

AFTERWORD

In Chapters 1 through 10 of this book I have outlined the results of my reflection and research, over a period of years, on the historical evolution of the concept of “bungaku” in Japan. Many matters, I know, require more detailed discussion, and on countless issues deeper scrutiny would lead to new discoveries. My goal will have been achieved if, for those who share these interests, my work provides material for further thought.

As I wrote in the Introduction, this book is the almost inevitable sequel to my *Nihon no “bungaku” o kangaeru*. Any attempt at a thorough, historical relativization of the current concept of “bungaku” requires clarifying the process by which the idea of “bungaku” took shape and gained acceptance in the Meiji period. In truth, because of its many complexities the concept was never fully assimilated during that time. In order to elucidate the process of its formation, I felt the urgent need to grasp the notion of “bungaku” from the beginning, and especially in the Tokugawa period. However, I was not at first able to go that far, and this, too, became a reason for continuing my work.

What encouraged me to do so was the large number of comments I received on *Nihon no “bungaku” o kangaeru*. Of special significance to me was the strong interest expressed by Wolfgang Schamoni of Heidelberg University, who focuses on the concept of genre and its evolution, and by the young researchers under his direction; by Liu Jianhui 劉建輝 of Beijing University, who studies Sino-Japanese comparative literature and culture; and, in Korea, by Kim Chun-mi 金春美 of Koryo University, who is editing a history of modern Japanese literature. Precious, too, was the stimulus I owe to Togawa Shinsuke 十川信介, a leader in the study of modern Japanese literature, who remarked of my treatment of the Meiji period that it was “careless.” Mark Morris, who teaches Japanese literature and contemporary Japanese thought at the University of Cambridge, observed that on several points my ideas resembled those of Raymond Williams and urged me to look into Williams’ work. Michael Marra, who specializes in Japanese aesthetics and hermeneutics at UCLA, and Sumie Jones of Indiana University (visiting scholars at Nichibunken) showed interest in my work and offered advice. Without their help and that of others like them, I would surely in the end have renounced the idea of carrying such demanding work through to completion. Of still greater value was the assistance, in fields unfamiliar to me, of Takada Mamoru 高田衛, a leader in the study of Tokugawa literature, and of Inami Ritsuko 井波律子, a major figure in research on Chinese literary art. Other colleagues at Nichibunken—Hayakawa Monta 早川聞多, Mitsuta Kazunobu 光田和伸, Inaga Shigemi 稲賀繁美, and Kuriyama Shigehisa 栗山茂久, as well as graduates and graduate students of the Sōgō Kenkyū Daigakuin Daigaku 総合研究大学院大学, kindly provided apt advice as well as vital bibliographic information. I know that without them I would not have progressed far.

In the course of my work I lectured nearly ten times before audiences of students, graduate students, and colleagues from Japan and abroad. Every question inspired me to rethink my ideas, reread the relevant materials, and discern new possibilities. I would like once again to thank all those who put questions to me, thus inspiring me to do so.

This book forms just one part of the trial and error process by which I have been seeking to

grasp the history of modern and contemporary Japanese literature from multiple viewpoints and in a variety of forms. However, I believe it has allowed me at last to secure the foundation of this project. Fundamentally, my plan remains the same as the one I laid out in my preface to *Nihon bungei shi: Hyōgen no nagare* (7 vols. projected, 5 published), Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1986-. It was Nakamura Shin'ichirō who, in his *Dokushōkōjitsu*, applied to this work the excessively strong expression, “a revolution in literary history” (*bungaku shi no kakumei* 文学史の革命). I do not believe that my slow, patient labors deserve the name of “revolution,” but the feeling his appraisal gave me has supported them ever since. I regret that I can only acknowledge my profound debt to him.

That trial and error process, which I outlined in Chapter 11 of the present work began slowly to take shape beginning with “Sengoteki rinen no kubiki, aruiwa gendai shōsetsu no fukō” 戦後の理念のくびき、あるいは現代小説の不幸 (1984). In pursuit of the theme of the present work, I have drawn frequently on the results of earlier research. I wrote “Sengoteki rinen no kubiki” in response to a request from Takagi Tamotsu 高木有, who was then about to become the editor of *Bungei* 文藝. To him, who has kindly supported my somewhat reckless efforts ever since his time on the staff of Kawade Shobō Shinsha, who has repeatedly given me penetrating advice, and who by now brought out many of my books, I decided once again to turn for this one. I owe him my deepest thanks.

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August 15, 1998 (the 53rd anniversary of Japan's defeat in the Pacific War)

Afterward to the English Edition

This volume is an expanded edition of the original text written in Japanese. I am grateful for the editorial assistance of the translator, Prof. Royall Tyler, as well as Prof. Patricia Fister and Mr. Takahashi Yu of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies.

In this book, I have set forth the extremely complicated situation regarding the formation and fixation in Japan of the concept of art or fine art (*geijutsu*), which has precedence over the concept of *bungaku* as linguistic art, and discrepancies with that in the modern West. However, it is necessary to integrate the recent advanced researches in the field of art history, aesthetics, and literary history, and I was not able to add those results to this volume. I will discuss this further in a book scheduled to be published in Japanese in the next few months.

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