Japan Review, 2001, 13:129-143

Mediators, Sacrifice, and Forgiveness: Laurens van der Post's Vision of Japan in the P.O.W. Camp in Reference to TAKEYAMA Michio and Ghost Plays of the Noh Theater

INAGA Shigemi
International Research Center for Japanese Studies

Laurens van der Post (1903-1996), along with his co-voyager to Japan, William Plomer, is one of the key literary figures in South Africa's relationship with twentieth-century Japan. In retracing Post's experiences with Japan and the Japanese, this paper investigates certain ethical dimensions of cross-cultural encounters symbolically crystallized in Van der Post's evocative prose.

Van der Post's first voyage to Japan coincided with the very first Japanese attempt to open commercial trade with South Africa in the 1920s, and his friendship with Mori Katsue, the Japanese captain of the ship Canada Maru, lasted until the Mori's death at 104. While Captain Mori provided Van der Post with the archetypal image of the Japanese, his first experience at sea would later be developed in his adventure novel on whale catching, strongly evoking Herman Melville. In his last years, Van der Post retraced his discovery of Japan as *Yet Being Someone Other* (1983). Some Japanese sources on Captain Mori, which remain inaccessible to non-Japanese scholars, can be useful to a better understanding of the fictional dimension implied in this recollection.

It would be no exaggeration to suppose that without his Japanese experience in 1926, Van der Post could not have survived his Japanese captivity in Java, almost twenty years later. *The Bar of Shadow* is among the outcomes of his experience of Japanese P.O.W. camps. Although not always highly esteemed by native English readers, The Christmas Trilogy, including this story, strangely appealed to the Japanese imagination. Kawai Hayao, a Jungian psychologist, Yamaguchi Masao, a cultural anthropologist interested in Black Africa, and Yura Kimiyoshi, a William Blake scholar, are among the first Japanese who paid special attention to Van der Post's interpretation of the Japanese psyche. The cinema version *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* produced by Oshima Nagisa, also reveals the director's particular interest, although his re-interpretation was not always convincing to the Western public.

In recent years, Van der Post's pioneering writings on the San people, then respectfully called "Bushmen" have been subjected to criticism. It would also

be easy to critiize Van der Post's fictional dramatization as distortions of the Japanese. However, his stereotyping can be reinterpreted more as the "shadow" of those to whom he belonged himself rather than as the "Other" on whom he depended in his own literary creation. This paper will examine how the "white man's burden" is at work in Laurens van der Post's literary imagination in the presence of the "Other" which he encountered during his exceptional life.

Keywords : LAURENS VAN DER POST, TAKEYAMA MICHIO, JAPANESE P.O.W. CAMP, NOH THEATER, MEDIATOR, SACRIFICE, FORGIVENESS, CONSOLING THE DEAD

In *The Seed and the Sower* (1963), a novel based on Laurens van der Post's experience as a prisoner of war in a Japanese camp in Java, there is an impressive description of the fauna and flora of the savannah of South Africa. Locating ourselves in this setting, let us begin with the episode titled "Stompie." My aim in this paper is to ask to what extent Stompie can serve as an archetypal figure in the ethical conflicts which the author tried to elucidate, and to what extent the author himself partakes of "Stompie" in his role of the mediator in search of reconciliation and forgiveness in the confrontation of incompatible value systems.

1. "Stompie," or Sacrifice in the African Savannah

Stompie was a male springbok that had been rejected from the herd because of his deformed horns. "One horn lay crumpled behind a saffron ear; the other was stunted and struck out crookedly in the air." (p.87) Because of this deformity, "he was spared to live a sort of moon existence, a fated satellite, condemned to circle forever the body which had expelled it. In this role he was not without great value to the herd. Exposed to the danger of man and beast, constantly alone, he developed a remarkable intelligence and heightened presentiment of danger. He was always the first to feel it and then to give the alarm by making a series of prodigious bounds into the air, his pastel coat, sea-foam belly and black-lacquered feet of Pan flashing in the sun. Often an exasperated gun would threaten to shoot him for spoiling our chances in this way, and sending us back to an empty pot. But a curious compassion for the deformed animal always restrained us" (pp. 87-88). But in the end Stompie is to be shot to death by the protagonist of the story, named Celliers.

It is easy to see in this lonely, handicapped creature a metaphor for a mediator and sacrificial target. The whole herd is protected from danger by an individual which it has expelled. "[A]lthough the herd had rejected 'Stompie' yet he was bound more closely to the herd by that rejection than any other animals." As a negotiator standing in between the animal world and the human world, Stompie is literally living on the border. A particular sensitivity and an unusual intelli-

gence were bestowed upon him as compensation for his physical deformity. The handicap is described here as a necessary condition for obtaining an unusual capability. The cause which exposes him to lethal dangers also protects him from them. Generally speaking, diplomats are protected by professional privileges in so far as they are supposed to face up to the dangers they are ready to be threatened by. In this sense Stompie was the diplomat of the springbok herd.

The death of Stompie recalls Gustave Flaubert's *Saint Julian L'Hospitalier*. After having liberated the herd from the imminent danger of shooting, Stompie looks "straight back at" Celliers, with, what Celliers believes to be "a look of pure triumph," which is "more than [Celliers] could bear" (p. 92) and prompts the shooting. "Stompie took the shock of the bullet without a bound or a stagger. For one second he remained in position looking at me without surprise." The passage reminds us of Flaubert describing the "grand cerf": The arrow on his forehead, "[l]e grand cerf n'eut pas l'air de le sentir (...) Le prodigieux animal s'arrêta; et les yeux flamboyants, solennel comme un patriarche et comme un justicier," before finally he gave way on his knees.

One may recall the refrain "maudit, maudit, maudit" pronounced three times in repetition by the huge deer before its solemn death at the end of Flaubert's story: "Cursed, cursed, cursed" resonating in one's ear. In the same way, Stompie displays a sacred and dignity as victim at the moment of the truth "l'heure de vérité." By his careless but instinctive and inevitable killing of Stompie, Celliers is in a sense "cursed." Indeed he is covered by a "shadow," but the shadow is also a blessing. As Celliers says in his captivity, looking up the night sky of Java: "I can't get over a star, so steeped in the night as that one there, throwing a shadow." (p.144)

The "Stompie" episode presages the cross-cultural confrontations between captives of allied forces and Japanese soldiers at P.O.W. camps in Java in 1942. And on Stompie's death is superimposed the death of Celliers, protagonist of *The Seed and the Sower*. Both of them serve as mediators between the conflicting parties. Just as Stompie's sacrifice saved the remaining lives of the herds, so Celliers' instinctive decision to become the elected victim of Japanese soldiers to save the lives of other prisoners from the threat of massive slaughter. Thus Celliers, half-conscious, assumes the fate of Stompie, and their deaths carry symbolic significance. Just as the killing of the cerf created Saint Julian l'Hospitalier, we shall see that Celliers will become a sort of saint in the Japanese P.O.W. camp through his martyrdom.

One day, in captivity, Celliers becomes aware of an unusual tension and menacing atmosphere in the P.O.W. camp. Finally, an English officer, chief of the British prisoners, is summoned to be executed on the spot. At this moment, Celliers suddenly steps out and approaches the officer, Yonoi, who is in charge of the prison, defying Yonoi's order to stop. This is an audacious provocation made

in full public view. "Celliers shook his head quietly and went on staring at [the Japanese officer] steadily as a disarmed hunter might stare a growling lion straight in the face" (p.153). And he finally "put his hands on Yonoi's arms and embraced him on both cheeks rather like a French general embracing a soldier after a decoration for valour."

Whether based on an actual event or not, the use of an embrace as a means of provocation is an important metaphor. An act which might have been a high honor in another context—say, decoration in the French army—the embrace could constitute a humiliation according to the Japanese social convention and moral code. "Did I not remember how Hara censored the few novels we had had in camp by ordering that all the pages with a mention of kisses and kissing should be torn out of the defaulting books?" (p.154)

By this surprising "kiss", Celliers succesfully puts an unexpected end to the critical situation. He stops the imminent massacre but only at the price of his own life. He will be executed by the Japanese army as a punishment for the humiliation he has caused them. In a sense, Celliers, who shot Stompie to death, atones for his killing of the animal by sacrificing himself for the survival of other prisoners of war in the Javanese P.O.W. camp. In Celliers' death, we can also easily detect a strong Christian sense of redemption. In his self sacrifice in place of others, Celliers follows the example of Jesus by way of *imitatio christi*. It is not by chance that the story about Celliers, named "Seed and Sower" is delivered by the narrator "on Christmas Morning" and occupies the central part in the author's "Christmas trilogy," preceded by "Christmas Eve" and followed by "Christmas Night."

2. Japanese Sacrifice

Part one, "Christmas Eve," tells the story of a Japanese third class sergeant, named Hara. If Celliers's death represents one of the innumerable cases of Japanese cruelty and brutality, Hara embodies this seemingly irrational side of the Japanese. In this story, first published as *A Bar of Shadow* in 1954, almost ten years earlier than the following two chapters, Hara appeares as the person who imposed fanatical censorship on the prisoners. "[I]t was he who ordered that every book among the few we possessed wherein the word 'kiss' or mention of 'kissing' appeared, should be censored by having the offending pages torn out and publicly burned as an offense against 'Japanese morality'. It was he who tried to 'purify' our thinking by making us in our desperately undernourished condition go without food for two days at a time, confined in cramped and overcrowded cells, forbidden even to talk so that we could contemplate all the better our perverse and impure European navel" (p.12) as if in a Zen Buddhist monastery.

Under conditions of serious material shortage, the Japanese tried to "rectify" and "correct" the "lazy spirit" (*tarunda seishin*) of their Western prisoners, in a "Japanese fashion" as was recommended under military rule. The "cure for the lazy spirit" by beating was not only applied to Western prisoners, but new Japanese recruits and Korean and locally mobilized people were constant victims of this exercise, which was repeated indiscriminately, at every possible occasion and under various pretexts. This "education" by beating was regarded by Western prisoners as a typical irrationality of Japanese behavior and served as evidence of physical violence inflicted upon them in clear violation to the Geneva convention which, by the way, the Japanese authorities seem to have decided to refrain from respecting, in the course of World War II, so as to manifest their categorical refusal to "worship" any Western value.

Sergeant Hara was the incarnation of this way of thinking. He "beat dying men, saying there was nothing wrong with them except their 'spirit,' their 'evil thinking,' their 'wayward willfulness of heart' which made them deliberately ill in order to retard the Japanese war effort" (p. 22). It so happened that after the defeat of Japan, Sergeant Hara could not understand why he was arrested and sentenced to death by the War Crime Tribunal of the Allied Forces. The last night before his execution, Hara makes the following confession to the narrator of the story :

> Truly you must know, I do not mind dying, only, only, only, why must I die for the reason you give? I don't know what I have done wrong that other soldiers who are not to die have not done. We have all killed one another and I know it is not good, but it is war. I have punished you and killed your people, but I punished you no more and killed no more than I would have done if you were Japanese in my charge who had behaved in the same way. (...) I was more lenient, believe it or not, than army rules and rulers demanded. If I had not been so severe and strict you would all have collapsed in your spirit and died because your way of thinking was so wrong and your disgrace [being captured alive by enemy] so great. If it were not for me, Hicksley-Ellis [who was threatened with execution by Officer Yonoi, the subaltern in charge] and all his men [who had been forced to construct an aerodrome] on the island should have died out of despair [though only one fifth of them could survive the operation]. It was not my fault that the ships with food and medicine did not come. I could only beat my prisoners alive and save those that had it in them to live by beating them to greater effort. And now I am being killed for it. I do not understand where I went wrong, except in the general wrong of us all. If I did another wrong, please tell me how and why and I shall die happy (pp. 33-4).

Though fictional, this passage is based on several real incidents which took place and is worth comparing with the last wills which were left to their family by no less than 1068 Japanese soldiers and civilians, who were sentenced to death by the military tribunal in the category class B (violation of the military conventions) and class C (crimes against the humanity) and later executed or died in prison between Nov. 1945 and April 1951. The narrator explains the absurdity of the vengeance of which Hara assumes the role of the representative target:

> It seems just as wrong for us now to condemn Hara under a law which had never been his, of which he had never even heard, as he and his masters had been to punish and kill us for transgressions of the code of Japan that was not ours. ... He may have done wrong for the right reason but how could it be squared by us now doing right in the wrong way. No punishment I could think of could restore the past, could be more futile and more calculated even to give the discredited past a new lease of life in the present than this sort of uncomprehending and uncomprehended vengeance! (p. 34)

According to TSURUMI Kazuko's classic study, the last words left by more than one thousand Japanese condemned to death show that 87.4% of them could not understand very well the reason why they were accused, other than for vengeance. As known from various other sources, if they had behaved in the Japanese army in a way that would have prevented them from being accused by the War Crimes Tribunal, they would have been punished or even executed by the Japanese army for their violation of Japanese military discipline. Indeed, the Tōjō cabinet had made it clear by 1941 that they would no longer respect the Geneva convention but instead rule prisoners of war in their own "Japanese" fashion, and gave new instructions accordingly. Of course the Japanese soldiers had no right to disobey orders. Thus free will was not supposed to exist in the principle of absolute obedience in the Japanese military hierarchy. But the war tribunal sentenced the accused Japanese (aside from the cases of mobilized ex-Koreans and Javanese supplementary soldiers, which must also be taken into account) on the presupposition that they could and should have behaved themselves according to their own individual free will.

Most of the accused were incapable of understanding the reason for their guilt, because they had not been informed of the Geneva convention by the Japanese military authorities, which had forced them to violate it without their being aware of it. In this double bind, what was typical of the behavior of these accused Japanese was that most of them even refrained from explaining themselves, although they had the right, and were requested to do so at the tribunal. Apart from several Japanese and (ex-) Korean Christians, whose loyalty had been suspected by the Japanese army because of their "Western" belief in God (as

opposed to worshiping the Japanese Emperor), and who were more or less prepared to swear an oath with their hand on the Bible, most of the Japanese would not defend themselves in front of the enemy, as was expected or anticipated, and no less than 97.5% of them did not recognize themselves to be guilty but accepted the sentence as if it were the incomprehensible and yet predestinated fate of which they were chosen victims. In her analysis TSURUMI Kazuko concludes:

> On the whole, the International War Tribunal failed to develop in the war criminals an awareness of guilt for "crimes against humanity" which was intended to act as the mediator of change from the war-oriented to a peace-oriented ideology. Those who arrived at an antiwar conviction did so, not through a sense of war guilt superimposed by the Tribunal, but rather through the sense of having been the victims of double injustices—injustices inflicted upon them by their superiors in the army and injustices inflicted upon them by the victors. Moreover, they not only suffered themselves but were keenly aware of the suffering that their premature deaths would cause their families. It was this sense of guilt toward their own families that led them to recant their early war-oriented ideology (Tsurumi 1970: pp. 173-4).

In this sense, one of the main aims of the War Tribunal was not achieved because it executed most of the accused Japanese without having successfully convinced them of their own crime. But the side effect seems to have been much worse, because the tribunal ironically contributed to reproduce and reiterate the same system of psychological oppression upon the accused Japanese and their relatives as the one that had been previously imposed upon them by Japanese militarism. Instead of annihilating what it hoped to annihilate, the War Tribunal acted in complicity with it. And this complicity could not have been redeemed, had it not been for the victims who had sacrificed their lives in the historical trial, known as World War II. Indeed, in their final words left to their relatives, most of the executed Japanese asked their families to understand that they were victims chosen for the restoration of world peace and for the reconstruction of the post-war Japan.

And thus we see why Laurens van der Post intentionally juxtaposed Hara's fate with the sacrifice of Celliers in his Christmas trilogy. The next question to ask is how to face these sacrifices.

3. Consoling the Soul of the Dead

Officer Yonoi, who was also sentenced to death, was pardoned and released after

four years of imprisonment. Returning to his homeland, Yonoi received the lock of hair that he had cut off from the head of his dying enemy, Celliers, buried alive for punishment. Yonoi intended to dedicate the hair of this "most remarkable man he had ever met" in the sacred fire of his people's shrine. Yonoi had written a poem for the occasion. "Presenting himself at the shrine, bowing low and clapping his hands sharply to ensure that the spirits knew he was there, he had deposited this verse for the ancestors to read:

> In the spring/Obeying the August spirits
> I went to fight the enemy.
> In the Fall,/Returning I beg the spirits
> To receive also the enemy (pp. 162-3)

This episode was not well understood, especially by Western audiences of the movie version by OSHIMA Nagisa, *Merry Christmas Mr. Lawrence*, but was taken as an act of fetishism. So as to covey better the religious meaning implied in the act, it would be useful to compare this passage with another tale, written for children and youngsters by TAKEYAMA Michio and published in 1947 despite the threat of censorship by the American occupation army: *Harp of Burma*. In this story a Japanese soldier named Mizushima decides to stay in Burma as a Buddhist monk after the defeat of the Japanese army to console the spirits of the dead Japanese whose bodies remain scattered over the landscape. His decision to remain in Burma comes as he is hurrying to join his company to return together to Japan. He hears a hymn being sung by a mixed chorus, mostly women, in a cemetery. Hiding behind a large eucalyptus, Mizushima watches them.

> After finishing their hymn, they crossed themselves, bowed their heads for a moment in prayer, and quietly walked away./ When they were gone, I went up and found a new granite tombstone decorated with a small but pretty wreath. The stone bore the inscription "Here Lie Unknown Japanese Soldiers."/ I stood there for some time, bewildered. Then I heard the harp playing *Hanyu no Yado* [Home Sweet Home] near the gate of the cemetery. As if drawn by it, I started unsteadily toward the gate. I was burning with shame. How wretched I felt for having turned my back on those dead heaped beside the river!
>
> I could hear a fierce voice whispering deep within me: Foreigners have done this for us—treated our sick and wounded, buried our dead, prayed to console their spirits. You cannot leave the bones of your comrades to weather by the Sittang River, and in mountains, forests, and valleys that you have yet to see! *Hanyu no Yado* [popular in Japan] is not only a song of yearning for your own home, for your own friends. The harp expresses the longing of

every man for the peace of his home. How would they feel to hear it, the dead whose corpses are left exposed in a foreign land? Can you go away from this country without finding some kind of resting place for them? Can you leave Burma? Go back! Retrace your steps! Think over what you have seen on your way here. Or do you just want to leave? Do you lack the courage to go back north? (p.123)

Having decided to stay in Burma, Mizushima explains his hope to his comrades as follows: "Though it was wrong to start a war, how could the young men who had to fight and die be considered guilty? Whether English or Japanese, their souls had departed from this earth. To hope for a joint funeral, or at least for an inconspicuous place at this one, would surely not be resented by the English dead. On the contrary, they would probably smile and welcome the souls of the Japanese to their own altar. After all, in that mountain village on the night of the armistice living enemies took each other's hands..." (p.127).

Reconciliation of the enemies after death was the common motif which Takeyama shared with Laurens van der Post. In the Postscript of *The Night of the New Moon* (1970), Post wrote: "I myself was utterly opposed to any form of war trials. I refused to collaborate with the officers of various war crimes tribunals that were set up in the Far East. There seemed to me something unreal, if not utterly false, about a process that made men like the war crimes investigators from Europe, who had not suffered under the Japanese, more bitter and vengeful about our suffering than we were ourselves. There seemed in this to be the seeds of the great, classic and fateful evasions in the human spirit which, I believe, both in the collective and in the individual sense, have been responsible for most of the major tragedies of recorded life and time and are increasingly so in the tragedies that confront us in the world today." (p. 121)

This almost literally subscribes to the message Takeyama tried to transmit to young Japanese boys and girls by his story of 1947, *Harp of Burma*. Takeyama is known to have read the Japanese translation of *A Bar of Shadow* when it was translated into Japanese by YURA Kimiyoshi in 1962, as "Prisoners in Malaya" in the 31st volume of the then-popular "World Non-Fiction Series." Takeyama's novel, in turn, was translated into English by Howard Hibbett in 1966, but we don't know if Laurens van der Post had the chance to read it. Yet it is highly significant that both of them were convinced of the magical power of healing and communication that hymns and folk songs could exercise. In the story by Takeyama both the Japanese and the allied army suddenly begin to sing together in chorus the "Home Sweet Home" despite their imminent threat of fatal confrontation with each other: "An exile from home splendor dazzles in vain/ Oh, give me my low, thatched cottage again...." This incident eventually led to the peaceful dismantling of the Japanese regiment, who were later informed that

Japan had accepted unconditional surrender three days earlier (pp.30-31).

In Post's case, the hymn "Abide with me" plays a similar role: "Abide with me: fast falls the eventide; The darkness deepens: Lord with me abide," was sung by the Japanese who welcomed him to Japan in 1980, which recalled to his mind an anecdote of the P.O.W. camps. "The way that my apparently doomed little band of Australians sang it one Sunday night, after a number of executions in a Japanese prison, still resounded within me. Even more poignant were the deep bass voices of the gallant Ambonese soldiers of the Dutch colonial army, singing it in the words of the 'Heer Blypt met my' of the Netherlands, despite the efforts of Japanese soldiers to silence them, so determined were they to support three of their number who were marching out to be executed as live targets for bayonet practice by a platoon of Japanese infantry. The consequence was that the anonymous threesome went to their death as if to a wedding" (*Yet Being Someone Other*, p. 334).

Why did TAKEYAMA Michio and Laurens van der Post share the same idea about the necessity of consoling the dead and the dying souls by way of the magical power of poetical incantation? This question leads us to the final point of this paper.

4. Magical Power of Poetry: in Search of Forgiveness

Poetical incantation possesses a power of communication uniting the living with the dead. This idea seems to be closely related to Japanese Noh drama, which Laurens van der Post had appreciated since he saw the piece "Sumidagawa" during his first visit to Japan in 1926, at the age of 20. According to him, this experience eventually led him to initiate Benjamin Britten to the Noh theater, which inspired Britten's first Church Parable, *Curlew River*, an adaptation of "Sumidagawa" into Medieval Christian Mystery, first performed in 1964. *Curlew River* "proved to be the pagan and aboriginal stock of his [Britten's] own religious exploration, on which was grafted the biblical flowering of *The Burning Fiery Furnace* and *The Prodigal Son*." Post's close friend since their first voyage to Japan by the ship Canada Maru, William Promer, wrote the librettos of these three pieces.

In "Sumidagawa," composed by Motomasa (1394-ca. 1432), the mother of a distinguished family in Kyoto makes a long pilgrimage to the East and comes as far as Musashi province in the hopes of finding her son, Umewakamaru, who was kidnapped by a merchant. The mother, half insane, sees the Phantom of her son at the riverside but the ghost vanishes near a weed-covered mound where her son, who died of sickness on his way, had been buried precisely one year earlier. The piece ends with the Buddhistic incantation for the consolation of the dead boy's soul, in which it happens that the expression "shadow within", a key term for

Laurens van der Post, suddenly appears:

> The voice is heard, and like a shadow too
> Within, can one a little form discern (p. 94)

The coincidence seems to suggest that the author of *Bar of Shadow* read "Sumidagawa" in the English translation made by Marie C. Stopes in her *Plays of Old Japan, The Nō* (Heinemann, London, 1913). In his *Yet Being Someone Other*, after the chapter, "The Shadow in Between," the author quotes from another Noh play, "Tadanori," a famous waka poem which evokes strong affinity with "Home Sweet Home" and "Abide with me." The protagonist of the piece is the soul or the ghost of "[a] kind of medieval Japanese *Bayard, sans peur et sans reproche*, Taira No Tadanori who, the night before the battle in which he was killed, added to the poems found in the band of his helmet":

Night falls,	Yukikurete	行き暮れて
My hospice,	Konoshitakage wo	木の下蔭を
A cherry tree,	Yadotoseba	宿とせば
My host	Hana ya koyoino	花や今宵の
A flower.	Aruji naramashi	主ならまし

The poem—probably the incisive translation is made by Post himself—is recited in the piece of Noh to console the ghost of Tadanori, a historical figure who was killed in a battle in 1184 at the age of 41 and became one of the most popular tragic heros of the oral epic narrative to be known as *The Tale of Heike*. Laurens van der Post named the chapter including this poem "Sword and Flower," implicitly referring to the death poem of Tadanori. This military man gifted with poetical talent and brutally killed in battle must be the metaphor of the "star" which Laurens van der Post described in *The Seed and the Sower*: the star, "so steep in the shadow," and "throwing its shadow" on Celliers (p. 144). Tadanori's death song also reminds us of the last lines the dying Celliers was crooning in a "hoarse broken voice":

> I rode all through the night,
> and far in the distance found the fire,
> And beside the fire one who had waited long...(p. 158)

Tadanori's dream of taking a hospice at the foot of a cherry tree under the flowers in full bloom in a spring evening reminds us of the yearning of "home sweet home" which was the leitmotif of Takeyama's novel. And Celliers' whispering lines in his last hours are also reminiscent of songs filled with memories and asso-

ciated with loved ones. But "home sweet home" here lies beyond any national borders, and is instead related with the world beyond. Laurens van der Post also confesses that Tadanori's poem exercised "a kind of healing" effect which removed the hurt and negation of the day in the P.O.W. camps and helped reinforce him for the next morning. "Without this I know even now with a certainty greater than ever despite many waters that seek to quench the memory of long eventful years, we would not have survived. And more important even than survival, we could not have come out of prison so much a something *other* than we had been before: an *other* totally bereft of bitterness and of longing either for revenge or for an exercise of uncomprehending fundamentalist justice" (p. 320). The growth of this "other self" was so important among the P.O.W. prisoners who had shared the experience with van der Post, that they found it extremely strange "to be taken to rehabilitation camps in Britain where they thought the people in need of rehabilitation were not they themselves but the officers and officials in charge of the camps."

In the final part of *Yet Being Someone Other* (1982)—the title is from T.S. Eliot's "Little Gidding," and the precedent citation shows what this Someone Other means for the author—Laurens van der Post repetitively explains how the experience in the Japanese P.O.W. camp helped him develop this "other person." "At every stage the crisis of instant death and a final sentence of execution was repeated, and it was resolved only by this other person in me" (p. 316). "Accordingly, I gave myself and all the reason I possessed to this 'other person'. I came to listen to what it had to say with the utmost care. More and more, it was always there like some kind of guardian angel over us" (p. 318). And this "other self" ultimately engaged him into the position in between: between the rulers and the ruled, between native and foreigner, between victors and vanquished, and even between the living and the dead.

In *The Bar of Shadow* (1954), this "other self" appears for the first time when the narrator of the story makes his final visit to the sentenced Hara to encourage him: "There is a way of winning by losing, a way of victory in defeat which we are going to discover"(p. 35). This lesson seems to be restored in its original context, 28 years later in van der Post's autobiography, *Yet Being Someone Other* (1982). Summoned by the Japanese High Command, Colonel van der Post was told of Japan's capitulation and was asked to help them find out the way to cope with the local sitatuation after Japan's surrender. Around the P.O.W. camp Javanese upheavals and aggressions against Dutch people had been already reported. At that moment the "other self" suddenly appeared from within and replied to the Japanese:

> 'You have to learn...' I remember the words that fell into me [from the other self] precisely because they were applicable to me as much as to them.

> 'You will have to learn, as I have had to in all these years in your power, how there is a way of losing that can become a way of winning' (p. 322)

We may conclude with this passage. Needless to say, it was Stompie, that handicapped springbok, who showed to the author the "way of winning by losing," by his own solemn death. Indeed it was Stompie that had sown the seed of "someone other" in the heart of a hunter born in Africa, i.e. Laurens van der Post, and had become the "sower within." *The Seed and Sower* ends with the following:

> Wind and the spirit, earth and being, rain and doing, lightning and awareness imperative, thunder and the word, seed and sower, all are one: and it is necessary only for man to ask for his seed to be chosen and to pray the sower within to sow it through the deed and act of himself, and then the harvest for all will be golden and great (p. 266) .

Notes

Main works by Laurens van der POST (1906-1997) are translated into Japanese. Among others, *The Bar of Shadow* was put into Japanese by YURA Kimiyoshi as "Prisoner in Malaya" and included in the 31st volume of *The World Non-Fiction Series*, from Chikuma Shobō in 1962. *The Lost World of the Kalahari* (1969) was translated into Japanese as early as in 1970, by SATŌ Takashi and SATŌ Sachiko and published from Chikuma Shobō. *The Seed and the Sower* was translated into Japanese as early as 1970, by YURA Kuniyoshi and TOMIYAMA Takao as *Kage no Goku nite*, Tokyo: Shisakusha, 1978. Most of the chapters of *Yet Being Someone Other*, related to the Japanese captain MORI Katsue, of Canada Maru, are translated into Japanese by YURA Kimiyoshi as *Captain's Odyssey*, Tokyo, Nihon Kaiji Kōhō Kyōkai, 1987. The commentary by the translator gives a full list of publications of Post's work in Japanese translations. With the exception of "The Creative Pattern in Primitive Africa," translated into Japanese by YURA Kimiyoshi in *Eranos Series*, vol.10, *Creation and Forms I*, Tokyo, Heibonsha, 1990, with the translator's notes. *The Seed and Sower* was put into movie by director OSHIMA Nagisa in 1986 as *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*, with David BOWIE, SAKAMOTO Ryūichi and Beat Takeshi respectively playing the role of Celliers, Officer Yonoi and Sergeant Hara. The film failed to obtain the Palm d'or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1986.

TAKEYAMA Michio (1903-1984)'s *The Harp of Burma* was published in 1947. Though the publication was threatened by the censorship of the GHQ of the American Occupation Army, the integrity of the text remained intact. The book was awarded the Mainichi Publishing Prize in 1948, and also The Minister of Education Prize in 1950. Translated into English by ISHIKAWA Kin'ichi and then by Howard HIBBETT in 1967, the tale was put into movie by Director ICHIKAWA Kon and obtained San Giorgio Prize at the Venezia Film

Festival in 1957. On TAKEYAMA, also read the article by HIRAKAWA Sukehiro included in *Images of Westerners in Chinese and Japanese Literature*, edited by MENG Hua and HIRAKAWA Sukehiro, Amsterdam/Atlanta, GA., 2000. The present paper is a reaction to HIRAKAWA's paper in this volume.

References of the quoted and related texts:

POST, Laurens van der, *A Bar of Shadow*, London: The Hogarth Press, 1954
——, *The Seed and the Sower*, London: The Hogarth Press, 1963
——, *The Night of the New Moon*, London: The Hogarth Press, 1970
——, *Yet Being Someone Other*, London: The Hogarth Press, 1982
——, *The Admiral's Baby,* London: John Murray Publishers Ltd. 1996
(all citations of works of L.v.d.P. in this paper are from the Penguin editions)
TAKEYAMA Michio, *Harp of Burma*, translated into English by Howard Hibbett, UNESCO collections of contemporary works, Tōkyō: Charles E. Tuttle, 1966

References of works and studies consulted:

KAWAI Hayao, *Kage no Genshōgaku* [Phenomenology of the Shadow], Tokyo: Shisakusha, 1976. In the last chapter the author examines and analyzes *The Seed and the Sower*, from a Jungian perspective, and shows subtle insights into the role of "shadow" in the integrity of self in cross-cultural situation.

NAKAO Tomoyo, "Problems of P.O.W. in comparative perspective," [in Japanese], *Kikan Sensō sekinin kenkyū* [Quarterly in the Studies of War Responsibility], winter 1998, pp. 27-35; spring 1999, pp. 27-39; summer 1999 pp. 77-84

STOPES, Marie C., *Plays of Old Japan, The No*, London: W. Heinemann, 1913

Sugamo Isho henshu-kai (ed.), *Seiki no Isho* [Testaments of the Century], Kōdansha Reprint Edition, 1974

TSURUMI Kazuko, *Social Change and the Individual: Japan before and after Defeat in World War II*, Princeton University Press, 1970

——, "The Voice of the Dead" [in Japanese, 1968]; *Tsurumi Kazuko Mandara* [Works by K.T.], Tōkyō: Fujiwara Shoten, Vol. III, 1998, pp. 100-156]

YAMAGUCHI Masao, "The Intellectual Possibilities of Africa" [in Japanese, 1968]; *Shinpen Jinruigakuteki Shikō* [Pensée anthropologique, nouvelle édition], Tōkyō: Chikuma Shobō, 1979, pp. 100-129. This memorable article in the intellectual history of post-war Japan, refers to Van der Post's *The Heart of the Hunter*, and tries to elucidate the reach of primitive thinking in modern critical theories. His theory of the sacrifice and trickster, developed later, in his studies in the dynamics of the social transformation through death and rebirth, seems to be directly inspired by Laurens van der Post, and was applicable to the

analysis of the Noh plays from anthropological point of view. See, HIRAKAWA Sukehiro, *Yōkyoku no Shi to Seiyō no Shi*, [The Poetry of Noh and the Western Poetry], Tokyo: Asahishinbunsha, 1975, p. 165 et seq. See also YAMAGUCHI Masao, "On Vulnerability" (in Japanese, 1980), in his *Bunka no Shigaku I* [Poetics of Culture I], Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1983, where the author stresses the contrast between the beauty of the elder brother (Celliers) and the ugliness of his deformed younger brother as the core of the story.