards Sonoko is not only manifested through his questioning of her narrative's authenticity, but also through his contempt for Sonoko's vulgar "Osaka taste." Sensei's responses to Sonoko's storytelling appears in brief passages, which interrupts her testimony and weakens her narrative authority. Sensei comments on Sonoko's choice of the kimonos and looks down upon her standards of beauty. Here is an example of Sonoko's narrative, followed by Sensei's comments/Author's note:

Oh yes, I've brought along a photograph I'd like to show you. We had it taken of us together when we got our matching kimonos—it's the one that was in the papers and attracted so much attention. As you can see, standing side by side like this I'm just a foil for Mitsuko; you won't find another such dazzling beauty among all the young girls around Semba. (Author's note: The "matching kimonos" in the photograph were of the gaudy, colorful sort that is so much to the Osaka taste. Mrs. Kakiuchi wore her hair pulled back in a chignon; Mitsuko's was done up in a

traditional Shimada, but her eyes were rich, liquid, extraordinarily passionate for a young city-bred girl of Osaka. In short, the eyes were fascinating, full of the magnetic power of a love goddess. Certainly she was very beautiful; there was no false modesty in the widow's remark about being a foil for her. But whether her face was in fact suitable for the benign features of the Willow Kannon was perhaps another matter).  
(Tanizaki 1994, 13)

Attracted to Mitsuko physically and emotionally, Sonoko portrays Mitsuko as the “bodhisattva.”<sup>8</sup> The married Sonoko is so attracted to Mitsuko that she even considers Mitsuko a perfect partner, regardless of gender. Sonoko adores everything related to Mitsuko, even her clothing choice. From Sonoko's perspective, Mitsuko is amazingly beautiful and the kimonos fit her perfectly. Juxtaposing “the author's notes” and Sonoko's comments, the author admits Mitsuko's beauty, but he dislikes the “gaudy, flamboyant Osaka-styled” clothing and looks down upon Sonoko's so-called bad “Osaka taste.” Moreover, Sensei questions Sonoko's over-praising of Mitsuko's beauty and points out that Mitsuko cannot be compared to Willow Kannon. Later, Sensei uses the word “*kebakebashii*” (garish) to describe the stationary Mitsuko and Sonoko used for their notes to each other and compared their taste of the stationary to that of people's in the capital: Tokyo women would use something plainer and Tokyo men would not like the idea of such a love letter. Moreover, Sensei associated their personal tastes with the trait of Osaka and commented as follows: “The taste of gaudy and loud things is, after all, [typical of] Osaka women” (Cronin 2017, 28).<sup>9</sup>

In *Manji*, Tanizaki consistently made the Tokyo listener—“Sensei” cast a judgmental gaze on Sonoko, and question her narrative authenticity and taste. By setting off the Tokyo listener's distrust in the Osaka narrator, Tanizaki emphasized the language and cultural differences between Osaka and Tokyo, as well as the local and the national. The bleak hope of the Tokyo listener's reconciliation with the Osaka

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<sup>8</sup> According to Cronin's footnote on P.194, the bodhisattva appeared to Shinran at the Rokkakudo and promised to take the form of a beautiful woman and allow the monk to violate her, thus satisfying his carnal desire while following the doctrine of Pure land Buddhism

<sup>9</sup> Translated by Michael Cronin.

speaker perhaps reflected Tanizaki's struggles to understand, accept, and assimilate into Osaka culture. By looking down on Osaka cultural differences from Tokyo values, Tanizaki built wall of defense in front of a foreign culture and justified his failure of embracing it. Tanizaki's failure to approximate an "authentic" Hanshin dialect and his exaggeration of an exotic Osaka bespeak his stance as an Osaka outsider—he had to define and construct an Osaka always as the bizarre "other." Despite the story's commercial success, Tanizaki's observations of Osaka from above and from the outside, and his illusions of mastering the "authentic" Osaka dialect, would also make readers question the credibility of his "authentic" Osaka narratives.

### ***Tade kuu mushi*—An Unfamiliar and Familiar Osaka**

Published between *Chijin no ai* (Naomi, 1924) and other historical stories of the 1930s, *Tade kuu mushi* (1929) could be considered as a transitional work between Tanizaki's fascination with the West and his "return to Japan" (*Nihon e no kaiki*). Dismayed by Tokyo's chaotic present, Tanizaki turned to look for comfort in another region—Kansai, and another time—the past. In *Tade kuu mushi*, Tanizaki constructed an Osaka different from that in *Manji*—an exotic and strange Osaka. On the one hand, Tanizaki still approaches Osaka from the perspective of an outsider, and uses his characters' voices to express his judgment of the coarse and vulgar Osaka culture. On the other hand, the Osaka in *Tade kuu mushi* was portrayed as less exotic, but more familiar and plain: this Osaka shares more similar traits with the protagonist's childhood neighborhood in Tokyo, which consistently calls on his ancient Tokyo memories.

*Tade kuu mushi* does not only focus on Osaka, it also encompasses other Kansai cities. Tanizaki discussed nuanced differences among the Kansai cities and associated them with his characters. As Ito summarizes, this story is "the cultural topography of Kansai" (Ito 1991, 115). In this story, the male protagonist Shiba Kaname and his wife Misako's marriage is drifting towards a divorce, and Misako has taken a lover, Aso, to Kaname's approval. Considering their young son, Hiroshi, and Misako's father, both

Kaname and Misako are procrastinating over their divorce decision. By presenting contrasting character personalities and associating them with the cities' aura, Tanizaki tells the nuanced distinctiveness among Kansai cities—Kyoto, Kobe, and Osaka. Misako's father and his mistress, O-hisa lives in Kyoto, a city famous for its rich aristocratic tradition and cultural heritage. Influenced by Kyoto's cultural atmosphere, the old man and O-hisa immerse themselves in a traditional life style—drinking Japanese sake and procuring Kyoto sweets in puppet theaters and traveling to the southern outskirts of Osaka to learn the traditional Japanese instrument *shamisen* (Tanizaki 1955,115). In contrast, Kaname's cousin Takamatsu lived in Shanghai and his lover Louise lives in Kobe, and they were influenced by these cosmopolitans' Western-style. Louise is half Korean half Russian, she has an exotic and foreign look, and lives in Kobe, an exotic and inclusive harbor city with a mixture of Eastern and Western culture. Moreover, she is practical, crafty, and alludes to money frequently; deeply inside she is materialistic and profit-concerned, and adheres to the modern value. Kaname and Misako live in the Hanshin region of Osaka, and they maintain a mixture of Western and Eastern life-style. Their attitudes towards the modern and the traditional are more ambivalent: although they embrace Western culture and ideas, they obey traditional Japanese values. As Keiko McDonald points out, “Kaname and Misako, placed between these opposing characters, enact the strange paradox of simultaneously being and not being Japanese” (McDonald 1977, 198). Both Kaname and Misako adore the Western life style—Kaname reads Western literature (Tanizaki 1955, 71-72), and Misako watched Western movies and is interested in French (75). However, they both struggle in their conjugal stagnation and could not divorce immediately because of traditional social and familial morale.

Similar to *Manji*, which seems like a love triangle story on the surface but deals with issues such as cultural and regional differences, *Tade kuu muchi* also deals with questions including modernity and tradition. As Matsumoto Seichō points out, *Tade kuu mushi* seemingly begins as a portrait of an unhappy marriage, but suddenly shifts

to a discussion of “the protagonist’s dawning sense of cultural identity” (Matsumoto 1965, 262-264). Regarding the story’s sudden shift, Ito says that “the organizing principle of *Tade kuu mushi* is the recognition of marriage as a function of culture” (Ito 1991, 136). Ito further states that “*Tade kuu mushi* articulates what other Tanizaki novels have implied: that a discussion of the relations between men and women is essentially a discussion of culture” (136). In the story, Kaname is involved with three women—Misako, Louise, and O-hisa, and his feelings towards these women also reflect his developing ideas of different cities and culture. Kaname loses interests in his wife Misako and has been looking for a chance to divorce her. The main reason that Kaname loses interests in Misako is because that she shares too much similarity with him, so she is no longer new, exciting and attractive:

He had nothing against his wife. They simply did not excite each other. Everything else—their tastes, their ways of thinking—matched perfectly. To him she was not “female,” to her he was not “male”—it was the consciousness of being husband and wife and yet not being husband and wife that caused the tension between them, and had they not been married they could probably have been excellent friends.  
(Tanizaki 1955, 53)

From the narration above, it is clear that Kaname yearns for someone different and new as his partner. He sees so much similarity and predictability in Misako, and this is why their marriage ceases to satisfy him. Therefore, he looks for sexual and emotional satisfaction elsewhere, and desires someone different, distant, and even unpredictable:

To keep for a life time companion a woman with whom he did not feel half—not quarter—the delight he felt when he embraced a woman of a different nation and different race, a woman encountered, so to speak, only at scattered points along the way—surely that was an intolerable dislocation. (Tanizaki 1955, 171).

To his satisfaction, Kaname finds a completely different woman from Misako—Louise. Kaname is attracted to Louise not only because she is exotic, but also because she satisfies Kaname’s fantasies for the West. Louise is young, energetic, amorous, and

cosmopolitan: Louise's international background and her multi-cultural experiences echoes her residence—Kobe's cultural aura. As an early port city heavily influenced by Western culture, Kobe was the second city to Yokohama as a major entry for products and ideas from abroad. With its prominent cultural diversity and inclusive foreign community, Kobe provides Hanshin residents with easy access to the newest trend from the West. Louise is a modern woman, she travels to different countries and masters different languages (161). Maintaining an affair with Louise not only temporarily sets Kaname free from his marriage but also brings him a sense of pride when showing off Louise to his friend: "Once he had brought a friend here, and the friend, just back from France, has said: 'You would have a hard time finding a woman like her even in Paris. Who would expect to see one wandering around Kobe'" (161). The comment of Kaname's friend makes Kaname realize Louise's value as a unique foreign woman and the bridge to connect him with the Western culture he has been yearning for, "with the impression left by his friend's remark still a strong one, he found something of his longing for Europe satisfied in his relations with Louise.

It is not rare to see the Japanese male characters' obsessions with exotic women in Tanizaki's stories. In his previous story *Chijin no ai*, Tanizaki portrayed a well-educated Japanese man—Jōji, who is enthralled to a girl—Naomi, with exotic Eurasian looks. As Ito states, it seems that Tanizaki's intense exoticism, through somewhat tempered by the years, was never eradicated (Ito 1991, 111). So, what is exoticism? As Noguchi's defines, exoticism, "is an attempt to find something lacking within the self in an object or person that is foreign, strange, or distant. It can thus be defined as an outwardly projected act of self-discovery."<sup>10</sup> Noguchi's definition of exoticism also responds to Georges Bataille's conception of exoticism as a process where "man is everlastingly in search of an object *outside* himself but this object answers the innerness of the desire" (Bataille 1986, 29). Therefore, in the core of the concept of "exoticism," there exist key ideas as "affinity" and "self-recognition." The reason people are attracted to something

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<sup>10</sup> Translated by Ken Ito (Ito1991, 110).



exotic is not because it is completely different from who they are or what they have, but because it maintains certain affinity they can identify with.

After Louise, Kaname becomes attracted to the Kyoto doll-like beauty O-hisa. Although both O-hisa and Louise differ hugely from his wife Misako, and they are both exotic, their beauty is not similar: Louise is more foreign, while O-hisa is more traditional. Kaname shares more similarity with O-hisa than Louise, in race and cultural background. And it is this “exoticism” of O-hisa, with familiarity and unfamiliarity, that attracts Kaname strongly and brings him tranquility. When they first meet in a puppet theater in Osaka to watch *Shinjū Ten no Amijima* (The Love Suicides at Amijima), by the famous dramatist Chikamatsu Monzaemon, Kaname notices O-hisa’s image merges with the ancient, theater-dolls on the stage and discovers her doll-like beauty. O-hisa is fragile, quiet, compliant, and vaguely unhealthy. She has authentic Kyoto black teeth, and dresses in traditional Japanese kimono. O-hisa is submissive to the old man, and their relationship is just similar to the *bunraku* puppet and puppeteer. O-hisa’s doll-like appearance and temperament fulfill Kaname’s expectations for an “ideal woman”— “elaborately crafted, subtle in her beauty, and silently manipulated by men” Kaname identifies O-hisa with the puppets again, and furthermore, associates O-hisa’s appearance with an ancient past (Tanizaki 1955, 139).

Kaname thought of the faces of the ancients in the dusk behind their shop curtains... And wasn’t O-hisa a part of it? Fifty years ago, a hundred years ago, a woman like her, dressed in the same kimono, was perhaps going down this same street in the spring sun, lunch in hand, on her way to the theater beyond the river. Or perhaps, behind one of these latticed fronts, she was playing ‘snow’ on her koto. O-hisa was a shade left behind by another age (Tanizaki 1955, 18).

The “past” that attracts Kaname is not only an ancient age in history that he has not experienced, but is also a replicate of his old childhood. In his trip to Awaji, Kaname hears the Osaka song “Snow” and finds it alluring, since it calls on his memories of early Tokyo years. The merchants’ houses on the island reminds him of the *Shitamachi*

(under city) of Tokyo. Moreover, “Awaji strikes him as a landscape where the past continues into the present, where his childhood still exists” (Ito 1991, 148). On the one hand, “Kaname had grown up in the merchant’s section of Tokyo before the earthquake destroyed it, and the thought of it could fill him with the keenest nostalgia; but the very fact that he was a child of the merchants’ quarter made him especially sensitive to its inadequacy” (Tanizaki 1955, 34). This could perhaps explain Kaname’s dismay and boredom with Tokyo, because he is so familiar with that place that he knows its imperfections. On the other hand, Kaname feels nostalgia towards the afternoon long ago when he was taken to a theater in Tokyo by his mother (Tanizaki 1955, 38), and deeply inside he still misses Tokyo, more specifically, the old Tokyo before the earthquake and modernization.

Similar with “Sensei” in *Manji*, after relocating to Osaka from Tokyo, on the one hand, Kaname constantly judges the things around him in Osaka according to his Tokyo values. Kaname explains his contempt for Osaka art, for instance, the Osaka style of singing as “coarse and noisy,” and he dislikes the Osaka way of singing, the Osaka samisen, and narrator. Furthermore, he even finds the way Osakans interact with each other rude and strange.

Kaname began to wonder whether, in its place and done properly, the Osaka style of singing was really as coarse and noisy as he had always taken it to be. Or perhaps its very noisiness heightened the mood of tragedy. He disliked the Osaka samisen, but even more he disliked the uncouth Osaka narrator, the embodiment, it seemed to him, of certain Osaka traits that he, born and reared in Tokyo like his wife, found highly disagreeable, a sort of brashness, impudence, forwardness, a complete lack of tact when it came to pushing one’s personal ends... Quite foreign to him is the openness of the Osakan, who strikes up a conversation with a stranger on the streetcar and proceeds—in an extreme case, it must be admitted—to ask how much his clothes cost and where he bought them. Such behavior in Tokyo would be considered outrageously rude (Tanizaki 1955, 34).

However, on the other hand, Kaname unconsciously looks for a sense of affinity in the neighborhood and seeks to identify and confirm his own cultural identity. He discovers a sense of belonging and tranquility in Osaka since he finds similar traits similar to those of his childhood neighborhood, and this discovery calls on his precious and nostalgic memory of his childhood. For instance, when he goes to the puppet theater with Misako, O-hisa and the old man, the smell and arrangement of the puppet theater remind him of the place his mother took him to in Tokyo:

As he stepped from his sandals and felt the smooth, cold wood against his stockinged feet, he thought for an instant of a time, long ago—he could even have been no more than four or five—when he had gone to a play in Tokyo with his mother. He remembered how he had sat on her lap as they took a rickshaw downtown from their house in the old merchants' quarter, and how afterwards his mother had led him by the hand, padding along in his holiday sandals, as they followed the maid from the teahouse. The sensation as he stepped into the theater, the smooth, cool wood against the soles of his feet, had been exactly the same then. Old-fashioned theaters with their open, straw-matted stalls somehow always seemed cold. And he had worn a kimono that day too—how clearly it called back his childhood, that feel of the air, like a penetrating, pungent mint, slipping through the kimono to his skin, chilly but pleasant, caressing as those cool, sunny days in very early spring when the plums are in bloom (Tanizaki 1955, 18).

Kaname's experience of an unsatisfying marriage and a cultural displacement reflects Tanizaki's private life experience. During 1928 to 1929, Tanizaki fell in love with his wife—Chiyo's little sister and considered divorcing Chiyo. Simultaneously, he also strived to blend into his new Kansai life and recorded many of his observations in his Kansai essays. As Ito states, Tanizaki gradually found that he could confirm his identity as a son of Tokyo's under city (*Shitamachi*), and “with time, he began to understand his affinity for Kansai as a reaffirmation of his class origins. Osaka's mercantile tradition played an important part in this process” (Ito 1991, 110).

Furthermore, on his trip to Kyoto and the Yamato region, Tanizaki discovered that Kansai possessed the mystery and the beauty of the “ancient East” and wrote this down in his essay (Tanizaki 1968, 21: 23-24). However, as Ito states, this “reclamation of his class identity and the rediscovery of a lost landscape did not automatically make Tanizaki at home” (Ito, 110). The sense of loss, displacement, and solitude kept haunting Tanizaki, but it also became the inspiration and driving force of his writings.

### ***Sasameyuki*—An Osaka With Fading Traditions**

As Donald Keene argues, in the 1940s, there existed “a literary resistance to the war in Japan” (Rubin 1984, 272). According to Keene, Tanizaki and Nagai Kafū were the only two writers who managed to sustain their “artistic integrity” during the war. Both of them were “well-established authors who could live on the royalties from reprints of old works (or on the generosity of their publishers).” Tanizaki continued writing *Sasameyuki* “after it was dropped from *Chūō Kōron* in 1943, but he wrote little else for publication through the remainder of the war” (Rubin, 273).

The wartime militarism was so strong that it forced Tanizaki to calibrate his literary activities to the pervasive activities of the censors. After the publication of *Manji* and *Tade kuu mushi*, between 1931 and 1935, Tanizaki worked on a series of short historical novels that master themes of the past, such as *Mōmoku monogatari* (A Blind Man’s Tale, 1931) and *Shunkinshō* (A Portrait of Shunkin, 1933). He also wrote in *In’ei reisan*, (In Praise of Shadows, 1933-34), a collection of essays on traditional Japanese aesthetics. Simultaneously, Tanizaki also devoted himself to the translation of the great eleventh-century classic *The Tale of Genji*, to modern Japanese. However, because of the wartime censorship, Tanizaki had to make distortions in his translations in order “not to infringe upon the taboos of the ‘hard-headed militarists’” (Rubin 1984, 259).

Despite Tanizaki’s caution in his writing and translating, he would not have expected that *Sasameyuki* would be banned in the 1940s. During and after the war, Tanizaki published *Sasameyuki* in the magazines *Chūō kōron* (Central Review) and

*Fujin kōron* (Women Review) from 1943 to 1948. *Sasameyuki* is set in Kansai that revolves around the vicissitudes of the bourgeois Makioka family's daily life. This story concerns the life of the wealthy Makioka family of Senba, Osaka, from the autumn of 1936 to April 1941, and focuses on a main plot—the family's attempts to find a husband for the third sister, Yukiko—and a secondary plot, the youngest sister Taeko's love affairs with different men. Unlike Tanizaki's previous stories about abnormal sexual desires, this story features slice-of-life episodes surrounding the slow-moving middle-class Makioka family; the primary moods of the family are decadence, and nostalgia for the past. However, after the second installment of *Sasameyuki* appeared in 1943, Hatanaka Shigeo, the editor of *Chūō kōron*, was summoned by the Army Information Division for the publication of the story. One Major Sugimoto said that *Sasameyuki* was so inappropriate because it detailed “the very thing we are most supposed to be on guard against during this period of wartime emergency,” and it is very “indifferent to the war effort,” because it maintained “the attitude of a detached observer” (Rubin, 264).

Is *Sasameyuki* truly a story ignorant of the war effort and the national ideology? To get the book published, Tanizaki was already aware of the censors' standards and careful with his writing, for he later wrote in “*Sasameyuki no kaita koro*” (When I wrote *Sasameyuki*) that he originally intended to make *Sasameyuki* a longer story and a study of the decadent middle-class life in Ashiya. However, he realized this kind of writing would be too “dangerous” at that time (Tanizaki 1968, 23: 364-65). Tanizaki already strived to adjust his writing with the censors' standards, but even so the militarists could not discern his efforts of narrating the national ideology in this story. How did Tanizaki present the ideal “modern and traditional” and embed the wartime national ideology in the story? Is this story truly a pure nostalgic for the past traditions?

### **Tradition and Modernity in *Sasameyuki***

In *Sasameyuki*, “traditional” and “modern,” “local” and “national” are two fundamental dichotomies that shape Osaka as a locale with a distinct duality: on the

one hand, Osaka is a place suffused with modernity, cosmopolitanism and inclusiveness, and these characteristics are manifested through the Makioka's interactions with foreign families and their acceptance of the Western-styled life; on the other hand, Osaka is a place with rich but fading traditional Japanese culture, and fewer economic opportunities compared with Tokyo, which is reflected via the Makioka's anachronistic struggles to keep up their old family's fame as well as the characters' decisions to relocate to Tokyo in search of economic opportunities. Moreover, Osaka was not presented as a remote and alienated place away from the national discourse, instead, it was depicted as a place where the wartime national ideology and capitalism gradually permeated, which threatened the local merchant culture. Standing at the juncture when the modern coincided with the traditional, the Makioka characters relentlessly struggled with the threatening national ideology and the fading importance of local Osaka culture. Different from his previous treatment of Osaka as a location of prosperous traditional arts and robust merchant culture, in this story, together with his characters, Tanizaki accepted the precarious fate of Osaka traditions and embedded his own reconciliation with the politically centralized and culturally homogeneous Tokyo within this the representation of the Makiokas.

In *Sasameyuki*, "tradition" is underscored by the cyclical and linear narrative timelines and embodied through the construction of the main character—Sachiko, the second sister. These cyclical and linear timelines include different seasonal events in a chronological order and put equal emphasis on the vicissitudes of each Makioka family member's life (Noguchi 1973, 235). Without specific references to any climax in the Makioka's life, the story's narrative treats each event equally and heightens the appreciation of the aesthetics of the mundane daily life. Many of the events are narrated through Sachiko's perspective and her interiority is seen more than any other character. Not only does Sachiko value traditional seasonal events such as spring cherry blossom viewing and summer firefly hunting, but she also feels attached to the Makioka's past glory and prioritizes the family's reputation over everything. It is mostly through

Sachiko that Tanizaki constructed a link with the past tradition of the Makioka family. In addition to her homage to the traditional Japanese events, as Ito points out, Sachiko also institutionalizes a “tradition” for the Makioka themselves: “Though their responses to the seasons echo the distant past, many of the specific observances practiced by the Makiokas are of a more recent vintage. These newer rituals, such as the annual trip to Kyoto to see the cherry blossoms, have become an indispensable part of the seasonal sequence” (Ito 1991, 196). Through the creation and reenactment of familial events and rituals, the Makiokas manage to share a feeling of intimate communal connectedness, which makes possible a reaffirmation of their middle-class Senba identity. As Ito points out, “by continuing to observe the customs of her childhood in the merchants’ quarter, Sachiko pays homage to a time when the townsman had been the fairest flower of the land” (Ito, 196). Sachiko’s obsession with her family’s past fame as prosperous merchants is the primary manifestation of her attachment to the Edo-period townsman roots.

By inheriting past traditions as well as creating their own, the Makiokas present themselves as a bourgeois family who indulge in the elegant pleasures of traditional taste and style. Their excessive attention to the past traditions, rather than to the creation of future ones, drag themselves in a different world, seemingly alienated from the ongoing national ideology and the devastation of the war. As Ito states, “the world of the Makioka Sisters is something of an anomaly in Tanizaki’s fiction because it is complete... In this novel, the ideal world has already been achieved and the problem is preserving it against change and intrusion” (Ito1991, 189). However, this world’s completeness and the narrative’s wholeness are broken and challenged by sudden incidents, which all concern “the modern.” By giving examples such as Tatsuo’s transfer to Tokyo, and the death of Taeko’s dance teacher, Tanizaki embodied the collision between “the modern and the traditional life” and shows Tokyo’s growing cultural and economic dominance over Osaka.

In Tanizaki’s view, Tokyo represents the national order, as a place with more

modernity, discipline, and economical productivity. In comparison, Osaka is a locale with a better-preserved tradition of cultural heritage, but less economic opportunities. Cronin defines Osaka as an “anachronistic play” and Tokyo a “new pragmatism,” and explains this dichotomy as follows: “one figures as a vestigial link to Senba, nostalgic in its expenditure; the other figures as a clean break, expectant in its economizing” (Cronin 2017, 121). The sharp contrast between Tokyo and Osaka is represented and reinforced through Tatsuo’s transfer to Tokyo, where he expects to earn and save more money to better support his family. From the third sister Yukiko’s observation, it is the Makioka’s old fame and luxurious life style that held Tatsuo back economically, while, by comparison, Tokyo provides a better environment with the freedom, privacy, and productivity necessary for Tatsuo to achieve self-advancement and financial success. The following paragraph narrates Tatsuo and Tsuruko’s decision to move to Tokyo:

It was a desire to advance in the world that had made them resolve to move, however, much though they disliked the prospect; and since one might say, with but a little exaggeration, that this desire to advance had been brought on by certain difficulties in the supporting of a family of eight on the property left by the sister’s father... Whereas in Osaka they did have to maintain certain forms for the sake of the family name, in Tokyo no one had ever heard of the Makiokas, and they could dispense with ostentation and accumulate a little property. Tatsuo’s salary was higher now that he had become a branch manager, Yukiko pointed out, and yet he was far thriftier than he had been in Osaka. Both Tatsuo and Tsuruko had become remarkably clever at economizing. With six children to feed, it made a difference if one planned in advance the buying of even a single vegetable, but what astonished Yukiko most was how the menu had changed from the Osaka days (Tanizaki 1955-57, 131).

This passage suggests two pieces of information: first, maintaining the Makioka’s old fame and keeping up with local people’s expectations for a privileged family cost so much money and energy that Tatsuo cannot continue to afford it. Second, Tokyo is a



place where austerity and economic productivity co-exist, where Tatsuo can not only earn more money from his new job but he can also save more money. With so many children to care for, Tatsuo's expenses also increased, "economic development made it more difficult for him to rely on the property he had inherited from his foster father" (Tanizaki 1955-57, 100). Economic productivity and austerity are Tokyo's two fundamental traits that attract Tatsuo. In Tokyo, no one cares about their Makioka family fame so they can thrive in frugality.

The nation's promotion of frugality allows Tatsuo to accumulate more fortunes. Already in 1922, as Sheldon Garon has noted, the Home Ministry's Social Bureau had launched a campaign for "restraint in consumption" that criticized citizens' taste for "luxury and self-indulgence." The following years would see more state-sponsored moral suasion campaigns to encourage frugality and rationalized consumption (Garon 1997, 319).

In addition to the emphasis of frugality and austerity in people's life, the importance of a strong body is also noted repeatedly in the national ideology, especially in the 1930s when the country witnessed the increasing cooperation between the military and government. Sabine Frühstück states that in order to serve Japan's expansionist aims, the National Physical Strength law (*Kokumin tairyoku hō*) was passed in 1940 to increase state control of bodies and to advance physical discipline to refashion the national body (Frühstück 2003, 10). This national discourse demanded high self-regulation and self-discipline from men, holding them to work hard to support their family and the nation. This idea of frugality and self-control helped to legitimize the middle class, and insulate them from consumption, and its ultimate goal was to enhance the ideology of nationalism.

In this story, the importance of building up a healthy body is closely tied to serving the nation. National ideology's educational influence on individuals is seen through Teinosuke's notion of raising and educating his daughter Etsuko, which vastly differs from his wife Sachiko's:

When Sachiko said that grace and elegance were more important for a girl than his “order,” Teinosuke answered that she was being old-fashioned, that the child’s eating habits and play hours should follow a strict pattern. Teinosuke was a barbarian who knew nothing about modern sanitation, said Sachiko; Sachiko’s methods of disinfecting were ineffective in any case, answered Teinosuke...Teinosuke preferred not to be too deeply involved in domestic problems, and particularly with regard to Etsuko’s upbringing he was of the view that matters might best be left to his wife. Lately, however, with the outbreak of the China Incident, he had become conscious of the need to train strong, reliant women, women able to support the man behind the gun (Tanizaki 1955-57, 118).

Influenced by the “old-fashioned” way of educating a middle-class daughter, Sachiko prioritizes “elegance” and “grace” over “order.” However, Teinosuke is aware of the national promotion of healthiness and the importance of building up a strong body during the wartime, and he believes in a scientific and strict eating pattern. Although Sachiko considers Teinosuke’s way of thinking as “barbarian,” her adherence to tradition is essentially more anachronistic than “civilized” compared with Teinosuke’s.

The tendency of being “anachronistic” is not only seen in the Makioka’s life. Taeko’s dance teacher’s death also showcases that the fading fate of tradition is inevitable, and it is necessary to follow the trend of modernity. In this story, Taeko practices the Osaka-style dance, which is being threatened by the dominant position of Tokyo cultural forms. At the end of Book 2, Chapter 11, when Taeko’s dance teacher is nearing the end of her life, Tanizaki points out that it is the teacher’s strong attachment to the old traditions and her failure to reconcile with modernity that makes her fail to survive. Tanizaki’s description of the teacher’s miserable ending implies the bleak situation of the Osaka-style dance and stresses the necessity to accept the trend of modernization:

The next day Sachiko visited the hospital with Taeko, and five or six days later they had notice of the teacher’s death. When they went with

condolences, they had occasion for the first time to call at her house; and they found it an astonishing house—little better than a tenement . . . And was that not because she was a woman with little talent for making her way in the world, a woman whose conscience did not permit her to do damage to the old forms and make concessions to the fashions of the day? (Tanizaki 1955-57, 207-8)

So strongly adhering to the “old forms” and “rules of tradition,” the dance teacher does not even want to move to a better-constructed house. “Not making concessions to the fashions of the day” is a major part of her conscience, which even includes adopting a modern way of living. However, such anachronistic loyalty to tradition would not bring the dance teacher any practical benefits in the 1940s; instead, it drags her into a poor and miserable situation.

Through the indulgence in their family’s past fame, the Makioka’s affirms their prestigious middle-class identity, which brings them a sense of pride and vanity, and helps them to escape from exposure to the national discourse. Through the examples of Tatsuo’s transfer to Tokyo, Teinosuke’s concept of raising Etsuko, and the dance teacher’s death, Tanizaki suggests that in the 1940s the incorporation of modernity and the permeation of imperialism and militarization had become an important part of Osaka people’s lives. Although characters such as Sachiko, Tsuruko and Taeko’s dance teacher adhere to the old traditions and reject the changes brought by modernity, they fail to stop the fading fate of Osaka’s local culture and the rising position of Tokyo’s national order. *Sasameyuki* narrates the Makioka’s struggles and confrontations with the economic centralization and cultural homogenization that came along with the development of the modern capitalist state, and elegizes the simultaneous richness and enervation of traditional Japanese culture as it is overwhelmed by the national ideology.

### **Conclusion**

When following Tanizaki’s writing trajectory on Osaka and tracing the shift of his Osaka literary representations from the 1920s to the 1940s, it is not difficult to

contemplate the change in his own views of Osaka. This chapter concludes that initially, Tanizaki took Osaka as both a geographical and cultural shelter and on to which he projected his expectations for an idealized locale and his longings for the West onto this region, but simultaneously, he could not help but judge Osaka from a privileged Tokyo outsider's values. This complicated feeling toward Osaka drove Tanizaki to construct an exotic, bizarre, and decadent Osaka saturated with lies and sexual desires in *Manji*. Subsequently, with his next work, Tanizaki achieved a sense of familiarity and belonging to the Kansai region through his rediscovery of the old traits of Tokyo in Osaka. Moreover, he began to see a more nuanced Kansai among Osaka, Kyoto, and Kobe and presented a Kansai "cultural topography" in *Tade kuu mushi*. During the Second World War, Tanizaki saw the imbalanced power relationship between the national order—Tokyo's imperialism and militarization—and the local order—Osaka's merchant culture—and realized Osaka's unavoidable fate of fading traditions. Tanizaki imagined an Osaka of anachronism, unproductivity, and a fading local culture, which embodied his mixed nostalgia of Osaka traditions and surrender to national ideology in *Sasameyuki*.

Among these three works, Tanizaki constructed image of Osaka from an exotic locale with entangled love relationship and sexual possibilities to a place with well-preserved Japanese cultural relics, traditions, urban heritage, and, ultimately, to a region with fading localness giving way to imperialism and capitalism. By shuffling the paired dichotomies of Osaka and Tokyo, tradition and modernity, West and East in his stories and embodying the interplay of these ideas in his narratives, Tanizaki imagined the developing distance between Osaka and the nation. By reconciling with the Tokyo national order and embracing the changes Tokyo had experienced, Tanizaki stopped placing his hopes for an ideal city on Osaka and viewing the Osaka-Tokyo relation as completely binary; instead, through a closer look into the texture of Osaka culture, he noticed the structural affinity between Osaka and Tokyo as the local and the national order. This discovery motivated him to look for a reconciliation with the Tokyo that

once disappointed him, and a reconciliation with the modern and the national. In this light, Tanizaki's Osaka stories are not a complete resistance to the national narratives, instead, they are essentially national narratives in a local form.

### CHAPTER III

## AN INSIDER'S OSAKA: OSAKA IN ODA SAKUNOSUKE'S *MEOTO ZENZAI* AND *WAGA MACHI*

### Introduction

In the 1940s, Oda Sakunosuke responded to Osaka's gradual subordination within the national entity and the empire's imperial project by asserting a strong Osaka localism and decentralizing Tokyo's political hegemony in his literature. Throughout Oda's life, the representation of a local Osaka was always at the center of his writing. In the 1940s, under the strong censorship and boiling wartime national ideology, Oda relentlessly reflected on the relation between the nation and Osaka and consistently looked for a space where his freedom of writing local Osaka was secured. By looking at Oda's well-known stories *Meoto zenzai* (Sweet beans for two, 1940) and *Waga machi* (My Town, 1942), this chapter aims to examine the interplay between the nationality and locality, as well as tradition and modernity in Oda's literature.

In the early 1940s, with the permeation of the national discourse and the intensification of government censorship, Oda gradually calibrated his writing of local Osaka to the standards of the national ideology. From *Meoto zenzai* to *Waga machi*, Oda's way of stressing Osaka's locality had shifted from a conscious ignorance of the national discourse to an implicit criticism of the empire's imperial project. In *Meoto zenzai*, by drawing on the historical and literary heritage of Osaka between 1915 and 1935, Oda presented an "Osaka realism" that focuses on common people's life and the local culture without treating serious topics such as politics, as a way to reject the Tokyo mainstream literary trend and the country's promotion of national ideology during wartime. On the one hand, Oda set up a historical Osaka by emphasizing the locality of food, city space, and Osaka identity; on the other hand, Oda established a literary Osaka by consciously situating the story in a setting separate from the ongoing national discourse and the war fever.

*Waga machi* differs from *Meoto zenzai* in the way that it embodies the nation's

subjectivity Osaka daily life. In *Waga machi*, Oda linked the Philippines with Osaka through the movement of the protagonist Sadojima Takichi.<sup>11</sup> Using the Osaka native Takichi's wandering experience to the Philippines and his subsequent return to Osaka as a microcosm, *Waga machi* reflects the migration, colonialism, and power relations among city, nation, and empire in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By constructing a character who obeys the national ideology and simultaneously maintains an Osaka spirit of toughness, Oda found a balance between promoting the national ideology and Osaka's local culture in this story. However, simultaneously, Oda implied the rift between the individual and national needs by narrating Takichi's failure to thrive in the Philippines and suggesting his alienation from Osaka. Moreover, the story uses the character Jirō, to question the war's damage to normal people's lives. On the one hand, *Waga machi* manifests the individual's insignificance compared to the national apparatus; on the other hand, *Waga machi* extols the greatness of human conviction in front of nature and war, especially the Osaka gutsiness (*naniwa konjō*). By doing this, Oda emphasizes the tradition, vitality, and spirit that was deeply rooted in the earth of Osaka and constructed a strong Osaka "localism."

### **Writing the Local for the Nation**

In the early 1940s, promoting the ideal of "localism" became not only the task for the Koro cabinet, but also the whole literary establishment. After the 1937 Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July, tensions between the Japanese empire and China had heightened, which led directly to full-scale war between the two countries. As Ozaki states, to unite the nation and establish a new order in East Asia (*Daitōa shin chitsujo*), in September, the Koro cabinet started a movement to lift the nation's spirit (*kokumin seishin sōdōin undō*). In the following April, the Koro cabinet passed the corresponding law (*kokka sōdōin hō*) on domestic industry, economy, and publishing. In this law, the cabinet reorganized and refined the ideal "localism" (*chihō gainen*), and

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<sup>11</sup> It is significant that the Philippines represented a locale transcended by the imperial expansion in the 1940s, since it was a U.S. colony when the story begins in the early 1900s, and was invaded by Japan in 1941.

made it the focus of the total war (*kokka sōryoku sen*) system. In October, 1940, under the command of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association (*Taisei Yokusankai*), the “local culture movement” (*chiho bunka undō*) became popular and played a significant role in the promotion of “localism.” (Ozaki 2016, 147).

During the wartime, promoting the local was considered an important way to serve the nation. As Ozaki says, in January, 1941, the Imperial Rule Assistance Association promulgated “Fundamental Ideals of the New Local Culture Construction and the Present Urgent Policy” (*chiho bunka shinkensetsu no konpon rinen oyobi tomen no hōsaku*). This policy says that to achieve the goal of establishing a new order in the Greater East Asia, which essentially decides the fate of Japanese people, it is crucial to build up a new system. As the policy states, for a long time in Japan, culture has been private (*kojinteki*) and consuming (*shōhiteki*), however, the ideal culture of the future should be logical (*ronriteki*), scientific (*kagakuteki*), and artistic (*geijutsuteki*). In addition to the definition of the future Japanese culture, this policy also says that “the pure tradition of Japanese culture does not exist in the mainstream culture, which forms under the influence of foreign culture, rather, it exists in local culture. Therefore, for the nation’s sake, it is significant to promote local culture” (Ozaki 2016, 149).

Oda was always aware of the importance of promoting local literature, and realized that for writers, the best way to promote their local culture, is to get themselves established in the Tokyo mainstream literary establishment (*bundan*). Responding to the local culture movement’s ideology of “respecting the uniqueness of the local culture” and “promoting local culture,” in August, 1941, Oda published his essay— “Osaka, Osaka” in *Asahi News* (*Asahi Shimbun*). In this essay, he used the term “local culture” (*chiho bunka*) for the first time. Two months later, Oda published another essay— “Local Culture,” in which he expresses his ideals on local culture. In this essay, Oda cites sentences from Tanizaki’s essay “Tokyo Memories” (*Tokyo o omou*, 1934), and praises and elaborates on Tanizaki’s ideals on the local and Japanese culture. In “Tokyo Memories,” Tanizaki points out that Tokyo is the capital of “consumption and pleasure”



(*shōhisha no miyako, kyōraku shugi no miyako*), and the culture in Tokyo is shallow; the authentic Japanese traditions lie in “everyone’s hometown” (*shōkun no kyōdo*). Moreover, Tanizaki says that Tokyo’s cultural centralization leads to the formation of the exclusive Tokyo literary establishment (*bundan*) and the writers’ hackneyed writing style, which he loathes. Tanizaki’s statement echoes Oda’s ideals, for he sympathizes with the hardships of local writers, usually marginalized by the Tokyo *bundan*, and he stresses the importance of local culture and traditions. Later in “Local Culture,” Oda states that to write good local literature, writers should start from learning their hometowns’ nature and customs (Oda 1978, 8:147-48). To make local literature the representative of Japanese literature, local writers should strive to bring their writing levels up to the Tokyo *bundan*’s standards (Oda, 148). This perhaps explains why Oda was not satisfied with merely publishing in an Osaka coterie magazine. It is Oda’s strong determination to promote the local Osaka, as well as his deep understanding of the *bundan*’s standards, that makes him become a national Osaka writer.

### **Oda Sakunosuke—A National Osaka Writer**

Throughout Oda’s life, Osaka was always the inspiration and focus of his writing. Oda achieved great success with his representations of Osaka. He rose to the national stage after publishing his story *Zokushū* (Vulgarity), and was nominated as a candidate for the Akutagawa prize in 1939. In 1940, his publication of *Meoto Zenzai* brought him more attention from the Tokyo *bundan*. Thereafter, Oda realized that he was no longer an Osaka coterie magazine writer, since the readership for his Osaka had been expanded to a national range. In the early 1940s, all the external factors, such as the attention from the *bundan* and the pressure from the wartime censorship and publishing policy, forced Oda to calibrate his writings and production of Osaka to a national standard. If Oda had the freedom to avoid the references of the national discourse in *Meoto zenzai* in 1940, two years later, when it came to *Waga machi*, he had to include or even promote the nation’s overseas imperial expansion. When forced to use the frame of “national”

in his writings, as a persistent Osaka writer, Oda had to find a way to secure a space to write Osaka in the currents of the national and imperial discourse.

As Oda claims in his *Waga bungaku shugyō* (My Literary Study, 1943), Osaka is tremendously important to his literary career: “My literary training must have been, in a way, the study of Osaka. Osaka is my birthplace, and my teacher” (Oda 1978, 8: 162). Focusing on the life and customs of local Osakans, Oda was truly a writer both of and from Osaka. Born and raised in Osaka, and simultaneously a successor of famous Osaka writers including Ihara Saikaku and Chikamatsu Monzaemon, Oda bases his literature in real life and maintains a strong consciousness of Osaka premodern literary tradition. Oda’s works are set in Osaka and full of Osaka elements such as local food, dialect, and culture, usually represented in a garrulous and joking style. Simultaneously, Oda sees his literature in terms of opposition to the officially sanctioned Tokyo literature and rejects the hegemony of the Tokyo literary establishment. In his essay “Kanōsei no bungaku,” (Literature of Possibilities, 1946), Oda clearly decries the limits of the “I-novel” and the conventions of a Tokyo-based, dominant realism.

However, Oda could not write Osaka with full freedom in the early 1940s because of the restrictions of wartime censorship, prompted by the needs to promote the national ideology. As Cronin points out, in 1940, when *Meoto zenzai* was published, “the government had coopted the discourse of popular play into national play (*kokumin goraku*)” (Cronin 2017, 76). As Cronin quotes Bataille, “everyday life was drafted into military leaders’ program of imperial aggression—a program that would effect the ‘catastrophic expenditure’ of war (Cronin, 76). The boiling national discourse led to the intensification of the wartime censorship. As Jay Rubin states, as early as in July 1936, the establishment of the Cabinet Information Committee (*Naikaku Jōhō linkai*) worked as an agency devoted to “positive propaganda,” which “marked the beginning of the truly fanatical suppression of any but the most worshipful references to the imperial house” (Rubin 1984, 256). In his chapter “The Military and the Thought Police Take Over,” Rubin says that in 1927, the military realized the importance of the four liberal

“general magazines,” *Chūō Kōron*, *Kaizō*, *Nihon Hyōron*, and *Bungei Shunjū*, and “organized these magazines into the so-called Four Company Society (Yonsha Kai)”, they were required to meet with the Army and Navy Information Divisions separately every month (Rubin, 257). In addition to the control of publications, the military bureaucrats also controlled the editorial autonomy when “in February 1941 the Cabinet Information Bureau demanded that the magazines surrender their subscription lists” (Rubin, 259).

Under such strong wartime censorship, Oda avoided references to the national discourse in *Meoto zenzai* by setting his story in a nostalgic and literary Osaka. Despite this cautious treatment, *Meoto zenzai* received criticism from the Cabinet Information Division in 1941, and according to Ozaki, the official record could be found in “Shuppan Keisatsu Hō” (Publishing Police Newspaper) and “Shuppan Keisatsu Shiryo” (Publishing Police Material). Together with *Meoto zenzai*, some of Oda’s other works such as *Zokushū* were also censored. According to the official record, the reason for the censorship was because of the characteristics of his writing style— “unreserved,” “erotic,” and “vulgar” (Ozaki 2016, 50). Oda learned his lesson from *Meoto zenzai*, ended up not publishing the novella’s sequel—*Zoku Meoto zenzai*, and calibrated his writing of *Waga machi* to the wartime publishing standards and censorship.

### **A Historical Osaka—Food and Identity**

Oda’s use of local culinary language and his depictions of local food culture add a strong Osaka color to *Meoto zenzai*. Responding to Osaka’s food culture and its consumerist trend, by capitalizing on the image of typical Osaka food and specific culinary language, *Meoto zenzai* constructs an Osaka identity. The male protagonist Ryūkichirō’s obsession with food reveals his identity as a prodigal and irresponsible Osaka “bon bon,” which contradicts the national image of man-woman gender role but has its real basis in Osaka life. Oda’s conscious choice of food and characters in this novella manifest his interests in a literature focusing on the authentic life of the common

people and presenting their mental activities in a frivolous and comical style.

Oda's *Meoto zenzai* was first published in 1940, in a local Osaka literary coterie magazine, *Seawind (Kaifu)*, which was co-founded by Oda and Kobe writer Aoyama Kōji in 1938. In this novella, Oda depicts many scenes of preparing and procuring food, and presents the vicissitudes of the typical Osaka man-women relationship between the two protagonists Ryūkichi and Chōko, through food. This emphasis coincides with Osaka's fame as "*tenka no daidokoro* (the world's pantry). The images of food reveal the identity of the eaters and the city space, and function as a metaphor for Ryūkichi's excessive consumption, which echoes Osaka's culture of consumerism and contributes to the constitution of an Osaka localism as a defiant gesture against the national ideology, which advanced frugality during the war time.

The story was set in Osaka in the 1920s and 1930s and was based on the actual life of one of Oda's older sisters and her lover (Uenagene 2014, 90). Oda took the book title "Meoto zenzai" from a small shop in Osaka that sold and still sells *zenzai*, a simple snack of soupy, sweetened azuki beans topped with cakes of pounded rice. *Zenzai* was always served and divided into two bowls, for wife and husband (*me-oto*) (Murakami-Smith 1997, 286). The novella tells about stories between Ryūkichi, the married son of an Osaka merchant, and a geisha named Chōko. When they meet and fall in love, Ryūkichi is already married. However, Ryūkichi abandons his wife and child and runs off with Chōko. Thereafter, Chōko looks for success in different businesses in order to support herself and the playful and lazy Ryūkichi. In contrast to Chōko's willingness to work hard, Ryūkichi indulges in eating and other enjoyments and refuses to take responsibilities for their family.

The image of Osaka is often associated with food because of its geographic advantage as a food hub and its people's enthusiasm for food. Osaka's long history as a merchant city and commercial hub brought it easy access to the nation's food supply. The availability of this food supply and Osakan people's passion for eating led to the typical Osakan stereotype: *kuidaore*--the popular notion that Osakans will spend all

they have for the love of food, a space of excessive appetite and expenditure (Cronin 2017, 62). This *kuidaore* stereotype of Osakans also has some basis in truth: as Oda points out in “Osaka Discovery” (Osaka Hakken, 1943), Osaka people are so passionate for food that each time they went out for work, they wouldn’t come back home without getting something to eat (Oda 1978, 8:239). *Meoto Zenzai*’s emphasis on Osaka’s food culture and Ryūkichi’s obsession with food help respond to Osaka’s image in the national imagination and establish an Osaka locality closely associated with gastronomy.

The novella’s first paragraph details the most common everyday activity: preparing food. The long list of local food and shop names coincides with Osaka’s fame as the “world’s pantry” and provides readers with an impression of the food diversity.

There were always bill collectors hanging around. Not only at the times when bill collectors regularly make their rounds, but almost any day you could find someone from the soy sauce dealer, the oil seller, the vegetable stand, the sardine store, the dried food store, the charcoal dealer, the rice store, the landlord’s, and whoever it was would be loudly demanding money. Tanekichi was stationed at the entrance to the alley, frying tempura and peddling it at one sen a piece—burdock root, lotus root, taro, stone parsley, konnyaku, pickled ginger, dried squid, sardines. Whenever he saw a bill collector coming, he ducked his head and pretended to be very busy mixing batter (Oda 1990, 13).

The food preparation scene not only presents a feast for the reader’s eyes but also offers a glimpse of daily life in Osaka—collecting bills, calculating money, and selling food. The depiction of Osaka’s food streets conjures Osaka’s fame as a place of gastronomy. In the Tokugawa Period, Osaka was known as “the world’s pantry” for its function as a hub for the transportation as well as storage of foodstuffs across Japan. Building on this reputation, the passage appeals to the national imagination of Osaka and the regional knowledge of food and store names to emphasize Osaka’s locality.

In addition to the opening scene, there are other scenes of procuring and consuming food. One such scene is when Ryūkichi introduces Chōko to his favorite places to eat

in south Osaka, or “Minami,” in the area that is located around Nanba and Shisaibashi stations.

About the fanciest place they patronized was a shop in Kōzu that featured boiled bean curd. Even less elegant than that were the night stalls where they went for doteyaki and dumplings stuffed with sake lees, or the place called Shiru-ichi in the street alongside the Sogō Department Store in Ebisubashi that specialized in a soup made of loaches and another made of whale hide. Then they had eel [mamushi] at the Izumoya at the east end of Aioi Bridge in Dotonbori, octopus at the Tako-ume in Nipponbashi, Kantodaki or vegetables in broth at the shobentango-tei in the grounds of Hozen-ji temple, tekkamaki sushi and sea bream skin in vinegar and miso sauce at the Sushisute just in front of the Tokiwa Theater in Sennichi-mae, rice cooked with vegetables and soy sauce [kayaku-meshi] and soup with sake lees at the Darumaya across the street, etc., --one unglamorous dish [getemono ryōri] after another, all made from ingredients that were anything but expensive. And the places where these dishes were served were hardly the kind one would ordinarily take a geisha to, so that at first Chōko wondered why in the world Ryūkichi was bringing her to such restaurant. (Oda 1990, 19)

In this passage, the introduction of food strongly asserts Osaka’s localism. With the cinematic-tinged writing, Oda skillfully retraces a food journey in at least two registers: first, the exterior space of restaurants and stalls in city space, from the boiled bean curd in Kōzu to sake lees in Darumaya; second, the hierarchy of food, from *getemono*, literally meaning the cheap, base, and strange dishes, to *umaimono*, which refers to tasty and elegant food. On a language scale, it is worthy of notice that Kantō people name food differently from that of Kansai people. As Hoyt Long states, the value of a place or its locality is produced through the notion of “difference.” (Long 2012, 19). Not to mention the passage’s correspondence with Osaka’s fame as “the world’s pantry,” the regional terms of dishes underscores Osaka’s locality. Cronin explains the language differences by offering such examples: “‘*Kanō-daki*’ means ‘Kanto stew,’ is what

people in the rest of Japan call ‘oden;’ the short ‘o’ reflects local pronunciation, and the verb ‘*taku*’ at the root of ‘*-daki*,’ which in Kantō refers only to the act of stewing.” (Cronin, 62). Dialect is marked as local and specific to a region, which creates a distinguished linguistic space and invokes a unique local culture in the text. Although referring to the same food, Osaka’s way of naming represents a strong element of Osaka culture and differentiates the city from Tokyo.

In addition, the classification of food in various areas of the city presents readers with a panoramic food map of Osaka. Following Ryūkichi and Chōko’s path to different restaurants in the city, readers become familiar with Osaka’s locations and urban space. By enumerating distinct street, stall, and district names in Osaka, Oda constructs a unique Osaka space by identifying the representative food in that area. No matter if it is in main streets, down alleyways or basements, Ryūkichi and Chōko would always find the representative and delicious restaurants and visit them to enjoy local fare. For instance: “Then they had eel[mamushi] at the Izumoya at the east end of Aioi Bridge in Dotonbori, octopus at the Tako-ume in Nipponbashi, Kantō-daki or vegetables in broth at the shobentango-tei in the grounds of Hozen-ji temple, etc” (Oda 1990, 24).

Ryūkichi and Chōko’s food choice is worthy of notice since food reveals eaters’ identity and people’s food choice is closely associated with their personal experiences. The protagonist, Ryūkichi, has such a strong passion for food that he is even willing to cross the whole city—from the north to the south, just to look for tasty food. Although living in the north side of Osaka, between Umeda and Senba area, Ryūkichi insists that there is nothing good to eat on the north side, or “kita.” The places Ryūkichi introduces to Chōko are in south Osaka, the area around Nanba and Shinsaibashi stations. Compared with Osaka’s north, the southern part of Osaka represents the essence of the real, undistilled, coarse, and vibrant Kansai culture since the Edo period. In history, the minami, or southern part of Osaka including the Dōtonbori and Shinsaibashi areas, is famous for its lively street life and theaters where people can enjoy traditional oral art performances, including *bunraku* (puppet play) and *kabuki* (classical Japanese dance-

drama). This area is famous for “most authentic” local food and culture in Osaka.

Ryūkichi comes from the merchant class and his family runs a famous cosmetic shop in Umeda Shinmichi Road, which lies between Umeda and Semba area, in north Osaka. Ryūkichi’s identity fits perfectly with the description of a stereotypical Osaka “bon bon,” literally meaning a handsome, well-off, urban young man, particularly one with a frivolous air (Makimura 1984, 654). The word “bon bon” was first established at the beginning of the seventeenth century Osaka, which was an honorific form used by servants to address sons in merchant households (Makimura, 654). The term “bon bon” has been widely used in Osaka life and frequently mentioned in other Osaka stories. In the Kamigata *rakugo* story “Chaya mukai” (1987), both the father *oyadanna* (merchant father) and the son *wakadanna* (merchant son) are Osaka “bon bon.” Instead of devoting themselves to the family business, the father and the son maintain a predilection for drinking, playing with geisha, and squandering money. As a “bon bon,” it is not surprising that Ryūkichi focuses on the enjoyment of life and devotes much of his time searching for good food. Surprisingly, what he likes is not the high-class food that coincides with his social class, instead, it is *getemono*, low-class food that is native to the southern part of Osaka.

Ryūkichi’s choice of food contradicts his middle-class social status, although he is born in a more affluent area of Osaka, he prefers the low-class food in Osaka’s south. From the following passage it is obvious to see Ryūkichi’s huge passion for food consumption in his relentless efforts to cross the whole city to hunt for good food:

When it came to good things to eat, Ryūkichi liked everything, and from time to time he would take Chōko along to what he called “some place special.” According to him, there was nothing good to eat in the north end of Osaka. For really good things you had to go to the southern part of the city. And it was no use going to first class restaurants. It might sound like penny-pinching, but you were just throwing your money away in places like that (Oda 1990, 9).

As an Osaka “bon bon,” Ryūkichi is spoiled, spendthrift, and is passionate for food



consumption. He is so obsessed with *getemono* that he would even cook *sanshō konbu*—a dish of simmered kelp seasoned with *sanshō* pepper at home even when he is unemployed. (The text proceeds to give directions for how to prepare this dish):

It was the smell of *sanshō konbu* cooking. Ryūkichi, sparing no expense on the ingredients, would buy the best grade of kombu seaweed, cut it up carefully into neat little squares, put it in a pot with the fragrant peppery berries of the *sanshō* or prickly ash tree, and simmer it very slowly in plenty of thick Kikkoman soy sauce over a low fire of pinewood charcoal for two or three days and nights. According to Ryūkichi, the result was as good as anything you could buy at a fancy store like the Ogurayama in Ebisubashi (Oda 1990: 18).

This cooking scene of *sanshō konbu* is presented in great detail and a comical tone: “he would buy the best grade of kombu seaweed,” “neat little squares,” “simmer it very slowly,” the words such as “the best”, “little”, and “very slowly” implies Ryūkichi’s punctiliousness about every detail of cooking this dish, ranging from the brand of soy sauce to the time of cooking and shows his strong enthusiasm for cooking. Ryūkichi’s enjoyment of cooking stands in a sharp contrast to Chōko’s hard-working attitude. After coming home from work and smelling the sweet pungent fragrance, Chōko exchanged a following conversation with Ryūkichi: Ryūkichi asks excitedly, “What do you think? It’s boiled down pretty good, huh?” The passage continues: “Chōko secretly felt a vague affection for Ryūkichi at times like this, but, as was her habit, she couldn’t show this sickly-sweet feeling... ‘Why are you still simmering it? What are you doing wasting so much time on it?’” (Oda, 18).

In *Meoto zenzai*, the gender roles—a hard-working woman and a lazy, irresponsible man—are worthy of notice. Chōko goes to work as a maid first and later becomes a geisha to support her parents and even continues to send money to them after she leaves home. After moving in with Ryūkichi, Chōko engages in various businesses to support him. Chōko works hard to support Ryūkichi and herself, but Ryūkichi does not take on the same sense of responsibility. Indulging in eating and cooking, Ryūkichi gains a

sense of self-achievement and avoids facing the hardships of life. In addition, Chōko sacrifices herself to stay with Ryūkichi and takes on his responsibilities for his original family. As Cronin states, “Chōko also sacrifices her respect for the institutions of marriage and motherhood to Ryūkichi’s impropriety” (Cronin, 57). Since Ryūkichi leaves his wife and young daughter to live with Chōko, when Ryūkichi’s father first learns of this affair, he has a family meeting with Ryūkichi and his wife, and decides not to accept Chōko as a member of his family. In addition, compared with Ryūkichi, Chōko shows more care towards his wife and daughter when Ryūkichi’s wife passes away. The subversion of gender roles—the man relies on the woman and does whatever he wants, while the woman supports him—and the abnormal woman—man relationship can also be found in other Osaka literature, including Chikamatsu monzaemon’s plays *Sonezaki Shinjū* (The Love Suicides at Sonezaki, 1703) and *Shinjū Ten no Amijima* (The Love Suicides at Amijima, 1720), and Kamizukasa Shōken’s *Hamo no kawa* (Skin of the Pike Conger Eel, 1914).

As Kobayashi Yutaka suggests, this man-woman relationship in Osaka literary works has an authentic basis in Osaka life (Kobayashi 1989, 243). Oda notes in *Osaka no jōsei* (Osaka Women, 1946) that the idea of full-time jobs for both husband and wife is considered a new social value for women, and it is a social value which Osaka women have had for some time – it could even be called a tradition. Thus, “it was not that a woman would get married for enjoyment, but that she would get married to enjoy hardship” (Oda 1978, 8: 290). Osaka women are capable of “adjusting flexibly to the outer world” and have the “strength to doggedly survive” without despairing. These are the same qualities he praises elsewhere in Osakans in general. Osakans, as Oda states in *Osaka ron* (On Osaka, 1943), have a strong self-confidence that they will be able to meet any difficulty head-on, and the adapt to any situation (Oda 1978, 8:249). Oda is always interested in the fate of lower and middle-class Osakans as their lives, occupations, and desires intermingled and their paths crossed on the wide bridges and in the narrow alleys of Osaka. Deeply rooted in real life, Oda’s *Meoto zenzai* delineates

the hardships and upheavals in Ryūkichi and Chōko's life, and depicts their interiorities without judgment.

Oda always realized the huge difference between the standards of the Tokyo mainstream literary establishment and his own values. In "Kanōsei no bungaku," Oda criticized the popular Tokyo "I"-novel trend and the preoccupation of "literati literature" in the Tokyo literary establishment. Lamenting that the confessional I-novel focused on stories that merely correspond to events in the author's life and indulging in a tendency of over-reflection, Oda resolved to write an authentic work of Osaka about the life of common people and employed his experience of wandering into his work and looked at Osaka with new eyes. Osaka is not merely a place of rich food culture and consumerism, but also a city filled with hardships, fortunes, and trials of lower-and middle-class people. Moreover, Oda believed that the boundless energy and vitality of common people, which allows them to face and handle hardships and embrace pleasures in life, was the essence of the Osaka spirit.

As a successor to Saikaku and Chikamatsu, Oda maintained a strong consciousness of the Osaka literary tradition, presenting stories with an authentic basis. Rather than imagining Osaka from above or at an observational distance, Oda looked at Osaka from the inside, observing the city at the ground-level and a close-up distance. Drawing on the historical heritage, Oda used images of food in *Meoto zenzai* to create a unique Osaka city space and establish symbolic Osaka male and female characters. Food reveals the identity of the protagonists Chōko and Ryūkichi, a hard-working and responsible Osaka woman, and a spendthrift and irresponsible Osaka man. Notably, as an Osaka "bon bon," Ryūkichi is so addicted to eating and food consumption that he barely contributes to his family nor the society. Ryūkichi's life seems to mainly focus on the consumption of food and the relationship with Chōko, which is limited in a small domestic space and separate from the social and national discourse.

### **A Literary Osaka Away from Practices of National Discourse**

Without referring to the ongoing imperial expansion, national propaganda and important locales of Osaka, Oda created a literary local Osaka in *Meoto zenzai*. In this novella, the characters are so occupied with consumption and overwhelmed by hardships in life that they are not capable of caring about the external world. Food creates a cozy domestic space inside Ryūkichi and Chōko's family and binds them together; moreover, it provides Ryūkichi with a safe space within the society, and a sense of self-satisfaction without serving the family and the nation. His excessive consumption of food and unhealthy relationship with Chōko helps him escape from the anxiety and responsibilities of life in the war period. Consciously avoiding the treatment of "serious" topics such as the war and depicting Osaka as alienated from the practices of national discourse, Oda presents readers with an image of Osaka that is a powerful rejection to the national ideology.

The initial publication of *Meoto zenzai* occurred only one year after his return to Osaka from Tokyo. In 1936, Oda left his high school in Kyoto for Tokyo and pursued his career as a writer. After spending three years in Tokyo, Oda returned to Osaka in 1939, a time which witnessed a strong promotion of the wartime state value system. However, despite the ongoing imperial expansion and promotion of propaganda during the First World War and Second World War periods, Oda barely contextualized the historical background in *Meoto zenzai*. The only place that makes readers realize the temporal setting of this story is when Ryūkichi and Chōko run to Tokyo together and experience the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake. Oda situates the two protagonists in a setting free from the war and national discourse and employs food as a way for Ryūkichi to indulge himself in excessive consumption and expenditure to avoid responsibilities for family and society, and escape from the practices of national discourse.

As Earl Kinmonth states, in the Meiji era, Japan's successful industrial and military development were assessed in terms of individual motivations and aspirations (Kinmonth 1981, 85). In the great turmoil and rapid progress of the Meiji era, a

revolutionary emphasis on personal advancement (*risshin shusse*, rising in the world) predominated in the national education and publications. The spirit of *risshin shusse* functions as both an illustrating and motivating factor of the emergence of the new national elite. When it came to 1930, Japan witnessed the prominence of the Japanese military in the politics. At that juncture, military education, mainly advanced for “suppression of the self in the service to the state” (*meshi hōko*), functioned as a path to personal advancement. As the later 1940s saw a centralization of authority, the nation purportedly transcended local identity just as the empire was pursuing the subordination of nations.

In contrast, Chōko and Ryūkichi are ignorant of the ideal of serving the country. Ryūkichi’s ignorance of his social and national responsibilities during the war time is closely associated with his anachronistic identity as a “bon bon.” As Cronin points out, Oda inserts the “bonbon” into the historical context of the Taishō and early Shōwa periods, which witnessed increasingly intrusive efforts to discipline the people and their impulses to the service of the expansionist state (Cronin 2017, 54). *Meoto zenai* was set in the 1920s, when the Great Kantō earthquake hit Tokyo and caused huge damage to the city. As discussed in Tanizaki Chapter, during the 1920s and the 1940s, the state promoted the ideology of “restraint in consumption,” “control of bodies,” and “physical discipline,” and reminded its citizens of the importance to be healthy and frugal, to better serve the nation.

In contrast, Ryūkichi’s profligate life-style as a “bon bon” fails to meet the demands of the nation. Ryūkichi’s love of food, regardless of its class and region, time and occasions, defines his identity as a gourmand. A gourmand does not merely take eating as a necessary way to survive, instead, he regards it as an important way to find joy and a sense of self-achievement in life. Ryūkichi’s good taste of food is merely self-satisfaction, which fails to bring wealth to the family, and certainly is not economically productive. Ryūkichi employs himself in the economically unproductive practices of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure, both of which are useless activities

that contribute neither to the family, to the economy nor to the services required for the functioning of society.

In addition to the rejection of the national ideology, Oda also consciously chose to avoid presenting certain Osaka locales in *Meoto zenzai*. Except for Ryūkichi and Chōko's trip to Atami, the novel is set entirely in the north or south of Osaka. The north and south of Osaka are important in the story because of their symbolic relationship to the characters: Ryūkichi as north and Chōko as south, at least in terms of their old residences. In this story, Ryūkichi is highly mobile as he frequently goes to restaurants in the south and visits Chōko there before they move in together. Despite so much movement across the city, it is worthwhile to notice that the area between north and south Osaka—the Higashi district, was not mentioned in this novella at all.

The Higashi district occupies a great geographical importance in Osaka in that it contains the famous Osaka Castle in the east and the merchant center Senba in the west. According to Hashimoto Hiroyuki, in the 1920s (when the story begins), before the subway Odōsuji line, which linked Umeda station and Namba station directly, people could not avoid passing through the Higashi district if traveling from the north to the south of Osaka (Hashimoto 2002, 34-36). Despite the historical and geographical importance of this district, why was it not mentioned in *Meoto zenzai*?

The east part of the Higashi district was the birthplace of army ground forces in Osaka (Uenagane, 90). In 1869, after the militarist Ōmura Masujirō proposed the plan of transforming Osaka into a military city, institutions such as military schools and hospitals began taking shape. Increasingly, army barracks made the Higashi district the representative place of militarism. In the Meiji era, the development of military industries, especially artillery factories constantly brought job opportunities to Osaka, and strong support to the practice of national discourse. In the early Taishō period, the First World War brought tremendous opportunities to the Higashi district and the high demand for military products managed to support the industry there after the economic depression brought by the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905). Subsequently, various

associations such as the labor association flourished in the Higashi district, which contributed greatly to the local democratic movements.

Oda's choice of creating an anachronistic Osaka "bon bon," who ignores social responsibilities and national ideology is part of his conscious omission of the Higashi, the locale representative of practices of national discourse. This omission is associated with his style and his identity as a writer of the decadent school. Grouped together with Dazai Osamu, Sakaguchi Ango, and Ishikawa Jun, Oda is categorized as the *Buraiha*, or Decadent School. Oda himself preferred the categorization "*shin* [new]*gesaku*." "Gesaku," or "frivolous compositions," refers to a playful, joking, and mocking writing style, which developed from the late Edo period into the beginning of the Meiji period. *Gesaku* writes do not deal with serious political topics nor strive for beauty in their writing. Oda considered himself the heir of the Edo *gesaku* writer, Ihara Saikaku, and took his own literature as an expression of criticism and resistance to the "serious" and "legitimate" Tokyo mainstream literature (Murakami-Smith 1997, 304-5). In *Kanōsei no bungaku*, Oda complained that the Japanese novel had long sunk into a "lethargic orthodoxy," for the idea of the "I-novel" overemphasizes the rigorous self-examination and confessional sincerity. Consequently, the literary establishment had come to value realism "profundity within strict limits" over fiction (Oda 1978, 117).<sup>12</sup> Through a conscious imitation of Saikaku and Chikamatsu's style, and a rebellion against the conventions of modern "realistic" narratives and the Tokyo mainstream "I-novel," Oda attempted to restore literary humor, entertainment, and fictionality. All of these are a rejection of the hegemony of the Tokyo literary establishment.

Oda's deep sympathy for lower-and middle-class people made *Meoto zenzai* a grass-roots story of hardships and trials of the common people's lives. Through the delineation of a typical Osaka culture and Osaka men and women, Oda managed to assert a strong Osaka localism and provide an alternative writing to the Tokyo mainstream literature. By consciously avoiding the references to the national ideology

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted and translated by Andrew Murakami-Smith (Murakami-Smith 1997, 311-312).

and Japanese militarism, Oda set up a literary Osaka alienated from the real life.

The employment of food in this novella maps a city space and constructs the protagonists' identity. Excessive food consumption in the story perfectly corresponds to the city's consuming culture and expectations for a spendthrift Osaka "bon bon." The anachronistic characteristics of the "bon bon" and omission of national history in *Meoto zenzai* did not derive from Oda's incapability of grasping the history. Instead, the obvious absence of the war is a choice he intentionally made to write a literature opposed to the Tokyo mainstream "I-novel." In writing *Meoto zenzai*, Oda promoted a literature free from the conventions of excessive self-examination, a literature that stayed away from serious political and propagandistic issues, and a literature of humor, fictionality, and sympathy for common people.

Although Oda initially intended to write an Osaka work for the local coterie magazine to advance his rejection of the Tokyo literary trend, *Meoto zenzai* became famous nationwide after its publication in the national magazine *Literary Arts* (Bungei) and gained wide popularity through adaptations into visual arts such as films, comedy and opera, which brought Oda much fame and acclaim within the Tokyo literary establishment.

How did *Meoto zenzai* appeal to a wider readership? What is special about this novella? By referring to the food culture and local customs in Osaka, *Meoto zenzai* creates a sense of locality; through depictions of the vicissitudes in a relationship and hardships in life, this novella produces a sense of universality, which was easy for people to sympathize with during the wartime of turmoil. As Cronin points out, this extended afterlife of *Meoto zenzai* in adaption indicates the powerful appeal of the novella's characters, its themes, and the very words "meoto zenzai." The story reminds us of the locality of Osaka, a place of food and mass culture, and a birthplace of the domestic drama such as Chikamatsu Monzaemon's *shinjūmono* (love suicide stories). The typical Osaka food evokes the intimacy of a shared married life and reveals the relationship between Ryuchiki and Chōko, "with its constant balancing of affections



and love that transcends any such accounting” (Cronin 2017, 52-3). The wide reception of “Meoto zenzai” embodies the success of Oda’s treatment of Osaka’s localism and reveals a universality in humanity—the ability to understand common people’s joys and hardships.

### ***Waga machi*—A Local Osaka**

Oda’s resistance to the national ideology was consistent yet implicit. In *Meoto zenzai*, without addressing Osaka’s military factory in the Higashi District, Oda deemphasized the national discourse’s influence on Osaka. When it came to *Waga machi* in 1942, Oda implied the rift between the individual and the national needs and offered a subtle criticism of Japanese imperialism. At the height of the empire’s imperial project, Oda could not criticize Japan’s militarism overtly. Instead, he created different layers in the story to avoid censorship and secure a safe space for writing Osaka. On the surface, Oda satisfied the government censors by emphasizing the importance of serving the nation and criticizing the injustice of American colonialism. But, by using a character’s voice to question the dictate of sacrificing oneself for the nation during the wartime, Oda reflected on Japan’s empire expansion and the national ideology during the wartime.

Oda’s treatment of the military center of Osaka paralleled that of Japan’s political center—Tokyo. By following the trajectory of the protagonist’s wandering to the Philippines and his life back in Osaka, Oda directly linked Osaka with Japan and American’s overseas imperial colony—the Philippines— without talking about Tokyo. By doing this, Oda lifts Osaka to a national stage and accentuates the city’s significance in the empire’s imperial expansion and development. Moreover, by not directly addressing Tokyo in *Waga machi*, Oda avoids legitimatizing the national order and addressing Tokyo’s cultural and political importance in the empire’s imperial expansion. This could be considered as his subtle resistance to the nation’s imperialism.

### *Waga machi*—A Story of two Towns

Kawamura Minato has pointed out that *Waga machi* belongs to the genre of *gōyo bungaku*—literature produced in support of Japan’s militarist policies (Kawamura 2002, 152-173). It is not hard to imagine that Oda had to make *Waga machi* a seemingly *gōyo bungaku* if he wanted to get the work published. The first edition of *Waga machi* appeared in the journal *Bungei* in 1942 and the second edition, with increased length, was published by Osaka’s Kinjō publishing company in 1943. Because of its great success, *Waga machi* received extended afterlife adaptations. As Cronin describes, this story “was staged as *Bengetto no hoshi* (Star of Benguet) in August 1943 and as *Waga machi* in October of that year and again as *Bengetto no hoshi* the following year. In 1956, Nikkatsu released a film adaptation directed by Kawashima Yūzō and featured Tatsumi Ryutarō as the protagonist” (Cronin 2017, 83). With his previous novel being banned and *Seishun no gyakusetsu* (The Paradox of Youth, 1941) strongly censored, *Waga machi*’s cross-media success proved Oda’s success in calibrating his work to the criteria of the censors.

It is worthy of notice that Oda divided *Waga machi* into three chapters, and named the chapters after the Japanese era names accordingly, titled Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa. Despite Oda’s freedom to give intimate and local connotations to the story’s title “*Waga machi*,” he still framed the individuals’ time via the national state time, and refit *Waga machi*, a local story, into the national history of the smoothly progressing centralized state.

As Miyagawa points out, *Waga machi*’s title refers to two “towns”: Manila and Osaka. The novella revolves around Sadojima Takichi’s migration to the Philippines and his life after he returns to Osaka (Miyagawa 2005, 186-203). The story opens up in the Philippines, and Takichi’s Philippine memory haunts the whole story. After Takichi’s return to Japan, most of the story plays out in Osaka, especially in the Gataro Alley. In the Shōwa Chapter, Takichi is back in Osaka and he claims, “Manila is my town!” (Oda 1978, 3:336). The story opens in Benguet of the Philippines, where Takichi

migrates there to help the American colonizers to work on the construction of the Benguet road. After completing the road construction, Takichi cannot adapt to the capitalist economy and fails to work on the abaca plantation in Davao, and was not able to sustain his own business in Manila. Therefore, he has no choice but to return to Osaka. After going back to Osaka, Takichi experiences a series of family losses. At first his wife dies; subsequently, his son-in-law, Shintarō, dies of cholera after being sent to Manila. After his daughter Hatsue dies, Takichi determines to raise his granddaughter Kimie by himself and strives to give her happiness. Since his return to Osaka, Takichi has always dreamt of going back to the Philippines. After Kimie grows up and marries a young man Jirō, Takichi thinks he can revisit the Philippines, however, the outbreak of the Pacific War crushes his dream, and he dies in regret. To construct a local Osaka and provide a panoramic view of its culture and customs, as Ōtani Kōichi says, Oda modeled the Gataro Alley of *Waga machi* “after the Osaka neighborhood where he grew up, Hinomaru yoko-roji (Rising-Sun side-alley) (Ōtani 1973, 20-34).” As Cronin says, Oda borrowed plots and characters from his previous works— “Risshiden” (Record of success, 1941), “Konki Hazure” (Beyond marriageable age, 1940), and *Meoto zenzai* (Cronin 2017,84). Takichi’s granddaughter Kimie is also the protagonist of “Risshiden;” Chōko and Ryūkichi appeared several times in *Waga machi*, as acquaintances of Kimie’s, and they lead a similar life to that in *Meoto zenzai*.

Although most of the story is set in downtown Osaka, specifically the environs of Gataro Alley, Takichi’s reminiscences of the Philippines haunt the entire story. Takichi’s Philippine memory includes two parts: his work experience in Benguet and his son-in-law Shintarō’s death in Manila. By constantly claiming himself as “the Tatchan of Benguet” (Bengetto no taayan), and repeating his motto “put your back into the work” (*Karada wo semete hataraka na*), Takichi takes pride in his unique Philippine experience and his difference from other Osakans; and adheres to the country’s ideology: “hard work” and “strong body.” By repeating his Philippine story to his family, Takichi transforms his private experience into a shared family memory and

tradition that binds them together. It is Takichi and Kimie's persistence in this invented family tradition that carried them through the vicissitudes of their Osaka life. In this sense, on the one hand, Takichi's Philippine experience has become a source of energy to get through life back in Osaka. On the other side, the pains of Takichi's Philippine experience—Shintarō's death and Takichi's failure to return to the Philippines—stress the discrepancy between individual and national needs and the insignificance of individuals in the currents of history.

### ***Waga machi*—Takichi's Experience in the Philippines**

Takichi's Philippine experience demonstrates the discrepancy between national and individual interests, and shows Oda's efforts to bring Osaka and Osaka culture to a national stage. In this chapter, Oda overtly expresses his criticism of the American colonizers' injustice to the laborers, and moreover, he voices his disappointment with the Japanese government's betrayal of its workers. In the end, Takichi's hard work and loyalty seems rather futile, for it fails to bring him respect or economic profits. When Takichi realizes the injustice of the American colonizers and voices his rage openly, he is alienated by his peer Japanese workers. After completing the road construction in Benguet, Takichi is jobless, and he cannot find any work there.

The "Meiji" chapter does not capitalize on the local Philippine culture nor Takichi's interactions with the local people, instead, it focuses on Takichi's experience with the American colonizers, and embodies the conflict between the individual and the national apparatus. This chapter includes two historical events in the Philippines: the construction of the Benguet Road and the settlement of Davao. In Benguet, the U.S. colonial authorities intended to build a road from Rosario up to the new summer capital, Baguio. As Cronin quotes Worcester and Corpuz in his book, after the colonial authority of the Philippines changed from Spain to the U.S. in 1898, "the U.S. Philippine Commission investigated the environment of Baguio and planned to establish a 'health resort' at Bagio, anticipating that a settlement there, amid pine trees and grassland,

would attract Americans to the colonial civil service” (Cronin 2017, 85). According to Corpuz, in December 1900, when the Philippine Commission authorized the building of road initially, external and internal factors conspired to prevent the construction. External factors such as the difficulty of the landscape, and internal factors including the Commission’s “ignorance about the local geography and shortage of labor, plagued the project” (Corpuz 1999, 143). As Cronin points out, the situation changed when Colonel Kennon took over supervision of the construction and added migrant workers from Japan, especially from Okinawa and China, to the local Philippine work team. It is Colonel Kennon who initiated the migrant labor flow from Japan to the Philippines. Colonel Kennon, who was addressed respectfully in the first sentence of the novella and honored in the construction of the Benguet Road, as a “samurai,” showed his preference toward Japanese laborers in the beginning. As Oda states in *Waga machi*, Kennon was more lenient towards Japanese laborers because he recognized Japanese workers hard work in California and “Japan’s recent victory over the Manchu state” (Oda 1978, 3:247).

Colonel Kennon’s preferences for Japanese laborers give Takichi a sense of privilege and racial superiority. Despite the work’s danger and hardship, Takichi and the other Japanese feel proud of finishing up the construction work that Americans and Filipinos could not. However, it does not take long for the American governor’s injustice to crush Takichi’s pride. When Takichi finds there existed a huge gap of work load, pay, and food rations among the workers of different races and nationalities, he feels angry towards the U.S. government and sympathized with the Filipino workers’ deplorable situation.

Japan’s victory in Manchuria brought Takichi and other Japanese laborers superiority in the beginning, but it failed to bring them respect. Oda not only implied the U.S. colonizers’ injustice, but he also subtly criticized the Japanese government: the Japanese government betrayed Takichi and other workers, since they were sent to the Philippines illegally. Because of their illegal status, it is not surprising to see the lack

of protection in their civic rights; their work was dangerous and difficult, their diet was in bad quality. In this sense, the Japanese government sent these laborers to the American colonizers as work force they could exploit. The Japanese government failed to repay its people, including Takichi's trust, and even betrayed them ultimately.

As Oda implies, it was Colonel Kennon who thought of introducing the Japanese workers to the Philippines: "a secretary there sends him to the procurement agent of the Kobe Emigrant Corporation, who finds a way around a law prohibiting migrant labor" (Oda 1973, 3:248). According to Ozaki Natsuko, Japanese historian Hayase Shinzō checked the historical records of the U.S. and the Philippines of the 1900s, but he could not find any evidence of the Japanese laborers' participation in constructing the Benguet Road. Hayase notes that the lack of evidence is partly related to the fire damage to the paper work in the U.S. system and partly due to the strategy the U.S. government adopted. Japanese labors' migration to the Philippines was in fact illegal, so the American government chose not to record the Japanese flow to the Philippines (Ozaki 2016, 282).

Race is another important issue for Takichi and other Japanese. Race and nationality determines their pay, workload, food rations, and promotion opportunities. Americans and European Caucasians could be promoted as high as foremen, while the highest rank Filipino, Japanese, and Chinese laborers could rise to was only *capataz* (overseer), which is in charge of twenty to twenty-five men of the same race. In addition to the promotion, there also existed a hierarchy of receiving rations among races: Europeans and Americans received higher rations than Asians. Although Japanese received the equal rations to Filipino laborers, they were provided with extra Japanese diet.

Not to mention the unequal promotion opportunities and pay amount decided by race and nationality, the danger of construction work led to a great number in the laborers' death (Oda 1978, 3: 249-50). When other Japanese laborers cannot tolerate the horrible working conditions and are angry about their fellow men's death, Takichi

urges the Japanese workers to bear out the conditions by preaching “We’re real, true Japanese!” in Osaka dialect. It is ironic that Takichi urges his co-workers to continue working for the country, which actually deceives its people and fails to protect them. However, Takichi’s loyalty to the country does not bring him any rewards. After finishing the construction, they are literally fired by the American officers and are miserably jobless:

When the construction is finished, from tomorrow on everyone unavoidably becomes jobless. Although the Japanese workers beg the U.S. Commission in tears: ‘Please do something for us,’ the Commission is indifferent. The Japanese walking down the hills, while staying in the hotel opened by Japanese in Manila, they squander the savings, even including the money to return to Japan (Oda 1978, 3: 250).

When Takichi and other Japanese do not have enough savings to return to Japan and wander on the streets in Manila, an important figure, Ōta Kyosaburō, appears and rescues him. “Ōta comes to Manila to recruit workers for his plantation of Abaca in Davao, a seaside town on the island of Mindanao” (Cronin, 88). Following Ōta to Davao, Takichi worked for a short time. However, when he hears that the Benguet road is in fact built as a driveway for Americans to go to dance, he bursts with rage and sadness: “Is this what we sweat and bled for?!” By thinking about the number of people who died for the road and the amount of effort they invested into the work, and the fact that they are abandoned by the offices, Takichi could not control himself and he rushed to Manila to get a green dragon tattoo. When Takichi is in Manila and walks the streets, he accosts an American and shouts at him in a rage: “Hey! The blood of six hundred men runs in the Benguet Road! And you’re going to take it to go dancing, without a care in the world? Just try it!” (Oda 1978, 3:251).<sup>13</sup>

Although Takichi realizes that he is used by the American government, he could not confront them directly, instead, he could only get a tattoo or beat a random American to express his anger. The reason Takichi’s reaction is not revolutionary

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<sup>13</sup> Translated by Michael Cronin (Cronin 2017, 87).

enough is perhaps partly because of his loyalty to the country, and partly because Oda's awareness of the censorship, he knew that a radical treatment with the character would not allow this novella to pass the censors.

After beating the American in Manila, Takichi is excluded by other Japanese workers. Because of this, Takichi is forced to leave the group and start his own business selling drinks. However, he fails. Before he tries something else, one influential Japanese tells him to go home:

Although Takichi gave himself the nickname "Taayan of the Benguet", and made himself well-known, people kept their distance from him and he had to close his shop selling shaved ice and cold drinks...When a powerful person told Takichi "If you stay here in Manila..." meaning that Takichi could cause trouble for the other Japanese, Takichi left the Philippines where he had stayed for six years with the excuse that he cared about his wife who he left behind in Japan (Oda 1978, 3:251).

Because of the alienation from his co-workers, Takichi has to return to Osaka. Takichi's failure to survive under American's colonial power and the environment of capitalism—planting abaca in Davao and managing his own business—echoes Charles Darwin's famous saying that "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, but the one most responsive to change." Takichi's integrity does not bring him respect in return. His inability to fully surrender to American colonialism leads to his forceful return to Osaka. Although the country fails to protect and respect him, he is still loyal to it and never voices his disappointment.

### ***Waga machi*—Living in Osaka with a Philippine Memory**

When Takichi is forced to return to Osaka, he does not look forward to it. However, he decides to go back partly because of the influential Japanese man's request, partly because of his wife (Oda 1978, 3:251). Even after he is back in Osaka, he consistently recalls the Philippine days and yearns to revisit. In addition, he claims that he is the "Taayan of the Benguet" frequently, to manifest his lingering connections to the



Philippines and his difference from other Osakans, who do not have the same Philippine experience. This subtle and nuanced alienation between Takichi and Osaka, and furthermore, his country of Japan, makes *Waga machi* less than a successful propaganda story, where the ideal “home” and “country” were supposed to be closely interwoven as a part of the national ideology.

Takichi may have realized the Japanese government deceived him in a certain way, for he was used to support the American imperialism. It is perhaps the government’s mistreatment of him from which he derives his attachment to the nation. However, in the war time, he is not even offered a chance to reconcile with the nation or leave the nation for the Philippines. His only option is to continue being a loyal citizen and a productive member for the nation, even though he may be deceived or abandoned by the nation again.

In the “Taishō” and “Shōwa” Chapters, Oda shifted his focus from a broad sketch of a foreign country to a detailed depiction of a local Osaka. Oda made a smooth transition from narrating the Philippines to Osaka through embedding Takichi’s Philippine reminiscences of his Osaka life. By connecting Takichi’s experiences in the Philippines and in Osaka, Oda delineated the influence the imperial project cast on individuals. On the one hand, Oda situated his characters in a closed local community, and referred to significant Osaka locales, to create an Osaka with well-preserved traditions. On the other hand, by narrating the wartime ideology’s permeating influence on the characters’ lives, and using Jirō’s voice to question the war’s damage to local people’s lives, Oda implied the discrepancy between the individual and national needs and criticized Japan’s colonial expansion. In Takichi’s case, despite his dedication to the empire and his loyalty to national ideology, he fails to be treated well by the country and is eventually abandoned by history.

Compared with the fact that the Filipino locales were briefly sketched and portrayed—only a series of place names were mentioned in the “Meiji” Chapter, not specifically the local culture or the topography—Osaka places, especially the Gataro

Alley, were more carefully delineated in the “Taishō” and “Shōwa” Chapters. These chapters include street and shop names, landmarks, train stations, and local people’s occupations. In the opening of the “Shōwa” Chapter, Oda gave a list of different occupations—umbrella renovator, drug sellers, *benshi*, pipe repairers, tempura fryers etc. These diverse occupation names call up a vivid picture of a local community life, and bespeak Osaka’s well-preserved local traditions.

The Osaka Oda constructed in this story, especially the Gataro Alley, is somewhat ahistorical and fictional. The “ahistorical-ness” of Osaka in *Waga machi* is reflected in the community’s stagnancy in time and space, and its ignorance of the huge local migrant community, as Cronin points out (Cronin 2017, 100).<sup>14</sup> The depiction of Gataro Alley goes as follows:

It was a poor, squalid neighborhood, and strangely unchanging; as lifeless as an old hand towel. The fruit shop on the corner had been a fruit shop for generations, the signboard so worn that not even the proprietor could read the shop’s name. The *sake* shop hadn’t moved in decades. The bathhouse hadn’t changed hands. The druggist hadn’t changed either: the same doddering old man was still measuring out doses in a shop hung with decades-old certificates from drug companies. (Oda 1978, 3: 257).<sup>15</sup>

Gataro Alley’s local time also seems different from the national time, borrowing Hoy

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<sup>14</sup> As Cronin notes, “we must also recognize what this local Osaka leaves out: the city’s significant migrant communities (Cronin 2017, 100). As Sugihara argues: “Osaka at the time of Oda’s novel was already home to the largest community of ethnic Koreans in Japan, as it remains today. By 1936, there were 224,749 Koreans living in Osaka Prefecture, 32.5 of all those living in Japan. By 1942, when *Waga machi* was published, 412,748 Koreans were living in Osaka, still one-quarter of all those living in Japan”. “In 1942, ethnic Koreans accounted for 10.4 percent of the population of Osaka city” (Cronin, 100). Cronin points out that the Gataro Alley’s prototype is Osaka’s “Higashinari-ku” and “the population of ethnic Koreans in Osaka is as much as 25.6 percent in Higashinari-ku, not far from the imaginary Gataro Alley” (Cronin, 100). In addition to the large number of ethnic Koreans, as Kawamura Minato states, Osaka is also a popular destination for Ryūkyū immigrants (Kawamura 2002, 171).

<sup>15</sup> Translated by Michael Cronin (Cronin 2017, 91).

Long's description of Tōhōku's "local time," Gataro Alley is also "left behind," and out-of-step" with the "singular historical time of capitalism" (Long 2012, 30-31). Compared with the Filipino locales which experience drastic changes under American colonialism, Gataro Alley is a more peaceful, stagnant, and even backward place. In Gataro Alley, people's lives seem not disturbed by the empire's imperial expansion, and move forward with their own rhythm: as Oda narrates, in Gataro Alley lots of residents maintain traditional family businesses for decades without any change, which indicates the community's claustrophobia. Moreover, when Takichi is back, he pulls a rickshaw to earn a living. Takichi's job option is quite proletarian, since he does not have ownership of the means of production and his only means of subsistence is to sell his labor power for a wage or salary. Even other people in the community are either handicraft men or artisans, who rely on traditional businesses to survive.

Despite Gataro Alley being "out-of-date" with the national time, it is not completely free from the impact of the national ideology. In the 1940s, with the development of Japan's expansionist aims, the national discourse demanded high self-regulation and self-discipline from men, asking for their hard work to support their family and the nation. This idea of frugality and self-control, and "suppression of the self in the service to the state" (*messhi hōko*) brainwashed people, encouraging them to drain themselves, even sacrifice themselves for the nation. Takichi is a good citizen who adheres to the national dictates: he is hard-working, austere, and strong-minded. Takichi manages to save 800 yen while raising Kimie, which is a great amount of money in the 1940s. In addition, when Takichi pulls a rickshaw in the streets and sees an American passenger, he dumps him because of his anger towards the U.S. authorities in the Philippines and in Japan. By doing this, he shows his absolute loyalty to the nation, which was definitely favored by the Japanese censors. In addition to Takichi, the wartime ideology also influences Chōko and Ryūkichi, it has even reformed the profligate Osaka "bon bon" Ryūkichi. In the end of *Waga machi*, Chōko tells Kimie:

"My husband Ryūkichi has become completely serious these days, he does not

drink *sake*, nor will he indulge in eating. What he does is only something like eating *yōshoku yaki* every night.”... Looking at the plump and carefree Chōko, Kimie felt consoled and momentarily forgot Takichi’s death (Oda 1978, 3:340).

Despite the characters’ loyalty to the nation, the nation fails to protect and reward them. Oda implied the discrepancy between the national and individual needs in the Shōwa chapter, by talking about how Japanese militarism permeates and threatens the characters’ lives in Gataro Alley. Oda uses Jirō’s voice to question the propaganda of “serving the country,” when his work safety is not guaranteed. Oda also talks about Takichi’s regret when the empire achieves its imperial victory in 1942 when it is finally a good chance for Takichi to return to the Philippines; however, he is told that he is too old to go.

In the Shōwa Chapter, Jirō has a job salvaging metal for the war effort. When Jirō hears of an accident of a salvage worker, he fears the work is too dangerous and tells his boss that he wants to quit. As Cronin mentions, “the story dramatizes the effect of the militarization when Jirō grows reluctant to continue the work” (Cronin 2017, 102). Jirō and his boss’s conversation goes as follows:

Jirō: “...I know the salvage work is for the sake of the nation.  
Although I’m clearly aware of this...”

Boss: “As I expected, because your wife is cute...”

Jirō: “No, if only considering my wife, it will be easy. When I think of my wife’s grand-father, I get lost... Actually, it is because of the grandfather. Perhaps even if I die from the work, he will still do well. However, since that grandfather has already lost his only son-in-law...”

Jirō uses half of this as his excuse. In fact, recently, Jirō feels unpleasant towards the work more than afraid (Oda 1978, 3:328).

Although Jirō accepts the hard-working ideal and respects Takichi’s loyalty to the country, he does not want to sacrifice himself for the country’s sake. Although he uses Takichi partly as an excuse, he realizes the individual’s importance to the family and does not want Takichi to suffer from the pains of family loss. Furthermore, when Jirō

meets his old co-worker and hears about his camera shop, Jirō starts to realize that he does not want to do the salvage work all his life, otherwise it is “deplorable” (*nasakenai*). Jirō figures out that his ideal career is starting a carefree business (*nonki na shōbai*) (Oda, 328). After Jirō voices his reluctance to continue the salvage work, Takichi gets so angry and disappointed at him that he takes Kimie back home and forces them to separate. Jirō gets punished for his refusal to be a productive member for the nation, and he reflects on his misbehaviors later. Despite Oda’s treatment of the community’s criticism of Jirō, his allowance of Jirō questioning of the national dictates and concerns for individual safety and development is fairly daring and radical in the 1940s. By doing this, Oda uses his character to question the national ideology and criticize Japanese imperial expansion.

Despite Takichi’s absolute loyalty to the nation, he is deceived and abandoned by the nation again, when the empire achieves its imperial goals. Takichi’s failure to benefit from Japan’s imperial victory is rather pathetic. When Takichi hears that the Great East Asia War starts, and the imperial army lands the Lingayen Gulf of the Philippines in 1942, he is proud that the army could use the Benguet Road he participated in constructing. Simultaneously, when he knows that his neighbor, Shime, the *rakugo-ka*, is sent by the military on a tour of the southern islands in the Philippines to entertain the Japanese troops, he thinks he can go with him and finally revisit the Philippines. Above all, he thinks his dream of visiting Shitarō’s graveyard can come true. However, Takichi is told that he is too old to go. Bursting with extreme regret and sadness, Takichi dies. Before he dies, he hears of Japan’s imperial victory and thinks he could revisit the Philippines:

Toward the end of the year, the Great East Asia War started. And the emperor’s army landed near the Lingayen Gulf of the Philippines. Although he could not read the newspapers, Takichi hears the news from the radio. “Ah, my efforts of living till now have paid off. My granddaughter and grandson-in-law are doing great. And they are having a healthy baby soon. I don’t have any regrets now. Finally my

corpse can be put together in the grave with my son-in-law's in Manila”  
(Oda1978, 3:336).

Takichi's joy of hearing the news does not come from Japan's imperial achievement, instead, it originates from the possibility of fulfilling his long-time dream—revisiting the Philippines and being buried together with Shintarō. When the country indulges itself in its victory of a brutal and inhuman discourse of invading another country, Takichi is only thinking of his only son-in-law, who sacrifices his life to the country's imperial discourse. Despite Takichi and Shintarō's dedication, they are forgotten by Japan when the country reaches its imperial goal. In this light, the empire exploits its people's labor and takes advantage of their loyalty, and eventually abandons them. In comparison, the *ninjō* (human emotion or compassions) and family ties that exist in Takichi's family, in the local Osaka, are initially stronger than the bonds between the nation and its people. The country's mistreatment of Takichi indicates the discrepancy between the national interests and personal interests. Moreover, it reveals that in the process of historical development, individuals are merely tools of the national apparatus, which are necessary but insignificant. The individuals' life values are easily ignored and unappreciated by the system and the nation.

### **Conclusion**

Although *Waga machi* includes Oda's implicit criticism of Japan's imperial project, it passed the censors and got published. There were two reasons for its success: first, almost all the main characters, except Jirō, are absolutely supportive of the national ideology; second, although this novella encompasses the protagonist's alienation from Osaka and his yearnings to return to the Philippines, it was published during a time when Japan already took over the Philippines. Since the Philippines was the Japanese colony in 1942, it was certainly regarded as a part of Japan. Therefore, Takichi's wish to leave for the Philippines would not be read as a betrayal to Japan, and censors wouldn't feel strange to see a character to want to go to a Japanese colony.

In *Waga machi*, Oda portrayed a life of an ordinary Osakan, simultaneously, a thrifty, loyal, and hard-working citizen, who strives for a balance between the national

and local rule throughout his life, but ends up being abandoned by his nation. On the surface, Oda managed to satisfy the wartime censors and continue his writing career of Osaka through his criticism of American colonialism, and his construction of characters who adhere to the national ideology. Despite his strategic surrender to wartime censorship, Oda never gave up his passion for imagining and writing Osaka. It was because of his compromise with the wartime censors that he was capable of gaining freedom in presenting Osaka, and accentuating its significance in the Tokyo-centered Japanese empire.

In both *Meoto zenzai* and *Waga machi*, Oda consistently put Osaka as the focus of his writing and established a local order which resisted the asserted totality of Japanese empire. By associating his Osaka with consumption, indulgence, tradition, and *naniwa konjō*, Oda modeled an individual morality and a local order that are independent within the order of the wartime nation-state. Through this attempt, Oda constituted a local authority and sovereignty to resist Tokyo's homogenization and centralization of culture under the national imperialism.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

Throughout the 1920s to the 1940s, Tanizaki and Oda's literary narratives responded to Osaka's gradual subordination into the national entity from an Osaka outsider and insider's perspectives respectively. Oda and Tanizaki's literary representations of Osaka illuminate Osaka's modern history and its relation to the nation; and offer possibilities of writing the local under the rigid wartime censorship. Compared with Tanizaki, Oda presents a more local and authentic Osaka, which has its roots in its local culture, dialect, and common people. As discussed in previous chapters, Tanizaki and Oda's literary treatment of Osaka share certain similarities and differences. The similarities lie in their awareness of the changing power dynamics between the Tokyo national order and the Osaka local order, and their attempt to accentuate Osaka's unique culture and differentiate it from the national order. Simultaneously, the differences of their Osaka writings are embodied through the era they wrote of, and their positions within, and attitudes toward Osaka, as well as their focus on different social classes.

Tanizaki's career started earlier than Oda's in 1910, so did his publications on Osaka. Having relocated to Osaka in 1928, Tanizaki published his *Manji* and *Tade kuu mushi* during the golden age of Osaka's development (1910-1930). As a Tokyo outsider, in these two works, Tanizaki exoticized the image of Osaka and stressed its difference from Tokyo by either detailing abnormal sexual relationships or depicting traces of the traditional cultural heritage in Osaka. When it came to *Sasameyuki*, Tanizaki continued to present Osaka as the "Other" by featuring a family nostalgic of the old traditions and suggesting Osaka's lack of economic opportunities and productivity. By contrast, as an insider of Osaka, Oda looks at it from the ground-level and aims at an Osaka realism, with his focus on a pure localness without legitimating Tokyo's political importance. In *Meoto zenzai*, Oda avoided talking about Osaka's military factory and discourses of the national ideology. In *Waga machi*, Oda continued to write about the vitality of a local Osaka and implied the rift between the national and individual needs. Tanizaki's Osaka



mainly concerns the bourgeois families in the Hanshin region while Oda's Osaka is rooted in the city's South, more specifically, the working-class people's lives. Tanizaki and Oda's similar and different approaches to Osaka added to the layers of the city's connotation and proved Osaka's literary potential, and paved a way for future writing on the city.

Examining Osaka literature, or Osaka in modern Japanese literature, is another important way of rethinking modern Japanese literature. For a long time, the ideal modern Japanese literature has always been associated with Tokyo literature: Tokyo's hyper-centralized economic and political position seems to make its literature more important and superior. This Tokyo culture-centered ideal undermines the richness, variety, and importance of other local literature, such as Osaka, Okinawa and Hokkaido literature. In an equal position to Tokyo literature, these local literatures contribute to shaping national identity and national literature by being a different "Other" and an inseparable part of Japanese literature. However, it is noteworthy that Osaka literature differs from Okinawa and Hokkaido literature because of its own history and culture: Osaka was never an internal colony of Japan; the *Kamigata* (Kansai) region's premodern preeminence as the political and cultural center affected the formation of modern Japanese literature. Because of its history as a political and literary center, and its geographical significance, the "otherness" of Osaka to Tokyo is complicated.

The ultimate concern of exploring the literary representations of Osaka in Japanese literature involves the question of literary canon formation and regional identity/locality construction in Japan. The canon formation established the authority of national literature and built up a Japanese national identity. However, what is the relation between a locality/regional identity and a national identity? Would building up a national identity necessarily require the repression and sacrifice of the diverse regional identity and locality? Against the backdrop of Tokyo's political centralization and cultural homogenization, research on the literary representations of Osaka and the development of Osaka literature allow a chance to consider and preserve a cultural

diversity and uniqueness in contemporary Japan.

Thinking forward, based on this research on Osaka, I hope to explore more Osaka writings or Osaka literature, to gain a fuller picture of the city and its people in the modern and contemporary Japan. As Cronin says, “any city comprises manifold cities. Social class, race and ethnicity, age, gender, personal history, and other considerations help determine the city that we come to know” (Cronin 2017, 1). Could Tanizaki and Oda’s literary Osaka somehow reflect the historical Osaka during the transwar period? The answer is yes. However, could their representations of Osaka stand for a comprehensive Osaka back then? The answer is no. As most cities, Osaka is rich in its geographical, political, and literary definitions and could be approached from both the spatial and temporal scales. In the modern times, Oda’s predecessors such as Uno Kōji (1891-1961) and Kamitsukasa Shōken (1874-1974), and successors including Tanabe Seiko (1928-), Miyamoto Teru (1974-), and Yamasaki Toyoko (1924-2013) have all contributed to the formation of Osaka literature and the representations of Osaka in Japanese Literature. Furthermore, some Korean immigrant writers, whose elder generations moved to Osaka and became *zainichi* Koreans, have also narrated their Osaka, more specifically, the *zainichi* Korean community in Osaka. Yang Sogiru (Yang Seok-il, 1936-) published his novel *Chi to hone* (Blood and Bones) in 1998. These *zainichi* Korean writers’ Osaka narratives revealed another cosmopolitan side of Osaka and recorded relics of Japanese colonialism’s heritage in the city.

In addition to the novels mentioned above, other cultural products—movies, *manga*, and comics—simultaneously promoted Osaka culture and shaped the image of Osaka in the nation’s imagination, among which Osaka’s self-exoticization is noteworthy. Film and drama adaptations of Tanizaki and Oda’s Osaka novels, as well as other writers’ stories, contributed to the performance of Osaka’s locality in other medium. The development of Osaka’s Yoshimoto Kōgyō, a major Japanese entertainment conglomerate with its headquarters in Osaka, created and sold numerous Osaka cultural products, such as *manzai* and *rakugo* in the market nationwide.

However, have these promotions of Osaka cultural products conveyed an authentic message of Osaka and its culture to the nation? To what extent have they contributed to Osaka's cultural preservation and continuity? Or do the cultural products consume Osaka's identity? Recently, a national stereotype of Osaka has formed through people's partial knowledge of Osaka and the influence of media, such as the cultural production of Yoshimoto. Osaka dialect has been often used in dramas and anime by an amusing character to invoke a hilarious sense, and Osaka is simply labeled as a place of consumption, pleasure, and comic culture. This light and playful treatment of Osaka language and Osaka culture undermined the nuance, profundity, uniqueness of Osaka that Oda and Tanizaki, as well as other Osaka writers managed to construct in their literature. On the surface, we see the commercial success and an overemphasized "localness" of Osaka cultural products, but deep down, we see a deterioration in other features that define the Osaka culture and life.

Simultaneously, Tokyo's cultural homogenization also overwhelmed and controlled the performance of Osaka's locality. As Cronin points out, some adaptations of Osaka stories "have registered the continuing loss of the Osaka voice in a different way" (Cronin 2017, 181). Fuji Television's 2003 adaptation of Yamasaki Toyoko's *Shiroi Kyotō* (White Huge Tower, 1965), starred Tokyo actors Karasawa Toshiaki and Eguchi Yōsuke. Although the original story is set in Osaka and about Osaka culture, the main characters do not speak the Osaka dialect. As Cronin further explains, perhaps producers and directors no longer expect stars' mastery of the Osaka dialect or they think educated characters should not use dialect nowadays (Cronin, 181). In cases like this, it is not hard to see the lessening importance of and respect for Osaka language and Osaka's localness, and the consumption of Osaka literature.

Does stressing the uniqueness of Osaka culture still matter in the contemporary time? For some Osaka writers, this does not seem to be their primary concern. Some native Osaka writers moved to Tokyo and became established in the Tokyo *bundan*, and they don't necessarily write literature on Osaka. The winner of the 2014 Akutagawa

literature prize, Shibasaki Tomoka (1973-), was born and raised in Osaka but currently lives in Tokyo. She does not label herself as a typical Osaka writer, nor does she consider memories of a local Osaka the focus of her literature. Instead, she focuses more about a universal theme—the vicissitudes of human life. When asked about her favorite writer, she would name the canonical Tokyo writer Natsume Sōseki.<sup>16</sup> The Osaka influence on her seems implicit and blurry. Perhaps Osaka writers such as Shibasaki no longer care about the Tokyo-Osaka rival, nor do they consider promoting Osaka's localness important, or else with Tokyo's increasing cultural homogenization, it is hard to be successful by limiting their writings to the local.

However, is the local Osaka no longer important in Japanese literature? The answer is no. Osaka writers such as Makime Manabu (1976-) and Matayoshi Naoki (1980-)—Osaka comedian and screenwriter—wrote stories based on Osaka life and culture. Matayoshi's *Hibana* (Spark, 2015) was both a best-seller and the 2015 Akutagawa Literary Prize winner. The story was also adapted to a 10-episode TV series through the co-operation of Yoshimoto Kōgyō and Netflix, and received huge acclaim. *Hibana* revolves around an aspiring stand-up comedian Tokunaga, who embarks on an apprenticeship with a seasoned *manzai* artist. The detailed depictions of the vicissitudes of a *manzai* boy's life echoes readers' and audience's experience of daily life, and presents a more comprehensive picture of the Osaka traditional oral art, Osaka landscape, and culture to them. Instead of simply labeling Osaka as a place of comedy and pleasure, Matayoshi delineates the texture of Osaka life and culture, and strives to present an authentic Osaka to the readers. Did Matayoshi consume Osaka culture? The answer is yes. Did Matayoshi contribute to the promotion and preservation of the traditional Osaka culture? The answer is also yes. Having the respect of Osaka's localness in mind, Matayoshi balanced consuming and promoting Osaka's localness.

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<sup>16</sup> Shibasaki Tomoka, personal communication, 10/17/16.

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