THE THEME OF INNOCENCE

IN

MIYAZAWA KENJI'S TALES

by

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ABSTRACT

Miyazawa Kenji (1896-1933), an exceptionally prolific poet and children's story writer, was little appreciated by his contemporaries, but after his death his literary fame grew rapidly. This neglect can be traced to a lack of understanding of Kenji's cosmology which gave rise to his unique sense of innocence. He expressed this sense of innocence through both his literature and his life. This dissertation is an attempt to clarify the nature of Kenji's idea of innocence as exemplified, specifically, in his tales.

Chapter 1 presents a biographical sketch of Kenji. It provides the necessary contextual information for analyzing his tales and explores the ways in which he expressed innocence in his life. Indeed, Kenji's life closely parallels his literature and can be seen as a "meta-text," as yet another tale whose central theme is innocence.

Chapter 2 discusses the relationship between Kenji's ideas of innocence and "the other world," or ikukan, in terms of certain dichotomies such as Iwate (nature) vs. Tokyo (culture), art (imagination) vs. life (reality), and life vs. death. These conceptual pairs will also be considered in relation to another opposition, the center-periphery or "unmarked-marked" opposition.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on how Kenji uses symbolism in his tales to express his ideas of innocence. Ideas from a wide variety of sources, including psychoanalytic theory, various schools of literary criticism, anthropology and religion, are used in analyzing Kenji's symbolism. These
chapters will establish that Kenji’s innocence is of cosmic scale and is often expressed through mandala-like images in which the center and the periphery interpenetrate.

Chapter 5 examines stylistic features of Kenji’s tales such as his use of Iwate dialect, songs, onomatopoeia, and scientific vocabulary, in their relationship to the issues of innocence, *ikōkan* and the center-periphery dichotomy.

The conclusion attempts to provide a synthetic view of innocence in Kenji. This chapter argues that Kenji’s ideas of innocence are best understood in relation to his cosmology which can be explained in terms of a special type of cyclicity and circularity. Indeed, the structure of Kenji’s universe may be compared to that of the Möbius strip in which ends are connected to beginnings through a simple half twist; this built-in twist generates the vital and energetic innocence seen in Kenji’s literature as well as in his life.
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Introduction

Miyazawa Kenji 宮沢 賢治 (1896-1933) was an exceptionally energetic and creative figure who, during his short lifetime, engaged in a diverse range of activities and occupations. Along with his career as a poet and "children's story" writer, he was also a soil scientist, a religious thinker, a teacher, farmer, social reformer, and engineer-salesman. In most of these roles, he was not merely active, but outstanding, demonstrating tremendous originality of thought and expression. Certainly, if one were to consider only Kenji's literary career, it could be argued that he is without counterpart in the tradition of Japanese literature. Indeed, his exuberant style, based upon a highly idiosyncratic cosmology, seems to place him in a category of his own.

Though Kenji received little recognition as a writer during his lifetime, his literary fame grew rapidly after he died. To date, six different editions of his collected works (seven, if we include the work currently being published by Chikuma Shobō) and innumerable books, periodicals and

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1 In this dissertation, Japanese names will be cited according to conventional Japanese style; i.e., the family name first, followed by the first name (except for people of Japanese descent living in Western countries, where the Western practice of first name-family name will be adopted). Also, following the custom of the Japanese critics and readers of Miyazawa Kenji, Kenji's given name, rather than family name, is used.

2 In spite of the fact that Kenji himself called his stories dōwa (children's stories) and wrote them in that style, the term "children's story" does not seem to be quite appropriate because his stories are often abstruse for children, and too much so for the very young. In this dissertation, therefore, we shall generally use the term "tales" (or occasionally "stories") rather than "children's stories."
articles related to Kenji studies have been published. It is probably safe to say that in the post war period, few primary or secondary school students in Japan graduate without having read one or two of Kenji's poems or tales. And recently, even in the non-academic world, Kenji has become extremely popular. Comic books and animated movies based on or adapted from his tales have been published commercially, while in Hanamaki, Kenji's birth place, various public works commemorate him, and every souvenir shop sells cakes and other gift items bearing his name or a passage from his poems.

The situation outside Japan, of course, is quite different. Naturally, what might be called Kenji sangyō (lit. Kenji tourist industry) is confined to Japan, and there is relatively little scholarship concerned with Kenji outside the country. Recently, however, there has been a growing interest in Kenji and his literature among Western academics as well. For example, a number of translations and studies of Kenji's works have been published in English, German, and Swedish. In English, these translations and studies include Gary Snyder's translations of Kenji's poems in his Back Country, Hiroaki Satō's Spring and Asura: Poems of Kenji Miyazawa, John Bester's Winds and Wildcat Places and Winds from Afar, both translations of


One might wonder why Kenji attracts such widespread attention today, both in Japan and increasingly in the West, when he was almost totally unknown to, or rather ignored by, literary circles in Tokyo during his lifetime. In the most general terms, each of the studies mentioned above may be seen as an attempt to answer this question. Certainly, to the extent that it is concerned with explaining the meaning—and hence the appeal—of Kenji, the present dissertation is also such an attempt. More specifically, however, this study is about the idea of innocence in Kenji's work. Literary scholars, critics and translators have so far treated the issue of innocence in Kenji's work only tangentially or indirectly, especially when discussing


9 Sarah Strong, "The Poetry of Miyazawa Kenji," Diss. The University of Chicago. 1984. For more information about studies and translations of Kenji's works outside Japan, see Strong, pp. 4-5; and Ueda, pp. 425-429.
his tales. Few have grappled with this issue in terms of how it relates to various other themes in Kenji's life, his thought and his literature—themes such as nature, the other world, the center-periphery dichotomy, symbolism and style. The present essay is intended to throw light on this important element of Kenji's literature, as well as on the question of why that literature was ignored or misunderstood by many people in Kenji's time.

In our attempt to clarify the nature of innocence in Kenji's work, we shall focus mainly on his tales, firstly because no major study of his tales has been undertaken in the West, and secondly because they are a particularly rich source for those wishing to explore Kenji's views of innocence. Kenji did, after all, address his tales to children, whom he associated closely with innocence. Along with analysing Kenji's tales, we shall also draw on biographical information, his poetry, other prose works, and personal correspondence when necessary. Because of the strong parallels which Kenji himself wished to draw between his life and his literature, a knowledge of his biography is particularly important in

10 See, for instance, the following remarks by Bester in his Winds from Afar, p. 8:

Yet still more essential in Miyazawa than this humanism is an intense nostalgia for innocence, for the childlike state that precedes all such things as society and morality. This nostalgia, together with the sensitivity towards nature with which it is so closely linked is, above all, what gives his work its special flavor. The harking back to innocence is not so much a retreat into childhood as a reaffirmation of certain aspects of our relationship with the universe about us.

11 That children do not necessarily appreciate his tales is another issue which we shall treat in the conclusion.
comprehending his view of innocence. Indeed, Kenji's biography is not only useful in elucidating his tales, but his life can itself be read as a kind of "meta-text," as yet another tale whose central theme is innocence.

The methodology adopted in this dissertation follows quite naturally from these aims and from the nature of the topic itself—the theme of innocence in Kenji's tales. Innocence is one of those aspects of the world which, once we try to conceptualize or define it, becomes endlessly elusive. This is probably because, like other concepts, such as God, eternity, love, good, evil, life and death, it is essentially an abstract idea. Trying to define it is, in fact, like trying to see one's own eyes with one's own eyes. We have innocence, or rather we are in innocence, and this is perhaps the reason that when we encounter innocence, we intuitively recognize it as such at once. But to define it is not such an easy matter, and any attempt to do so necessarily becomes circular and discursive. The issue of innocence in Kenji's tales is, perhaps, a rather complex matter. Kenji himself drew on various experiences and ideas in formulating his thoughts on the subject, and he expressed those thoughts through various symbols, themes, images, and stylistic means. Thus, to comprehend how he viewed innocence, we will examine not only the sources which informed his thinking on the subject, but also the means he used to express them. In general, our strategy is to cast a metaphorical dragnet in order to gather the various components which comprise Kenji's view of innocence.

As for organization, this study consists of seven main parts: an introduction (the present section), five chapters, and a conclusion. In Chapter 1, we will sketch Kenji's biography in such a way as to provide a context for comprehending his tales and his view of innocence. The biographical information we have chosen to present has been conditioned
accordingly by this aim. This does not, of course, mean that we have used unlimited licence to distort information. Rather, it only means that each biographer has his own principle in choosing and arranging material, and that this principle inevitably limits and conditions the scope and the tone of the biography he presents. To reiterate, the biographical sketch of Kenji given here will largely overlap with the works so far done by other biographers, but along with presenting an overall picture of Kenji, it emphasizes those events, episodes and aspects of Kenji's life which bear particularly on his thoughts concerning innocence.

Chapter 2 treats the relationship between Kenji's ideas of innocence and "the other world" or, to use Kenji's term, ikōkan (lit. a different space). His visionary temperament and his intense interest in nature—both touched upon in the biographical sketch—are more fully discussed to demonstrate, with reference to his tales in general, how they influenced his thinking about innocence. This chapter will also analyse how his thoughts on innocence can be ordered around certain conceptual and physical dichotomies, such as Iwate (nature) vs. Tokyo (culture), art (imagination and imaginary) vs. life (reality), and life vs. death. Finally, these conceptual pairs will be considered in relation to another major opposition which is useful in understanding Kenji's thought—that is, the center-periphery or "unmarked-marked" opposition.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on Kenji's tales, and the manner in which they express his views of innocence. Specifically, these chapters are concerned with how Kenji uses symbolism in his tales. For this analysis, we have concentrated on two tales which represent Kenji's symbolism. Thus Chapter

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12 For a substantial biographical sketch of Kenji in English, refer to Strong, pp. 15-124.
3 explores the symbolism in "The Fourth Day of the Month of Daffodils" (Suisenzuki no yokka, 水仙月の四日) and Chapter 4 analyses "The Night of the Milky Way Railroad" (Ginga tetsudō no yoru, 銀河鉄道の夜). In analysing Kenji's symbolism, we have drawn on a wide variety of sources--such as the author's biography, psychoanalytic theory, various schools of literary criticism, anthropology, folklore, and religion--the main criterion of selection being that such sources enhance our understanding of the text. In general terms, the text is considered an organic totality (following the methodology of "New Criticism"), but one which is not, by virtue of that, divorced from its context.

The fifth chapter discusses Kenji's style in its relationship to innocence and the other world. A central theme in this chapter is how Kenji's thoughts concerning the two dichotomies of "center-periphery" and "unmarked-marked" converged with his style. In particular, the chapter examines such stylistic features of Kenji's tales as his use of Iwate dialect, songs, onomatopoeia, and scientific (especially mineral) vocabulary. In addition, the unique features of Kenji's style are clarified through a comparison with the styles of various other modern Japanese writers.

The concluding chapter reviews the preceding chapters as well as attempts to provide a synthetic view of "innocence" in Kenji's life and literature. We would like to argue that Kenji's ideas of innocence are best understood in relation to his world view, a view which would explain the structure of the universe in terms of a special type of cyclicity and
circularity. Indeed, the structure of Kenji’s universe can be compared to that of the Möbius strip (see Appendix I) in which ends are connected to beginnings through a simple half twist. As we shall see, it may be this built-in twist that is the secret of the life and energy in Kenji’s literature as well as in his own life. In any case, if we may apply the lesson of the Möbius strip to the present dissertation, we may return now to the beginning, to the biographical sketch of Miyazawa Kenji in Chapter I.

13 Onda Itsuo 恩田逸夫, a prominent Kenji scholar, points out in his article, “Kenji ni okaru enkan goitsu no ishiki” 賢治における円環・合一の意義 (Sense of circularity and unification in Kenji) that the characteristics of Kenji’s world view include such interrelated elements as the sense of continuity of things, the sense of constant change and flow, the sense of the “way” that leads man to the supreme goodness or happiness. Onda argues further that underlying these elements is the energy or will of what Kenji calls Cosmic Consciousness, and that “circularity” is one form of continuity and “unification” an ultimate form of continuity and circularity (Onda Itsuo, Miyazawa Kenji ron 宮沢賢治論 [Treatises on Miyazawa Kenji], ed. Hara Shirō 原子郎 and Ozawa Toshirō 小沢俊郎 [Tokyo Shoseki, 1981], 1, 123-151). It is regrettable that Onda does not elaborate on the theme of circularity and unification concerning Kenji’s senses of continuity, flow, “way,” and Cosmic Consciousness. The present dissertation is, in a sense, an attempt to develop Onda’s theme from where he leaves off. (Here and throughout the dissertation the place of all Japanese publications is Tokyo unless otherwise specified.)
I. Childhood and Middle School Days: 1896-1914

Miyazawa Kenji (1896-1933) was born in the town of Hanamaki in Hienuki County, Iwate prefecture on August 27, 1896. He was the eldest son of Miyazawa Masajirō (1874-1957) and his wife, Ichi (1877-1963). Besides Kenji, the couple had four other children: Toshi (1898-1922), Shige (1901- ), Seiroku (1904- ), and Kuni (1907-1979).

The Miyazawa family belonged to the "Miyazawa clan," one of the old and powerful mercantile clans in Hanamaki. When Kenji was born, his father, Masajirō, was running a second-hand clothing shop as well as a pawnshop. However, Masajirō was not a mere merchant. He was an extremely devout Buddhist, a follower of the Shin sect of Buddhism (Jōdo shinshū, 浄土真宗). Not only was he devoted to his own sect, but he was quite open-minded towards other Buddhist sects. Thus he founded and actively organized the Hanamaki Buddhist Society (the Hanamaki būkkyōkai, 花巻仏教会) and invited Buddhists and scholars from various sects to Hanamaki to give lectures to the townspeople every year.

Masajirō's occupation as a merchant and his religious devotion were two factors that deeply influenced Kenji and his literature. There is a story about the young Kenji, who, at the age of four or five, memorized entire sutras, such as a "Posthumous Writing About a Skeleton" (Hakkotsu no ofumi, 白骨の御文章) and "Gatha of Right Faith" (Shōshinge, 正信偈), while listening to his parents chanting every morning in front of the altar. He

Another story relates how an older Kenji, who, while tending his father's pawnshop, would loan any amount of money that customers requested, to the dismay of his father.\footnote{Horio, 68. Satō Takefusa 佐藤隆房, Miyazawa Kenji 宮沢賢治 (Fuzambō, 1970), p. 58.}

Ichō, Kenji's mother, was also an important figure in the development of Kenji's character. She was the second daughter of another Miyazawa family in the Miyazawa clan, and like her husband was a devout Shin Buddhist. Ichō was stable, calm, bright and humorous. She was kind to everyone. She is said to have told the young Kenji, almost as a bedtime story, that man is born to serve other men. Later, when Kenji had grown up and impaired his own health in the service of others, his mother forgot what she had taught him as a child and is said to have lamented, "Why does my son so devote himself to others, without caring a bit for his own comfort?"\footnote{Mori Sōichi 森末己池, Miyazawa Kenji no shōzō 宮沢賢治の肖像 (A portrait of Miyazawa Kenji) (Hirosaki: Tsugaru Shobō, 1974), p. 253.}

In the year Kenji was born, two major natural calamities hit Iwate prefecture. One was a tidal wave that ravaged the east coast of the prefecture and caused the deaths of more than 2,000 people. The other was...
an earthquake of fairly strong intensity that hit the town of Hanamaki five days after Kenji's birth. One may see the calamities that occurred at Kenji's birth as rather symbolic portents of his later life and literature, for both were dedicated to bettering the lives of the poor farmers in his prefecture. Iwate, which is often called the "Tibet of Japan," is a mountainous prefecture situated in the northeast of the main island of Honshū. Throughout history, it has suffered uncounted famines due to drought and cold weather. Even in Kenji's time, when peasants had bad crops, they were forced to sell their daughters to pleasure quarters or to wealthy people in order to survive. In the precinct of Shōan temple (Shōanji, 松庵寺), which Kenji and other children used as their playground, tombstones still commemorate those who perished in various famines. Kenji and his friends may have played on these stones, climbing up and down them. In one of his stories entitled "A Biography of Gusukō Budori" (Gusukō Budori no

4 As one of the most tragic cases of these famines, a chronicle of Iwate records a story of a starving mother who killed and ate her own children and who was finally shot to death by officials. For more on this story and other records of the famines, see Hara Shirō, "Miyazawa Kenji no hito to sakuhin" 宮沢賢治の人と作品 (Miyazawa Kenji: the man and his works) in Kanshō nihon gendai bungaku: Miyazawa Kenji, 鑑賞日本現代文学宮沢賢治 (Appreciation of modern Japanese literature: Miyazawa Kenji), ed. Hara Shirō (Kadokawa Shoten, 1981), XIII, 8-10; and Makabe Jin, 真壁仁 "Miyazawa Kenji to sono jidai" 宮沢賢治とその時代 (Miyazawa Kenji and his period) in Gendai nihonbungaku arubamu: Miyazawa Kenji 現代日本文学アルバム宮沢賢治 (Modern Japanese literature in photos: Miyazawa Kenji), ed. Sakurada Mitsuru 桜田満 (Gakushū Kenkyūsha, 1974), X, 185-216. This kind of history of famines in his native prefecture may be related to Kenji's "peculiar" attitude about food and eating in general, a point which we shall touch more upon later.
denki, グースコープ"ドリの伝記), Kenji writes about a boy who loses his family in a famine. This boy later becomes a scientist and by redirecting a volcanic eruption saves the people from a disaster and at the same time controls the climate and prevents crop failure.

In 1901, when Kenji was hospitalized at the age of six for dysentery, his aunt, Yasō, a skillful storyteller, told Kenji many folktales as she nursed him. These folktales are said to have been another important element in the development of Kenji's literary career.⁵

During Kenji's illness, his father, Masajirō, also looked after him and became infected with his son's dysentery. From that time on Masajirō suffered from chronic stomach problems. Kenji's concern that he had hurt his father's health at this time caused him considerable guilt later when, as a young man, he rebelled against his father.⁶

In 1903, at the age of seven, Kenji entered Kajō Primary School (Kajō shōgakkō, 花城小学校) in Hanamaki. This period abounds in stories, some semi-legendary some factual, that provide a background to Kenji's later interests and eccentric characteristics. Among these there are three episodes which are most relevant here. The first is a story concerning Yagi Eizō, one of Kenji's teachers, who fascinated Kenji and his classmates with children's stories by such writers as Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm. Perhaps, this is one of the factors which ignited Kenji's interest in "children's stories." Years later, after Kenji had started writing his stories, he came across Yagi Eizō and said, "It was the children's stories you read for us that opened my eyes to poetry. My

⁵ Hara, p. 12.

⁶ Hara, p. 12.
children's stories are rooted in the Lotus Sutra (Hokkekyō, 法華経), but don't you notice that they have flavours of the stories you told us at that time?

Another possible motivation for writing tales was the bed-time stories his two aunts told young Kenji during his illness mentioned above. Iwate, as elsewhere in the northeast area of the Japanese mainland, has a long tradition of folk tales. Elderly people used to entertain by telling stories, especially during the long and severe winters.

A second notable story about Kenji from around this time tells of how, at about age eleven, he started to show an unusual zeal for collecting rocks and stones. He was so enamoured with rocks that the people of his family nicknamed him "Pebbly Kenji" (Ishikko Kensan, 石子賢). This kind of enthusiasm for stone collecting is not particularly unusual for boys of this age, but with Kenji it became a life-long passion and an essential part of his life and literature. Later he was to study soil science at the Morioka Higher School of Agriculture and Forestry (Morioka kōtō nōrin gakkō, 盛岡高等農林学校) and not surprisingly his literature (both poems and tales) is full of mineral imagery and motifs that range from pebbles and jewels to stars and planets.

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7 Yagi Eizō, "Miyazawa Kenji" 宮沢賢治 in Hienuki fudoki 稲村風土記 (Gazette of Hienuki), Yagi Eizō, ed., I, 1951, quoted by Hara in Kanshō, p. 15. See also Mori Sōichi, "Kenji no bungaku teki shōden" 賢治の文学的小伝 (A small literary biography of Kenji) in Geppo 月報 (Monthly bulletin) in Kōhon Miyazawa Kenji zenshū 校本宮沢賢治全集 (Variorum edition of the complete works of Miyazawa Kenji), ed. Miyazawa Seiroku 宮沢 清六 et al. (Chikuma Shobō, 1976), II. Here and in the subsequent chapters, unless otherwise specified, all translations are mine.
A third story concerns Kenji's rather unusual attitude about eating. He was deeply troubled by the fact that, in sustaining his own life, he was destroying or causing pain to another. According to Miyazawa Seiroku, Kenji's younger brother:

Indeed, although on the surface he looked very cheerful, my brother [Kenji], whom I had known well since I was a small child, seemed to have an unspeakable sorrow deeply hidden in his heart...

Even when he had meals with his family, my brother ate as quietly and self-effacingly as possible, as if he were ashamed of something or as if he were apologizing to someone.8

Also, when Kenji was fourteen or fifteen he was poisoned by lacquer. His parents made paste, mashing small crabs for treatment, but Kenji refused it because he thought that it was too cruel to the crabs.9 This kind of "oversensitivity" towards the pains of living things in general remained unchanged throughout Kenji's life, and he later practiced vegetarianism and wrote many tales that dealt with the paradoxical aspect of life (i.e., life living on life) inherent in the world.

In 1909, at the age of thirteen, Kenji graduated from the primary school in Hanamaki with excellent marks and, in April of the same year, entered Morioka Middle School (Morioka chūgakkō, 盛岡中学校) in Morioka city, the capital of Iwate prefecture, about 30 kilometers north of Hanamaki. During his first three years there, he lived in the school


9 Setō, pp. 20-21.
dormitory. His interest in collecting rocks persisted, and to pursue his interest he developed an enthusiasm for hiking and mountain climbing. In 1910, when he was fourteen, Kenji, together with his teacher and classmates, climbed Mt. Iwate, situated about 24 kilometers northwest of Morioka city. The mountain enchanted Kenji with its beauty and height (2040.5 m), and from then on Kenji climbed this mountain countless times, both by himself and with others.

Kenji's academic performance in middle school was mediocre. One reason for this is said to be that he did not have any hope of attaining a higher education because, as the eldest son, he was expected to follow his father's occupation and become a merchant as soon as he graduated from school. Moreover, when he was in the fourth year, he became involved in an altercation between the dormitory supervisor and students and was consequently expelled from the dormitory.

After that, he lodged at a Buddhist temple in the city and practiced Zen meditation at another temple. He also read Buddhist scriptures and composed tanka. These tanka amount to nearly 120. When he was in the third year, Kenji wrote the following, recalling the time he entered middle school:

Chichi yo chichi yo
Oh, Father. Oh, Father.
ndaote kansha no
Why did you [have to] wind
mae ni shite
your big silver watch
dai naru gin no
in front of
In March 1914, at the age of eighteen, Kenji graduated from Morioka Middle School with average grades. Soon after graduation he underwent a simple operation for chronic inflammation of the nose, but this was followed by a complication, suspected typhoid fever, and he had to remain in the hospital for about two months. During his stay at the hospital he fell in love with one of the nurses. This was presumably his first love. Kenji seriously thought of marrying her, but his father forbade it because of his son's youth. Kenji wrote several tanka about his first love, one of which reads as follows:

Sukoyaka ni Oh, sound and wholesome
wuruwashiki hito yo beautiful one.
yamihate te [But I], exhausted from illness
waga me wa kinari my eyes are yellowish.
kitsune ni nizu ya (Z 1:19) Am I not like a [hideous] fox?

These two early tanka demonstrate that Kenji's poetic sensitivity differs from that of most writers who lyrically express human emotion through images charged with traditional implications, such as snow, moon and flowers. His studies in agricultural science would strengthen this untraditional approach to tanka, but we will touch on this issue later.

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10 Zenshū, I, 100. Hereafter the quotations from this edition will be specified in parentheses as in (Z 1: 100) where "Z" stands for Zenshū's collected works, "I" for volume I and "100" for page number. In this series, however, Volume Twelve is divided into two parts which will be hereafter referred to as "12-A" and "12-B."
After he was discharged from the hospital at the end of May 1914, Kenji spent frustrating days tending his father’s shop, but in September he found he could stand it no longer—he had to go on for a higher education. His father finally gave in, and Kenji began to study zealously in preparation for the entrance examination to Morioka Higher School of Agriculture and Forestry.

During this year Kenji had discovered the Lotus Sutra, the central sutra of the Nichiren sect of Buddhism, and was extremely moved by it. From then on, the sutra became his Bible, and he gradually inclined towards the Nichiren interpretation of Buddhism until he eventually deserted the Shin sect, which his family followed, to become a devout follower of Nichiren.

The reason that Kenji was so attracted to the Lotus Sutra and the Nichiren sect was not and will never be totally clear, but one thing seems obvious: as opposed to the introverted and “pessimistic” Shin sect, the tenets of the Nichiren sect are exceptionally extroverted, active and “optimistic.” It is often said that the Lotus Sutra is a hymn to Cosmic Life and Energy as represented by the Cosmic Buddha. This optimism must have charmed Kenji, for he was optimistic and sensitive to the animistic joys of life despite his religious sensitivity, which was negativistic because of both his temperament and upbringing.

Along with the Lotus Sutra, The Major Theories of Chemistry (Kagaku honron), published in 1915, was also a major influence on Kenji’s world view. This book, by Katayama Masao, was also a major influence on Kenji’s world view.

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11 See, for example, Kino Kazuyoshi 纪野一義, Gendai iin no bukkō: inochi no sekai hokkōkyō 现代人の仏教と のちの世界法華経 (Buddhism of modern men: the world of life: the Lotus Sutra) (Chikuma Shobō, 1965), V, 6-7, 206.
prominent scientist, gives extensive descriptions of the physicochemical make-up of matter, incorporating the latest theories and discoveries, such as the laws of thermodynamics, the concept of energy, the Brownian movement, and electro-chemical reactions in molecules and atoms. Kenji encountered this book a few years after he read the Lotus Sutra, and its impact seems to have been equally great. Saitō Bun’ichi argues that through this book Kenji gained a scientific view on the apparent metamorphosis but real continuity of matter and existence. This kind of view of matter and existence is similar to that of Buddhism. Miyazawa Seiroku, Kenji’s brother, testifies that Kenji always kept both the Lotus Sutra and The Major Theories on his desk and repeatedly read them. The importance for Kenji of these two books is suggestive of a fundamental feature of his literature and life: the synthesis of religion and science.

II. Morioka Higher School and Kokuchūkai: 1915–1921

In 1915 at the age of 19, Kenji enrolled in the Morioka Higher School of Agriculture and Forestry. Once again, he entered the school dormitory, which became the base for his activities during the three years of his schooling. On weekends Kenji usually did not return home but went out to the fields and mountains in order to collect specimens of minerals, rocks and plants. On his frequent overnight outings he carried such things as a map, a compass, a notebook for jotting down poems, a flashlight, a hammer...

12 Saitō Bun’ichi 齊藤文一, Miyazawa Kenji to sono tenkai: hyōchisso no sekai 宮沢賢治とその展開氷室素の世界 (Miyazawa Kenji and his unfolding: the world of frozen nitrogen) (Kokubunsha, 1976), pp. 108–111.

13 Miyazawa Seiroku, p. 247.
and biscuits. As a result of these forays, it is said that none of the rocks that jutted out of the earth in the vicinity of Morioka city escaped being knocked on the head by Kenji's hammer.\footnote{Abe Takashi, “Chūgakusei no koro” 中学生の頃 ([Kenji’s] middle school period), \textit{Yojigen} 四次元 (The fourth dimension), No. 100 (1959), p. 10.}

With his changed attitude towards academic training, Kenji became a very diligent student and the favourite of his teachers. Above all, Professor Seki Toyotaro 関豐太郎 (1868-1955), who was feared and nicknamed by the students “Lion” because of his eccentric behaviour and severity, took a particular fancy to Kenji. The professor later appointed Kenji as his assistant for a geological study of the earth in the Morioka area, commissioned by the government of Hienuki county of Iwate prefecture. It seems the professor intended to recommend Kenji for the position of assistant professor at his school.

Kenji also became more active and public in his occasional writing which, until then, he had kept private. In his third year, Kenji, along with three other friends, founded a literary magazine entitled \textit{Azalia} (Azaria アザリア). He contributed a number of tanka and a few prose works to this magazine as well as to a school periodical, \textit{Kōyōkaishi} 校友会誌. That he continued to use un-tanka-like devices is apparent from the following examples:

\begin{verbatim}
Sono mukashi
namako no gotoku
minasoko o
haitte nagareshi
sekiei somengan \textit{(Z i: 290)}
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
In ancient times
the rough-faced quartzite
like a sea slug
flowed, crawling
along the water's bed
\end{verbatim}
Kohaku haru

tsumetaki sora wa

ake chikaku

ōtokage ra no

kumo o hitaseri (Z 1: 304)

Covered with amber,

the cold sky,

near the dawn,

is letting float

clouds of giant reptiles

As is evident from these examples, Kenji’s tanka are almost entirely divorced from traditional aesthetics such as mono no aware (lit. sorrow of things) and yūgen (lit. dark and mysterious). These tanka avoid the wet emotionalism of Chōko-Chūsei (roughly between the ninth and sixteenth centuries) aesthetics and remind one of the primitive sensitivities of the pre-Manyō age (before the fifth century). This tendency is also seen in his tales which combine primeval, animistic sensitivities with modern and surrealistic poesy.

This tendency is one of the factors that makes Kenji’s literary efforts stand out in the stream of Japanese literature. Indeed, in his article, Isogai Hideo argues that Kenji’s writings set him apart in two ways: first, they reflect a Buddhist world view which differs completely from the idea of the individual in modern societies; and second, they express a primordial animism which gives a vital exuberance to his literature.15

Certainly Kenji is not alone in this. Many modern Japanese writers express in their work a Buddhist philosophy as well as the animistic sensitivity of the ancient Japanese. Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972), for instance, would seem to resemble Kenji on these points. In contrast to Kenji, however, Kawabata's animism and Buddhism are deeply steeped in, and thus subdued and darkened by, the sensitivities of the Chūko-Chūsei periods. Similarly Shiga Naoya's (1883-1971) animism, while it may not have the darkness of Kawabata's, is still rather quiet and contemplative when compared with the exuberant and even explosive sense of life found in Kenji's work.

The same can be said of still another type of ethnoanimistic writer exemplified by Ibuse Masuji (1898- ), Fukazawa Shichirō (1914- ), and Nakagami Kenji (1946- ). While we can easily sense that these writers are deeply rooted in the magma of the common people's vitality, which was, perhaps, basically the same thousands of years ago, their literature is without the dazzling colours, the lightness of innocence, and the soaring imagination seen in Kenji's stories.

In the field of poetry, Hagiwara Sakutarō (1886-1942) and Nishiwaki Junzaburō (1894-1982) may be cited as counter examples. However, Sakutarō's Buddhism is Theravada Buddhism, and one that came via Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy, and even the modernistic Sakutarō was attracted by traditional Japanese poetry like Buson's. Nishiwaki also returned to the Eastern traditions in his interest in Zen and in one of its sources, philosophical Taoism (rōshishō). Thus we can say that Kenji is different from his contemporaries even in his ethnoanimism and Buddhism. All the other writers mentioned above are,
one way or another, restricted by, or rather deeply rooted in various traditional Eastern sensitivities.

Here, because it bears centrally on his work and development as an artist, it would be appropriate to touch briefly on Kenji’s religion. His understanding of Buddhism deepened and changed as he studied in the Morioka Higher School. Ono Ryūshō argues that Kenji’s introverted manner deepened in this period due to his personal contacts with Shimaji Taitō 島地大等 (1875-1927), the superior of the Gankyō Temple (Gankyōji, 頌教寺) in Morioka and an authority on the philosophy of Tendai Buddhism (Tendai bukkyō, 天台仏教). Tendai philosophy is well known for its meticulous teachings on the relationship between the mind and the universe as, for instance, expressed in the concept of *ichinen sanzen* 一念三千 (one in many and many in one).

At the same time, as Kenji began to open his eyes to the corruption of the Shin sect of Buddhism, his conclusions gradually drove him away from his family religion and caused him to look towards the Nichiren sect. There was a newly founded Nichiren sect called Honke myōshō 本化妙宗 (the fine teachings of the original Bodhisattvas) founded by Tanaka Chigaku 田中哲学 (1861-1939). Upon the basis of his beliefs Chigaku also founded an ultra-nationalistic society called the Kokuchūkai 国柱会 (Pillar of the Nation Society), which Kenji was to join later.

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16 Ono Ryūshō 小野隆祥, Miyazawa Kenji no shisaku to shinkō 宮沢賢治の思索と信仰 (The musings and beliefs of Miyazawa Kenji) (Tairyūsha, 1979), pp. 9-52.

Before joining this society, Kenji seemed to have experienced considerable spiritual wanderings and doubts, which Ono Ryūshō has studied in detail in his book mentioned above. According to Ono, one reason that Kenji hesitated to join Kokuchūkai was its ultra-nationalism as expressed, for instance, in Chigaku's "Renovation of the Nichiren Sect" (Shūmon no išin 宗門之維新) published in 1898. "Renovation" was applauded by various intellectuals of the times, including Tsubouchi Shōyō 坪内逍遥 (1859-1939) and Takayama Chogyō 高山 檀牛 (1871-1907). Ono Ryūshō also thinks that this pamphlet is the predecessor of "General Principles for the Renovation of Japan" (Nihon kaizō hōan taikō 日本改造法案大纲) by Kita Ikki 北一輝 (1883-1937), a fascist who was involved with the aborted coup d'état of 1936 and was executed in 1937. Kenji could not resist the energetic optimism of the organization and its religion, which he believed to be the authentic embodiment of the teachings of Nichiren and the Lotus Sutra. Ono argues that there is even a similarity between a number of tanka written by Kenji at this time and the nationalism expounded by "Renovation." In this regard, there is a letter written by Kenji addressed to an acquaintance who was serving as a soldier in Manchuria. In his letter, Kenji envies as well as encourages the soldier and says that if circumstances allowed he would also like to fight and serve his country. As the previous discussion of Kenji's interest in rocks indicates, Kenji's temperament was such that he could become obsessed with a given thing once it ignited his

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18 Ono, pp. 49-90.
19 Ono, pp. 78-86.
passion. It seems that his mystic and obsessive temperament towards the Cosmic Buddha or Life underwent a chemical reaction with the nationalistic yet optimistic ideals of Kokuchōkai which he referred to as converting the world to the teachings of Nichiren and the Lotus Sutra in order to realize the Kingdom of God (or rather the Cosmic Buddha) on earth.

In 1918, at the age of twenty-two, Kenji graduated from Morioka Higher School of Agriculture and Forestry. The title of his graduation thesis was "The Values of Inorganic Elements In Fumar for Plants" (Fushokushitsu chū no muki seibun no shokubutsu ni taisuru kachi, 食物中ノ無機成分ノ植物ニ対スル価値). Immediately after his graduation he assisted Professor Seki Toyotarō in his laboratory and field work.

During this period, Kenji wrote a few tales and prose works. They included "Spider, Slug and Badger" (Kumo to namekuji to tanuki, 蜘蛛、蛞蝓と狸), "The Twin Stars" (Futago no hoshi, 双子の星), "An Exceptional Effect of Full Dress" (Taireifuku no reigai teki kōka, 大礼服の例外的効果), and "The House With a Spring" (Izumi aru ie, 泉ある家). "Spider, Slug and Badger" is a tale which satirizes the competitive systems of schools and society through allegories. (Also, underlying the theme of competition is that of the biological food chain—an important theme of Kenji's literature.) Kenji's sense of humour and his originality can be observed through his vivid and humorous characterization of the insects and animals as well as the songs inserted throughout:

Akai tenagano kūmo
O, the red long-legged spider

ten no chikaku o haimawari
Crawls about up in the sky

suru suru hikari no ito o haki
As he lets out, soft and bright

kiirari kiirari su o kakeru
His silver thread of light
"The Twin Stars" is also a tale with a somewhat didactic flavour, but Kenji's imagination, which ranges from the bottom of the sea up to the stars in the night sky, has an unusually wide scope and thus is exceptional in the Japanese literary imagination. This tale prefigures Kenji's other tale about the night sky, "The Night of the Milky Way Railroad," which we will treat more fully in Chapter 4.

Both "An Exceptional Effect of Full Dress" and "The House With a Spring" are short and somewhat fragmented prose works which display the kind of talent that might have made Kenji a good novelist had he pursued that form. Critics have conjectured about why he did not go on to write novels, but it seems that the reason lies in the nature of Kenji's imagination and sensitivity, which are too mystic and cosmic to be confined within the narrow range of human society, which is, after all, the domain of the novel.

It seems that after Kenji's graduation in 1918, Professor Seki intended to recommend Kenji as an assistant professor at his school, but Kenji declined this honour for two main reasons: he thought that he did not have sufficient talent and skill for laboratory work; he wanted to help farmers more directly. Thus Kenji resigned from his assistantship and returned home to tend his father's shop.

Towards the end of that year, however, Toshi, Kenji's sister, who was in the third year at Japan Women's Academy (Nihon joshi daigakkō),

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21 Bester, *Winds from Afar*, p.44.

22 We shall discuss this issue in more detail in Chapter 5.
became ill and was hospitalized in Tokyo. Kenji and his mother left Hanamaki for Tokyo on December 26, 1918, and Kenji stayed there until February of the following year, assuming the responsibility for his sister's care after his mother returned to Hanamaki in January. How devoted Kenji was to the care of Toshi can easily be surmised by the number of letters he wrote to his father. During his forty-day stay in Tokyo, Kenji wrote forty-five letters to his father, minutely reporting on Toshi's daily condition.

When Toshi had improved, Kenji would go out to libraries and theaters. He planned to start a new business as a jeweller in Tokyo and wrote his father to ask for permission as well as for financial assistance. Obviously, Kenji did not like the family business and wanted to escape from it. Kenji even suggested to his father that he quit his business as a pawnbroker and move the entire family to Tokyo. To his father, who was an experienced merchant, Kenji's plan to start a jewellery shop appeared naive and optimistic. Thus, Masajirō refused his son's proposal and ordered him to return home and bring Toshi with him.

Kenji's reluctance to succeed in the family occupation stemmed chiefly from his religious beliefs. As mentioned earlier, Kenji had joined Kokuchūkai while in Morioka Higher School. The Nichiren sect is perhaps the only Buddhist sect in Japan which is extremely "militant" in its attempt to proselytise non-believers. Consequently, Kenji tried hard to convert his family members to his sect. His sister, Toshi, was the first to follow Kenji into the sect, but his father, Masajirō, was the most reluctant. Father and

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23 Later, Japan Women's University (Nihon joshi daigaku).
son had fierce arguments over the superior merits of their respective beliefs.

Conflicts between them had actually started much earlier, about the time Kenji graduated from Morioka Middle School. In one of the tanka Kenji wrote when he was hospitalized for the operation on his nose, we find the following:

Nenmaku no
akaki borokire
nodo ni burasagareri
kanashiki isakai o
chichi to mata suru

(2 1: 123)

At this time the issue of the arguments seems to have been whether Kenji should advance to higher school or not, a disagreement that had no relation to the argument over their beliefs. However, the source of much of their discord was religious, and Kenji did not want to succeed in his father's occupation primarily because he saw a contradiction and conflict between the business of pawnbroking and a sincere adherence to the Shin sect.

In general, Masajirō was a broad-minded man concerning religion. He supported a fellow, Christian resident of Hanamaki, Saitō Sōjirō (1861-1969), one of Uchimura Kanzō's disciples, for instance, when the townspeople persecuted Sōjirō. His tolerance for the beliefs of others did not mean that he lacked conviction towards his own beliefs, however. Thus the arguments between Kenji and Masajirō escalated daily as Kenji became increasingly frustrated with
tending his father's pawnshop. Kenji thought seriously of leaving the house
to go to the headquarters of Kokuchūkai in Tokyo, apparently as a means of
protesting against his father as well as escaping from an unbearable
situation.

He decided to leave suddenly on January 23, 1921. That day, while
tending the shop, Kenji was brooding over how he could carry out his plan to
leave home when a copy of the Lotus Sutra fell on his back from the raised
god shelf (kamidana, 神鏡台) behind him. It was 4:30 p.m., and the train
for Tokyo was to leave Hanamaki at 5:12. Kenji immediately cleaned his
hands and wrapped the sutra and other artifacts of his Nichiren faith in a
cloth, and, taking an umbrella with him, left the house unnoticed.

On arrival at Ueno Station the following morning, he went to the
Kokuchūkai's headquarters. The man who answered Kenji's call was
Takachio Chiyō (1883-1976), one of the high disciples of
Tanaka Chigaku. Takachio did not accept Kenji's offer of service right away
but suggested that Kenji settle down somewhere first. Kenji rented a small
room in Hongo and found a job at a small printing company near Tokyo
Imperial University. He worked there in the mornings and in the afternoons
joined in the missionary activities of the society through road-side
evangelism. At night he attended a series of lectures given by the same
society.

In February of the same year, Takachio Chiyō suggested to Kenji that
he propagate the teachings of Nichiren through literature. Thereupon Kenji
turned his tremendous energy to writing tales. It is said that he wrote at
the speed of 3,000 pages per month and that in the end, letters jumped out of the manuscript paper by themselves and bowed to him as he wrote.24

In the meantime, Kenji’s father was worrying about his son's financial condition and sent him money. Each time, Kenji returned it, writing on the unopened envelope, “Your kindness accepted with gratitude.” Kenji also wrote to his father, saying, “As soon as you are converted I shall return home.” His mother, in a more passive show of concern, set out meals for him in his absence and prayed for her son’s safety. At this time Kenji was practicing vegetarianism and frequently ate only boiled potatoes and water at his two daily meals.

Once again, Toshi, who was teaching at Hanamaki Girls' High School, became ill. Because of her grave condition Kenji was called home from Tokyo in September 1921. He returned to Hanamaki with a big trunk full of the manuscripts written during his eight-month stay in Tokyo. When Seiroku, Kenji’s younger brother, met Kenji at the station, Kenji pointed to the trunk and said, “This is what I created instead of begetting a child in Tokyo.”25

Kenji continued writing tales even while looking after Toshi. These tales include “Electric Poles in the Moonlit Night” (Tsukiyo no denshin bashira, 月夜の でんしんばしら), “The First Deer Dance” (Shishiodori no hajimari, 鹿踊りの はじまり), “Acorns and Wildcat” (Donguri to Yamaneko, どんぐりと まんぞく), and “The Restaurant of Many Orders” (Chūmon no おし りょうりてん, 注文の多い 料理店). Together with the stories he brought back from Tokyo in the trunk, Kenji published these

25 Z 14: 541.
himself in 1924 as a collection of "children's stories" titled *The Restaurant of Many Orders*. This was the only collection of Kenji's tales to be published while he was still alive.

III. Hanamaki Agricultural School Period: 1921-1926

In December 1921, Kenji was offered a position as teacher at Hienuki (later Hanamaki) Agricultural School. This was a good opportunity for both Kenji and his father to solve their conflicts over the family business. Kenji immediately accepted the offer, though his sisters were a bit skeptical as to whether their brother could really teach. However, it seems that Kenji proved to be a natural teacher, and the next four years and four months at this school were the happiest and most peaceful of Kenji's life.26

Here, Kenji could express as well as develop his talents and skills—both in his specialty as an agronomist and as an artist. The broad-minded principal, Hatayama Ei'ichirō, allowed Kenji much freedom to choose his own teaching methods. Kenji taught chemistry, algebra, English, soil science, and fertilizers, along with a practicum in the rice paddies. His teaching methods were rather unusual. One of his students later said:

In the beginning we were really puzzled and at a loss. He [Kenji] did nothing from the textbooks. So the students realized that they had to write; i.e., to take notes. "How far did we go last time?" he would ask us. When we told him how far we had

26 See, for instance, Kikuchi Chūji, "Hanamaki nōgakkō no kyōshi seikatsu nitsute" (On Kenji's life while he was a teacher at Hanamaki Agricultural School) in *Miyazawa Kenji kenkyū*, ed. Kusano Shimpei, p. 265.
gone he would say, "Oh, is that right?" and start teaching without the textbook.

We were astounded by that.  

According to Shirafuji Jishū 白藤慈秀, one of Kenji's colleagues, Kenji categorized his teaching material into three ranks: 1) not very important, 2) important, 3) essential. He took most pains with the material in this last category, explaining it in great detail. "This required," says Shirafuji, "a tremendous amount of talent and ability." It is also interesting to note that Kenji told his students that they should not study too hard and that those who attained a 75 percent average did not need to study harder because getting higher marks was useless. Those who attained less than 75 percent were told to strive to attain that level. The students also attested to the strange behavior of their teacher:

He swam around in the pampas grass in moonlight, danced with birds and flowers, danced frantic dances to recorded music and, while walking hastily, jotted down something in his notebook with a pencil hung from around his neck.

Horio Seishi also provides the following recollection of Kenji, written by Shirafuji Jishū:

For example, Kenji used to bring records to school at night and, playing them, would dance to the music. But none of his dances had organization and order, and no two dances were the same. At first glance, they looked like a mad man's dances. Asked, "What do your dances mean?" Kenji would answer, "No two pieces

\begin{itemize}
\item \cite{27} Horio, Nempu, p. 121.
\item \cite{28} Horio, p. 121.
\item \cite{29} Horio, p. 122.
\item \cite{30} Horio, p. 123.
\end{itemize}
of music are identical and so neither are dances. My dances are for attaining the sense of rhythm in my body, and this rhythm becomes the rhythm of writing poems."

One night the field of barley in front of the school shone in the moonlight. Seeing this, Kenji suddenly jumped into the field and began to "swim" to the ridge. Reaching the other end of the ridge, Kenji returned and then moved on to the next ridge. In this way he kept swimming for nearly an hour and finally came back saying, "Gee, I'm tired! I've swum in the silvery waves and I feel quite refreshed."31

At times Kenji's eccentricities went a bit too far, as when he went in and out of the teachers' room by the window and was admonished by the principal, or when he ate apples while walking down the street in Hanamaki and made his embarrassed colleague do the same, or when he walked with his dirty rubber shoes down the corridor just cleaned by the students. However, on the whole, Kenji's warm and kindly personality was extremely well accepted by his colleagues and by the students.

Because the number of staff was small, teachers had an unusually high frequency of night duty—once every four days—compared to today's standard of once in a month or two, and the teachers considered it a nuisance. Kenji, on the pretext that he was tired after working in the school's fields and did not feel like returning home, would substitute for other teachers on night duty. His colleagues more than welcomed Kenji's offer. Kenji would eat supper with the dormitory students and then write poems and stories. When one of his colleagues had to resign his teaching post because of tuberculosis and so suffered financially, Kenji gave the man

31 Horio., p. 123.
one third of his salary every month for three years until the death of the colleague.

The same can be said of Kenji's kindness towards his students. He not only paid the school excursion fees for students of poor families, but he also took a student who had been caught thieving and helped to rehabilitate him by finding him a job in Hokkaidō. In a word, Kenji treated his students almost as if they were his own children or younger brothers.

His progressive approach to teaching mentioned earlier was another reason for Kenji's popularity among students and colleagues. Besides the regular subjects, Kenji freely introduced his students to various art forms such as literature, plays, music and fine arts. When Kenji taught the practicum, he deliberately made a seed bed or two which did not receive enough fertilizer and then, together with his students, he added the fertilizer. They then stretched themselves on the grass and watched the changes in the rice seedling as it quickly assimilated the fertilizer. As they lay in the bright sunlight, observing the rice plants revive and breathe in the green winds of May, Kenji would read his own poems to the students.

At another time, after a certain amount of field work, Kenji summoned all the students from the rice paddies and made them sit on the grass and watch as he danced his "dance," falling down on the wet grass and stretching his arms into the air with a shout. This was strangely attractive and entertaining to the students.\(^{32}\)

Although shy and introverted, Kenji was at the same time bright and humorous. Because of his infinite kindness to others, he also seemed to embody the ideal of the Bodhisattva. Whenever and wherever Kenji was

\(^{32}\) Mori, Shōzō, p. 70.
present, the atmosphere suddenly became bright and lively. In one other episode Kenji amused his colleagues by mimicking the gait of the new principal who, unlike his predecessor Hatayama Ei'ichiro, was so authoritarian that he repelled the teachers. In the midst of his clowning the principal came in and stood behind Kenji, who kept on mimicking until he finally realized the situation from the facial expressions of his colleagues.

The record does not describe in detail how Kenji dealt with this embarrassment, but this anecdote, together with the ones mentioned above, indicate that Kenji also had considerable theatrical and satirical talents.

Indeed, Kenji wrote four plays, one of them a comic operetta, for his students and staged them at the celebration which commemorated the completion of the newly built school. The titles of these plays are, Plant Doctor (Shokubutsu ishi, 植物医師), The Polan Square (Poran no hiroba, ポランの広場), Starvation Barracks (Kiga jin'e1, 餓餓 阵营), and The Night of Taneyama Highland (Taneyama ga hara no yoru, 桃山ヶ原の夜). Although the plays themselves are not exceptionally interesting or amusing, the attractive titles indicate Kenji's talent in humorous literature. Of the four plays The Night of Taneyama Highland is the most fantastic and suggests the author's mystic temperament, one of the most important elements of his literature.

It is interesting to note that his mysticism is often mingled with folkloric elements, as seen in the song sung by one of the tree spirits in the play:

Taneyama ga hara no kumo no naka de The grass I cut in the clouds of Taneyama

33 Mori., p. 99.
Where did I put it? I forgot. It rains.
The tall pampas grass and thistles of
Taneyama Highland.
I cut them and forgot where I put them.
It rains. It rains.
The grass I cut in the mist of Taneyama Highland
Was there some wasure grass in it? I forgot. It rains.
The sheathes of grass I left forgotten on
Taneyama Highland
Are getting wet, getting wet somewhere on a ridge.
The grass left on the ridge of Taneyama Highland
Is carried away by the clouds and disappears, disappears.
When you chase after the clouds above the long ridge of Taneyama Highland, they disappear, disappear.

The songs and music written and composed by Kenji for his students exhibit the same character. The above song for which Kenji composed music is one example. Although Kenji was an avid fan of Western classical music
and had a large collection of recorded music by Beethoven, Bach and other composers, the rhythm and melody of his music, though his own, call to mind the indigenous Buddhist pilgrim’s songs (goeika, 御詠歌) and Buddhist sutra chanting (dokyo, 説経).34

Another example of a song written by Kenji in this period is the school anthem of the Hanamaki Agricultural School (Hanamaki nōgakko seishinka, 花巻農学校精神歌). In its noble ambition, expressed through refined diction which involves mineral and cosmic imagery, this song achieves a high level of artistry. It was set to music by Kawamura Gorō 川村悟郎, who along with Kenji had studied at the Morioka Higher School of Agriculture and Forestry. Unlike Kenji’s music, Kawamura’s reflects a Western flavour. This arrangement matches the highflown idealism in Kenji’s works with the result that the school anthem easily surpasses most of the school anthems in Japan.35 It is indeed an interesting contrast to see that this idealistic song was sung by the students of a small agricultural school, one which had its classrooms in a straw-thatched building originally built for teaching sericulture and which was nicknamed “Mulberry University” (Kuwakko daigaku, 桑子大学) by the townspeople and the students of the nearby Hanamaki Girls’ Highschool.

In conjunction with Kenji’s love of occidental music Fujiwara Katōji’s (1896- ) name should also be mentioned. Fujiwara Katōji was a teacher of music at Hanamaki Girls’ High School. Fujiwara also

34 Itaya Eiki 板谷英紀, Kenji gensōkyoku 賢治幻想曲 (Kenji fantasia) (Renga Shobō Shinsha, 1982), pp. 17-19.

35 One critic sees the influence of hymns on this anthem. See Makabe, "Miyazawa Kenji to sono jidei," p. 194.
wrote poems. One that he sent to a local newspaper was published and caught Kenji's attention. Kenji visited Fujiwara one day in October 1922, and the two young teachers became lifelong friends. Fujiwara taught Kenji music theory, and in return Kenji taught Fujiwara German.

Of their various activities, their mutual appreciation of recorded music concerns us here. Kenji had a keen sense of synaesthesia, and so the music he heard immediately turned into colours and vision. There is a passage from one of Beethoven's piano concertos that apparently frightened Kenji out of his wits. He tells us that when he heard that part of the music, he could see red and blue demons come rushing towards him with wicked weapons in their hands.

Satō Takafusa, in his *Miyazawa Kenji*, relates an amusing episode which took place shortly after Kenji's resignation from his teaching post in 1926.36 One autumn evening in 1927, Kenji and Fujiwara gave a record concert for the music lovers of the town. When they played "La Mer" by Debussy, Kenji suggested that they make comments about the piece while it was being played. Fujiwara protested. He argued that this was an improper way to appreciate music because to make comments on a piece limited the interpretations which otherwise would vary with the listener. To this Kenji said, "Okay, then. You don't have to do it. I will do it." And as the record began, Kenji started his comments:

"It is a beautiful starlit night. A fisherman has just rowed his boat out onto the calm sea. He now dives into the sea and goes deeper and deeper down to the bottom. Now he has caught an octopus. He hurriedly comes up and throws the creature into his boat...."

36 Satō, pp. 202-204.
As soon as the record ended, Fujiwara stood up, kicked over his seat and shouted at Kenji angrily, "Kenji, you've made a nasty comment! I'm going home. This is the end of our friendship!" Then he rushed out. The audience was astounded. What they did not know was that Fujiwara's students had nicknamed him "the octopus," thinking that he looked like an octopus whenever he became excited playing the piano. Some people went up to Kenji, saying, "Is it okay, then, Kenji?" Kenji calmly answered, "Oh, it's okay. Don't worry about it. This is the third or fourth time that Fujiwara has declared the end of our friendship in my presence." Indeed, Kenji and Fujiwara stayed very good friends until Kenji died. Kenji even found a wife for Fujiwara and acted as the "go-between" at their marriage ceremony.

Kenji's sensitivity towards fine arts was no less keen than his sensitivity towards music. Although he received no professional training in drawing and painting, several water colour paintings left by Kenji testify to his visionary temperament. All his pictures are of non-mimetic nature: some of them are surrealistic and some abstract. We can see a strong affinity between Kenji's pictures and his literature in the quality of his visionary sensitivity. Many of his fantasy-like writings overflow with the imagery of vivid colours. See, for example, "A Night in the Oak Grove" (Kashiwa bayashi no yoru, かしわばやしの夜) and "The Fourth Day of the Month of Daffodils."

Kenji also took an interest in Japanese woodblock prints (ukiyo e,浮世絵) and owned a good collection, many of which were pornographic. He brought them to school to show his colleagues, who were surprised not so much by the pictures themselves as by the fact that Kenji, whom they thought to be quite "square" and puritanical concerning sex, had such an aspect to his nature. Although Kenji remained celibate throughout his life,
believing that sexual energy must be sublimated for his artistic achievement and for serving others, he was by no means ignorant of sex. He owned and read the seven volumes of *Studies of the Psychology of Sex* (1897-1928) by Havelock Ellis (1859-1939), the then-famous English medical doctor and psychologist, and Kenji was also familiar with Freudian psychology.

In his literature, however, Kenji seldom dealt with sex as such. This does not mean that he had no ability to deal with it or was not interested in sex. On the contrary, his sexual drive was so strong that, as he consciously tried to suppress it, it consequently found expression under the guise of seemingly asexual images in his literature. We shall discuss the issue of sex in Kenji's literature in more detail later on. Here suffice it to say that among his prose works written around 1918, there is a very short story entitled "The Sixteenth Day" (Jūroku nichi, 十六日) in which Kenji displays unusual understanding in discerning and presenting the subtle psychology of a young country wife whose sexual desires waver between her uneducated husband and a young university student from the city.

Kenji was by no means a misogynist, but there are some elements in his writings that may be interpreted as indications of a fear of sex and hence a sense of alienation from women. Around 1919, at the age of twenty three, Kenji wrote a passage in prose-poem style under the title "Woman"
(Onna,女), in which we glimpse Kenji’s fear of sex and women. It reads as follows:

The edge of the sky goes sinking in, and only the farthest end of the road edged with pines burns a cheerless dark amber.

In the evening on the outskirts of the town a huge cypress is frantically swaying in the winds. It is the seaweed of the atmosphere—the cypress hairs.

In the dark house a lamp is lighted yellow and vague, while a woman with a crimson face is hastily raking rice into her mouth all alone.

She is raking in. The grey of the rice starch.

The green of the tree top that was dragged out of the darkness by the lamplight.

It looks horribly green.

It looks horribly deep.

It looks horribly swaying. (Z 11: 262)

Kenji wrote a great deal while he was a teacher at the Hanamaki Agricultural School. Except for the six-month silence after the death of his

beloved sister in 1922, Kenji wrote stories, poems, plays and songs one after another. Many of his important works were created in this period. In 1924 Kenji even published, though privately, two books: one a collection of his poems, *Spring and Asura* (Haru to shura, 春と修羅), the other a collection of his tales, *The Restaurant of Many Orders* mentioned earlier. Neither of them sold well. No one, except perhaps a handful of literary men, paid attention to them. Among the few exceptions, Tsuji Jun (1885-1944) was the first literary man of some importance to praise *Spring and Asura* profusely in his essay "Random Words From the Cave of Idle Sleep" (Damindō mōgo, 悠眠洞客語) published in *The Yomiuri* (Yomiuri Shinbun, 読売新聞) on July 23, 1924. The poet, Sato Sonosuke (1890-1942) was another who recognized Kenji's talent in *Spring and Asura* and applauded it in the December issue of the periodical *The Japanese Poets* (Nihon shi jin, 日本詩人). Kusano Shimpei (1903- ) read *Spring and Asura* in China in the spring of 1926 and tells us how deeply it moved him. From that time on, Kusano became one of the major champions of Kenji and energetically introduced him to the world, publishing Kenji's poems in his magazine *Gong* (Dora, 銘録) while Kenji was alive, and editing the collected works of Kenji (1934-1935) shortly after his death.

*The Restaurant of Many Orders* received an even worse response than *Spring and Asura*. In fact it was often mistaken for a book on cooking. Suzuki Miekichi (鈴木三重吉, 1882-1936), the founder of *A Red Bird* (Akaitori, 赤い鳥), did not approve of Kenji's stories. *A Red Bird*, a monthly magazine specializing in children's stories, lasted from 1919 until 1929 and published stories contributed by various well-known writers such as Shimazaki Tōson (島崎藤村, 1872-1943), Tokuda Shūsei (徳田秋声, 1871-1943), Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (谷崎潤一郎, 1886-1965) and
Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892–1927). The one obvious and perhaps most important difference between Kenji’s tales and those written by these well-established writers in Tokyo was that, while the latter tended to condescend and even “force” themselves in order to write for children, Kenji found the writing of tales a very natural form of self-expression. Nature and the world in Kenji’s literature display extremely fresh colours and vibrate with the joy of life as if captured by the innocent and primordial sensitivity of a child or a primitive man.

Kenji’s days in the Hanamaki Agricultural School were on the whole peaceful and happy except for two occasions. One was his sister, Toshi’s, death on November 27, 1923, and the other was his concern for his students after their graduation.

Toshi’s death upset Kenji tremendously and caused him to write the series of famous elegies: “Last Farewell” (Eiketsu no asa, 永訣の朝), “Pine Needles” (Matsu no hari, 松の針) and “Voiceless Grief” (Musei dōkoku, 無声嘆哭), all of which, together with other elegies written later on, he included in the first volume of Spring and Asura. Brother and sister were so close to one another that one critic even suspects an incestuous relationship.38 The magnitude of the grief Kenji experienced at Toshi’s death can also be surmised from his six-month literary silence immediately following it in the midst of what was otherwise Kenji’s most creative period.

Another dark element that made Kenji unhappy in this period was the refusal by many of his students to return to farming after graduation.

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38 Ao e Shunjiro 青江舜二郎, Miyazawa Kenji 宮沢賢治 (Kodansha, 1974), pp. 16–27.
Instead they wanted to receive a higher education to become white-collar office workers or teachers. Kenji consistently urged his students that they should return home and farm after graduation. Since the students ignored this advice, Kenji believed that what he was doing at school was of no value to the farmers and peasants. On the contrary, he thought it even harmed them. What was more, Kenji himself was one of those white-collar salaried men. He was too honest to deceive himself about this contradiction.

IV. The Period of the Rasu Farmers' Association (Rasu chijin kyōkai): 1926-1928

On March 31, 1926 at the age of thirty, after teaching for four years and four months, Kenji resigned his teaching post and went to live alone in a small house built by his grandfather on the outskirts of Hanamaki. His father by this time had decided to change the family business from that of pawnbroker to hardware dealer, and Kenji's younger brother Seiroku was to succeed in it. Thus Kenji was liberated from the burden of tending his father's business. In the cottage on the outskirts of Hanamaki, Kenji's grandfather, Kisuke 吉助 (1840-1917), had spent his later years. Toshi also had stayed in this house for a few months before she had been moved to her parents' home in the city to die. The place where the house stood was called Sakura and was situated about two kilometers southeast of Kenji's parents' house. Before Kenji moved in, he had the cottage renovated so that it contained a large plank-floored room where he could hold gatherings of the peasants and farmers from the neighbourhood.

He had to wait until the fall when the farmers had more free time before he could start to hold regular meetings to teach the farmers agronomy as well as art theory. In the meantime, Kenji cultivated the wild
wasteland near his house, hoping to grow flowers and vegetables, while at night he wrote poems and tales, gave record concerts for the young farmers, many of whom were his former students, and read aloud tales written both by himself and by others such as Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm. Kenji also organised a small chamber orchestra consisting of young farmers. He provided most of the instruments, but early the following year, before the group had attained many skills, Kenji had to disband the orchestra for a reason we will touch on shortly.

Although Kenji intended to become a farmer, he did not grow rice on the land he cultivated. One reason might have been that, unlike cultivating flowers and vegetables, growing rice demanded too much labour, labour which Kenji could not perform alone. Another possible reason was that Kenji could not obtain water, the vital ingredient for rice growing. In spite of all this, there still remains the question: Why did Kenji not grow dry land rice which requires less labour than the regular rice or why did he not grow other kinds of grain such as wheat and barley?

That Kenji seemed to have been indifferent to this staple food seems to be closely related to his general indifference to his diet throughout his life and, more particularly, during this period. In order to save trouble, Kenji cooked rice for three meals at one time and kept it hanging in a well. In winter he ate frozen rice, sprinkling salt on it. Once a neighbourhood boy came to Kenji's cottage, and hearing that Kenji liked small, pickled eggplants and usually ate four or five of them at one meal, said that at his house he was not allowed to eat more than two. After that Kenji decided that he would eat not more than two eggplants at one time.39 Kenji's

39 Setō, p. 194.
mother, worried about her son's health, often cooked nutritious food and had her daughters take it to Kenji. Each time Kenji so sternly rejected it that his sisters returned home in tears.

Kenji's unusual indifference to, or rather almost fanatic abhorrence of food can be explained at least on the surface: eating coarse food was his way of attempting to identify with the poor farmers and peasants. Confronted with the ironic contradiction between this and his indifference to rice growing—the very symbol of the Japanese farmer—we cannot help suspecting that his attitude towards food and farming may have deeper roots that are related to the quality and nature of his literature. This is not the place to pursue this idea further. Here we can simply point out that the deeper root we suspect to underlie the various aspects of his life and literature is a peculiar type of dualism, which he also seemed to have intuited as an essential characteristic of the universe as a whole.

Ito Katsumi 伊藤克己, one of his neighbours and a member of his orchestra, recalls Kenji's lifestyle at this time as follows:

Soon we began to see Sensei [Kenji] in khaki working clothes and a straw raincoat walking around on his fields near Kitakami River or on the river bed of Shishihana. In those days Sensei, like others, went out to his fields to work early in the morning, but at around 10:30 he would return to his cottage and seemed to be reading or writing. After lunch he would work in the fields until around four o'clock but would return home early to read again. The villagers thought that Sensei did this kind of thing just for fun, and no one understood him.

In fact, Sensei's life in those days was exactly like that of an ascetic. We often witnessed him washing himself with cold water by the side of the well at around eleven every night, or we suddenly heard him chanting sutras around one
o'clock in the morning or playing the organ and singing to himself. My grandmother was famous for her piety in Sakura, and she soon became good friends with Sensei; she would teach him how to use a hoe or would talk with him about something for a long time. Whenever we made rice cakes or dumplings at our house, my grandmother put some in a box and made me take it to Sensei.40

While Kenji spent his days at Sakura in this way, he prepared for the formal gathering of the Rasu Farmers' Association, (Rasu chijin kyōkai, 羅須地人協会).41 He intended to hold the first meeting on August 23 (July 16 by the old calendar) of that year when even the busy farmers and peasants were said to take the day off for the Bon Festival. However, it seems that Kenji actually held the first gathering of "Rasu Farmers' Association" on November 26, 1926.42 At this meeting Kenji introduced his famous "Notes for the Outline of Agrarian Art" (Nōmin geijutsu gairon kōyō, 農民芸術概論綱要) as well as scientific agriculture to the farmers. What Kenji advocates in the notes is the abolition of professionalism in art and religion in order to elevate agrarian life to the level of art and religion:

Now religionists and artists are those who monopolize and sell truth, good and beauty. We cannot afford to buy them, nor do we need such art and religion. We now have to go along the right path and create our own beauty. We must refine our

40 Gifu Sei'ichi 嘉府成一, Miyazawa Kenji: sono ai to sei 宮沢賢治の愛と性 (Miyazawa Kenji: his love and sex) (Geijutsuseikatsusha, 1972), pp. 190-191.
41 "Rasu Farmers' Association" is Sarah Strong's translation for "Rasu chijin kyōkai." See Strong, p. 93. It seems that Kenji did not mean anything particularly by the name Rasu 羅須. See Sakai, p. 273.
42 Sakai, p. 273.
grey labour in the furnace of art. Here is our constant, pure and joyous creation.

(Z 12-A: 10)

At the basis of this assertion lies the idea that the whole universe is one gigantic process of creation: "The new age is moving towards the state where the whole world becomes one consciousness, one creature. To live correctly and strongly means to become aware of the galaxy in one's self and to respond to this consciousness" (Z 12-A: 9). "Agrarian art," according to Kenji, "is a concrete expression of Cosmic Consciousness through the earth, man and personality" (Z 12-A: 11). In order to realize this potential to produce agrarian art, one must "First of all become, together with others, the shining modica of the universe and be scattered throughout the limitless sky" (Z 12-A: 15). Kenji called agrarian art the fourth dimensional art (Dai yojigen no geijutsu, 第四次元の芸術): "The huge stage of our life moves along the axis of time to form the imperishable four-dimensional art" (Z 12-A: 15).

It is doubtful how much the farmers understood Kenji's idealistic aspirations towards a higher life. Even now more cynical and "realistic" people shy away from his ideas on art, religion and life in general.

It is quite natural that one who pursued such ideals would not easily be distracted by what he would regard as "mundane affairs." Marriage was one of these affairs for Kenji. As is usual with any Japanese family, Kenji's parents were rather anxious to see their eldest son, already over thirty, get married and settle down with a steady job instead of seeing him waste time and energy on writing nonsense and on fruitless activities among the farmers and peasants. It is said that when Yasu, one of his aunts, at
his parents' will, came to Sakura and tried to persuade him to marry. Kenji held his cello tenderly in his arms and said, "This is my wife."  

Such being his attitude towards marriage and woman, Kenji must have been dismayed when a young woman appeared and made advances towards him. Her name was Takase Tsuyu 高瀬露, a primary school teacher and a Christian, who happened to hear Kenji when he lectured to the farmers at her school. Soon after Kenji started his activities with the neighbourhood farmers in Sakura, this woman came to join their gatherings. At first Kenji welcomed her participation, thinking that she could tidy up his house or act the woman's role in a play he planned to stage. It seems she had other plans—to make Kenji her future husband. She began to visit him three or four times a day, sometimes very early in the morning when Kenji was still sleeping. This so upset Kenji that he began to avoid her by thinking up various tricks and excuses such as pretending to be out, or by telling her that he had leprosy and showing her his soot-smeared face. Since she was a Christian, leprosy did not deter her, but Kenji's persistent messages of rejection finally got through and she stopped coming to his cottage. Instead, she now began to slander him. Kenji appears to have rejected this woman partially out of fear that he would disillusion the neighbourhood farmers for whom he was a kind of saint figure—an ideal to which Kenji himself strived. At the same time, one suspects that this woman did not after all meet Kenji's image of an ideal woman, for later Kenji came across a woman whom he seriously thought of marrying.

Be that as it may, it was obvious that Kenji was extremely sensitive about the feelings of the neighbourhood farmers and peasants. There were

43 Mori, p. 171.
at least two major reasons for this. Firstly, he was the eldest son of a wealthy merchant and landowner in the town but an outsider in Sakura. Secondly, the Nichiren sect, of which he was an ardent follower, was the arch enemy of a secret Shin sect of Buddhism (hiji nembutsu shū, 常純念仏宗) which was dominant in the region in which Kenji lived. One of the followers of this secret Shin sect whom Kenji named Kuma in his poem used this incident of the woman Takase Tsuyu to spread malicious rumours about Kenji. The cart which Kenji purchased to carry his vegetables and flowers to the town for sale was another target of the peasants' envy and ill-will. What was worse, most of the vegetables and flowers Kenji grew were quite new and strange to the peasants.

Thus there were good reasons that Kenji had to be cautious about the feelings of the people around him. It was under such circumstances that the Iwate Daily (Iwate Nippō, 岩手日報), a local newspaper, ran an article on Kenji's activities at Sakura. The article itself was quite favourable towards Kenji, but it drew the attention of the police to his meetings. In those days, as militarism grew stronger and stronger, the government was very sensitive about public gatherings. Because of the newspaper article Kenji was summoned by the police to clarify the nature of his activities. Soon after this Kenji disbanded his orchestra and stopped other activities of the Rasu Farmers' Association. He feared that his activities would

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44 See for example, Tobita Saburō 飛田 三郎, “Hiryō sekkei to rasuchijin kyōkai (kikigaki)” 肥料設計と羅須地人協会 (聞書) (Fertilizer planning and Rasu Farmers' Association: an interview) in Miyazawa Kenji kenkyū, pp. 275-287.
mistakenly be considered Communist or Socialist. They thus could ultimately cause trouble to the participants of his gatherings.\textsuperscript{45}

After disbanding the regular gatherings at his house, Kenji switched his activities to advising the farmers and peasants on fertilizer for the rice paddies. On the whole his free advice brought about an increase in crops. Sometimes when the peasants' rice plants were threatened by strong winds and rain, Kenji would go out into the storm and desperately run around the rice fields apologizing profusely to the owners one by one, promising that he would compensate for the loss. In those days scientific agriculture was not as effective as it is today, and there was no way of knowing whether it was because of Kenji or nature that the rice plants were ruined, but all the same Kenji assumed complete responsibility.

In June 1928, about one year after he started to help the farmers plan to use fertilizer, Kenji made an 18-day trip to Tokyo and Izu Ōshima, an island about 80 kilometers south of Tokyo. In Izu Ōshima, Kenji visited Itō Nanao and his sister Chie. Nanao and Chie had come from Mizusawa, a small town about 30 kilometers south of Hanamaki. Several months prior to Kenji's trip, they had ostensibly sought Kenji's advice about a horticultural school Nanao planned to open on Izu Ōshima. Their real aim had been to seek out Kenji as a prospective husband for Chie. Kenji seemed to have liked the brother and sister, for he promised to visit them on their island later to give them further advice. Gifu Sei'ichi gives two more reasons for Kenji's trip to the island: since the newspaper had publicized

\textsuperscript{45} Sakai Tadaichi, "Kenji nempu no mondai ten," Kōkō bunka (Problems in Kenji's chronology), 23, No. 2 (1978), 175. See also Gifu, Ai to sei, p. 268.
the Rasu Farmers' Association, Kenji had decided to switch his activities to advice on fertilizer and other farming matters. He considered Nanao to be in this category, and by leaving Hanamaki temporarily, he thought he would escape from, and thus discourage, the persistent passes of the primary school teacher.\(^{46}\)

Nanao and Chie welcomed Kenji as an important guest to the island, but their plan to marry Chie to Kenji did not progress at all. This was simply due to Kenji's indecision. Judging from the poems he wrote during the trip and from what he said to his friend, Fujiwara Katōji, later,\(^{47}\) Kenji seems to have predicted the ultimate futility of their relationship, as we can see in the following passage from one of the poems he wrote on his trip to the island:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Minami no umi no} & \quad \text{Out of the strong heat and} \\
\text{minamino umi no} & \quad \text{thick vapour} \\
\text{hageshii nekki to kemuri no naka kara} & \quad \text{Of the south, south sea} \\
\text{hirakanu mama ni ssezae kaori} & \quad \text{Sprouts a huge bud of a flower} \\
\text{tsui ni hirakazu mizu ni koboreru} & \quad \text{Fragrant and fresh without opening} \\
\text{Okina hana no tsubomi ga aru} & \quad \text{And finally, without blooming, it} \\
\text{(Z 6: 218)} & \quad \text{Falls down onto the water.}
\end{align*}
\]

It looks as if Kenji had somehow known what was in store for him before he left Hanamaki, for soon after his return from the fatiguing trip, he fell ill, and until his death five years later never completely recovered. That summer the weather was unstable, and Kenji exerted himself both mentally

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\(^{46}\) Gifu, pp. 268-269.

\(^{47}\) Mori, pp. 176-177.
and physically with the inspection of rice paddies for which he planned fertilizer. One stormy day in August he finally broke down with acute pneumonia and had to return to his parents home in the city. His ambition to become one of the farmers and serve them was thus halted two years after he began his activities at Sakura.

V. Tōhoku Rock-Crushing Factory and Kenji’s Death: 1928-1933

Kenji suffered from high fever for forty days after he returned to his parents’ home. In September, he recovered enough to write letters to his friends and acquaintances, reporting about his illness and apologizing for his silence.

In early spring of the following year, a man by the name of Suzuki Tōzō 鈴木東蔵 visited Kenji’s bedside. He was the owner of a small rock-crushing factory named the Tōhoku Rock-Crushing Factory (Tōhoku saiseki kōjō, 東北碎石工場) in a small town called Matsukawa about 45 kilometers southeast of Hanamaki. His factory produced limestone, which can be used, in its powdered form, to improve the quality of farm soil. Suzuki heard that Kenji highly recommended limestone and came to Kenji’s house to visit him. Kenji seems to have liked Suzuki and passed on various pieces of scientific information concerning the use of limestone. This was the beginning of the relationship between Kenji and the Tōhoku Rock-Crushing Factory. From then until the end of the year, Suzuki wrote a number of letters to Kenji to consult him on the advertisement of his factory’s products. In the meantime, Kenji gradually recovered and by early the following year, (1930), he could leave his bed to work on his poems and
tales and to tend his flower beds where he grew various exotic flowers from abroad.

Around April Suzuki came to visit Kenji again, this time to consult him about synthetic fertilizer. The more Kenji knew about the nature of the factory and its owner, the more sympathetic towards them he became. In September Kenji wrote to Suzuki to say that he would like to work in his factory if Suzuki wanted him.

Early the following year, Kenji felt that he had recovered almost completely, and so he formally became an engineer and salesman for Suzuki. It was also agreed that Kenji’s father would invest capital for the factory, which was suffering from chronic financial difficulty. Once he became its employee, Kenji dedicated everything he had to help the company avoid bankruptcy. Kenji busily travelled as a salesman, eagerly giving Suzuki advice for improving the quality of the products.

On one of his sales trips, Kenji visited Mori Sōichi, a friend in Morioka, and shocked him by saying, “My continence did not bear any fruit after all. I became ill because of my abstinence” and “Although I practiced it for the utilitarian purpose that I might gain some good profit out of it, it was totally useless.”

We can sense that his illness greatly shocked him and he was beginning to doubt whether he could be super-human. In a letter to one of his former students written about one year earlier than this confession to Mori, Kenji says:

I felt most confident and thriving during the four years at the agricultural school. Towards the end of that time, I became quite arrogant depending on my small talent. I regret it, but it is now too late. For me those days were the zenith of my

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48 Mori, pp. 177-178; and Sato pp. 242-244.
life. I now only wish to find a new way to proceed so that I can return even in a small way the great favours bestowed upon me by people. \( Z \ 13: 273 \)

To work for the rock-crushing factory, no doubt, was one of the ways for Kenji to carry out this desire. In a letter to Kudō Tō'ichi 工藤藤一, an engineer acquaintance, Kenji writes about his new work:

The owner [Suzuki Tōzō] of the factory is a rather honest and straightforward man who has written a few small books on a self-governing community, and he does not seek undue profits, all of which agrees with my temperament. I, for my part, with no desire for a family, will be quite content if I can earn a regular monthly salary of 50 yen. \(^{49}\) Then I shall consider this beautiful prefecture, Iwate, as my own garden and at night will play the cello a little bit, write nonsensical poems and read books. When, in the near future, the prices of commodities perhaps rise with a concomitant rise in the price of limestone, we will have to worry only about the increase in the labourers' salaries and will be able to keep the price of our products at today's price level. This is my only expectation at present. \( Z \ 13: 309-311 \)

But Kenji's life during this period was far from the idyll described in this letter. It seems to have been a feature of his nature to devote himself wholeheartedly to one thing once he set his mind on it. Just as with the Rasu Farmers' Association when he worked at Sakura for the farmers, Kenji continued to push himself in all directions as a salesman to rescue the small factory from bankruptcy. Kenji took to his bed with high fevers a number of times in the process, but he would not stop. Owing to his

\(^{49}\) Kenji's monthly salary when he resigned from his teaching post at Hanamaki Agricultural School was 130 yen.
energetic devotion, the factory sales greatly increased, so much so that production could not meet the demand.

In September of 1931, Kenji decided on a sales trip to Tokyo and the Kansai area. He wanted to develop new markets in those areas for decorative bricks, a product Kenji had invented to sell during the winter when the farmers did not need limestone products. He packed 40 kilograms of brick samples in the big trunk he had brought back from Tokyo when his sister Toshi became ill ten years before. On the day of his departure (September 19), all the family members tried to dissuade Kenji from going because he had not completely recovered from his illness. In particular his mother Ichi, with tears in her eyes, implored her son not to go, but Kenji would not listen to her. He felt he carried the future of the factory on his shoulders.

On his way to Tokyo, Kenji stopped by Sendai, where he attended to other sales business and spent the night. At the inn, the guests next door held a drinking party and made merry until late at night, but since Kenji was not comfortable asserting his rights when others were causing a disturbance, he did not complain but slept poorly. He caught an early train the following morning and fell fast asleep. In the meantime, a passenger sitting across from him got off the train, leaving the window wide open. Cold winds blew directly onto the sleeping Kenji. When he left the train in Tokyo, he was running a high fever and as soon as he reached an inn he took to his bed.50

Kenji must have sensed from his past experiences that the unusually high fever might kill him. He wrote farewell letters addressed to his

50 Sakai, p. 341.
parents and siblings and kept them in the inside pocket of his trunk. He pretended to the people of the inn and his friend whom the inn people called to his bedside that he had the flu and would recover in a few days. The day following his arrival, Kenji wrote to Suzuki Tōzō that he had safely arrived in Tokyo, but he did not say a word about the illness. Perhaps Kenji simply could not disappoint Suzuki with the truth that he had become stranded as soon as he arrived in Tokyo.

Kenji did not notify his home for one week. Since his condition did not improve, the people in the inn finally called a doctor who suggested Kenji should return home for better treatment. The following day Kenji called home and said to his father, "Since I believe this is the end of my life, I want to hear your voice before I die ...."51 His father ordered Kenji to return home immediately and had an acquaintance by the name of Kobayashi Rokutarō 東林六太郎 buy a sleeping-car ticket to Hanamaki. Kobayashi and his wife escorted Kenji to Ueno station and put him on a night train.

Seiroku, Kenji's brother, went to the station to meet Kenji on his arrival. Kenji left the train not from a sleeping car, but from a third-class coach. He looked a little pale but had neatly dressed himself and even put on a tie. Seeing this, Seiroku thought that there was nothing particularly serious about his brother's condition, but as a precaution they took a taxi home. At home Kenji exchanged polite bows and greetings with each member of his family, momentarily relieving them. However, as soon as he went upstairs, saying, "Excuse me. I am a bit tired," he took to his bed and

did not leave it. Seiroku later found out that Kenji had risen a few stations earlier to dress himself neatly and tidily, pretending that his illness was not serious, so that he would not worry Seiroku and the other members of his family.52

Kenji was unable to leave his bed until around May of the following year. He recovered gradually, and by October of that year he could walk one hundred meters and sit up for one hour, but it was obvious that this time he would never completely recover. Even as he recuperated, Kenji continually received correspondence from Suzuki Tōzō of the Tōhoku Rock-Crushing Factory and politely answered with advice about advertisements and other matters. Kenji's relationship with this factory continued until one month before his death.

When he recovered a little, Kenji spent days planning fertilizers for farmers, studying mathematics, growing flowers and rewriting his tales and poems. He rewrote many of his old free-style poems from colloquial language into classical-style verse. Critics attribute this change of style to his two major illnesses which almost completely crushed his youthful ambition and pulled him down to an earthy, sordid reality. On November 3, 1931, Kenji wrote the untitled poem that starts with the line, "Unbending to rain" (ame ni mo makezu, 雨ニモマケズ), which is perhaps the most popular of his poems and yet considered by some critics his least successful and most powerless.53

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52 Satō, pp. 242–244.
53 See, for example, Nakamura Minoru 中村敏, Miyazawa Kenji 宮沢賢治 (Chikuma Shobō, 1975) pp. 193–218; and Ao'e, pp. 174–177.
Kenji contributed a number of poems and tales to various small magazines and periodicals such as *Children's Literature* (Jidō bungaku, 児童文学), and at the same time he rewrote his old tales. "The Night of the Milky Way Railroad," "Matasaburō, the Wind Child" (Kaze no matasaburō, 風の又三郎) and "Gorsh, the Cellist" (Serohiki no Gōshu, セロ弾きのゴーシュ) are some of the tales Kenji continued to revise almost till the last moment of his life.

Kenji's illnesses left him with an ineradicable and deep-rooted sense of failure. His letters to friends and former students expressed his chagrin and regrets about his past mistakes. He read a number of books on divination and changes and was attracted by their ideas about the vicissitudes of life. In a letter addressed to Mori Sōichi written on March 31, 1933, the year of his death, he said:

> I find the principle of  in divination to be interesting. When everyone thinks that the situation is kichi (lucky) it is already in rin (declining) and so to restore the kichi state is almost impossible. When people deplore kyō (unluckiness) they are already in kai (repentance), which promises tomorrow’s pure felicity. This is very scientific and I think it is a wonderful idea. I also think that those who stayed constantly in the state between kyō and kai would be quite free in their lives. (Z 13: 435)

The idea of *eki* (divination and changes) stated here shares something in common with the Buddhist notions of the cyclicity of time and life. This may be one reason that it attracted Kenji, but his remark that the state between kyō and kai is the best and ideal indicates the negative state

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54 Sakai, p. 355, p. 358.
of his mind. Six months later, ten days before his death, Kenji reiterates this idea in his letter to Yanagihara Shōetsu, his former student:

My miserable failure originates in my past mistakes. I threw myself into one of the streams of "arrogance," the great illness of our age in general. I believed my small talent, ability, social rank and family wealth to be something that belonged to myself from the start and despised my work and scorned my fellows, while thinking that from somewhere, someday someone would come to pull me up to the heights of society. Thus I lived only in illusions, and forgot to taste the perfect life of the present. In this way I spent several years in vain, and finally witnessed the disappearance of my mirage, which made me angry and indignant at others and society, which, in turn brought about the loss of my teachers and friends, and caused me anguish and ill health. (Z 13: 450-451)

From these self-torturing and self-condemning passages we can sense how Kenji's two illnesses shocked him into a new form of self-knowledge. Because of all this, he did not give in to physical defeat, for he often said that if his health allowed he wanted to carry out his old ambition in a different way.55 And even while he was in bed recuperating he continued his work. But he was never to realize completely his wish to start his work anew.

In spite of the tidal wave that hit Iwate prefecture in March of 1933, causing death and injury to 3,000 people (we are reminded of the earthquake and the tidal wave that attacked Iwate in the year of Kenji's birth), Iwate was enjoying an unusual bumper harvest in the fall of that year. Hanamaki's

annual Shintō fall festival, held for three days from September 17 to 19 to celebrate the good harvest, was particularly lively that year. Kenji would never miss a festival, and so he sat in front of his house every day to watch the people and the passage of the portable god house (mikoshi). On the last day of the festival, Kenji sat at the gate of his house until late at night in order to worship the returning shrine. The following morning a farmer came to consult Kenji about some fertilizer. After he had given the farmer kind advice, Kenji's condition suddenly worsened. He had acute pneumonia and thought he would die. That day he composed two tanka, his last:

Hōjūri  
hienuki no mikamo  
in e urete  
mimatsuri mikka  
sora hare wataru  
(Z1: 340)

In the ten square miles of the Hienuki valley the rice has ripened and during the three days of the festival the sky is totally clear.

Itatsuki no  
yue nimo kuchin  
inochi nari  
minorini suteba  
ureshikaramashi  
(Z1: 340)

Because of my illness, my life is about to pass away. If I could offer it for the sake of the good harvest and the Buddhist Law I would be grateful.
Later, another farmer came to the house for some advice. The members of his family tried to stop Kenji from getting out of bed, but he would not listen and sat formally to hear the farmer and give advice.

Around noon of the following day his family was preparing lunch for themselves downstairs when they heard Kenji chanting the Nichiren prayer. They all hurried upstairs. Kenji made his last request to his father at this time. This was to make one thousand copies of the Lotus Sutra in Japanese and send them to his friends and acquaintances. The last pages of the copies were to have the following line: "The work of my whole life was to send this sutra to you so that you would realize the Buddha's wish and attain the supreme way."

Leaving Kenji with his mother, the family members went downstairs to have lunch. Kenji asked his mother for drinking water. Receiving an earthen teapot from her, he drank most of its contents. Saying "It was really good!" he picked up a lump of cotton soaked in hydrogen peroxide and wiped his hands, neck and the rest of his body. Tidying up his bed, his mother stood up to leave the room to fetch something and turned back to see Kenji. She noticed something was wrong with him. Kenji stopped talking and, as if falling asleep, he let the cotton drop from his hand. He no longer answered his mother's call. The year was 1933 and Kenji was thirty seven.

56 This and the subsequent description of Kenji's last moments is based on Satô, p. 253; Mori, p. 432; and Z 14: 715-716.
Chapter 2

Kenji’s Ideas of the Other World (ikūkan)

It is possible to see Kenji’s death as symbolic not only of his life but also of his views of the other world. A few days before his death, the annual festival of Toyagasaki Shrine was held, and the mikoshi, the portable shrine, was carried out of its divine precinct (the other world) into town (this world). Wishing to dedicate himself to the deity and the ritual of this festival, Kenji sat in front of his house, risking his life, to worship the passing mikoshi throughout the three-day festival. In so doing, Kenji “sacrificed” himself for the ritual of the rebirth and procreation of nature and the universe. In his death is symbolized the merger and interpenetration of life and death, of this world and the other world. In this and subsequent chapters, we shall examine the nature of the other world as conceived by Kenji in its relationship to innocence.

In a passage from his poem, entitled “Anokutatchi Fantasy” (Anokutatchi gensōkyoku, 阿穂達池幻想曲), Kenji writes:

The reason why many humming birds seem to be chirping somewhere
must be that the Sun that
crossed the sky cheerlessly
behind the porcelain clouds

The verse above is a part of Kenji’s work, highlighting his connection to the divine and the natural world. His dedication to the shrine and the festival symbolizes his commitment to the rituals and beliefs of his culture, which he so deeply revered.
... has now fallen into the jaws of the great fish Makatsu\textsuperscript{1}...

beyond the pointed, rugged teeth of the rocky mountains,

and tiny cracks will be formed in the void of the sky.

... That void is indeed

the sensitive bodies of atoms of different kind

or the medium for the different space... (Z 4: 133–134)

Kenji was an artist who was “obsessed” with the “different space” (ikūkan, 異空間) or the other world and who consciously pursued it. It is not an exaggeration to say that Kenji’s entire life and literature were both a pursuit and an expression of that “other world” through the medium of this world.

Kenji sought this different world because, like many other artists, he was not quite satisfied with the world he was born into. For Kenji, the different space was in many ways better, truer, more beautiful, and more perfect—it was the realm of primal innocence from which, as various myths from all over the world tell us, man has been expelled since time began. This does not necessarily mean that Kenji was an escapist. It may only be that, like many other artists, thinkers, and religious people, Kenji tried to achieve a harmonious fusion of this world and the other world. The aims of this chapter are to examine the nature of Kenji’s “different space” (ikūkan)—or the realm of innocence—in its relation to this world as expressed in

\textsuperscript{1} Makatsu 摩竭, or makara in Sanskrit, is a mythical fish enormous in size both in Hindu and Buddhist myths. See also, Mochizuki Shinkyo 望月信享, \textit{Mochizuki Bukkyō daijiten} 望月仏教大辞典 (Mochizuki’s dictionary of Buddhism), V (Kyoto: Sekai Seiten Kankō Kyōkai, 1954), 4726–4727 and Nakamura Hajime 中村元, \textit{Bukkyōgo daijiten} 仏教語大辞典 (A dictionary of Buddhist terms), II (Tokyo Shoseki, 1975), 1278.
Kenji’s tales. We shall refer also to his poems, letters, biography and other materials, as necessary.

To further explore the nature of Kenji’s “different space,” let us begin by quoting another passage from his tale, “Grape Juice” (Budō sui,葡萄水), written around 1922. This is a simple, yet humorous tale about Seisaku, a fellow who tries to brew illegal wine out of wild grapes but fails because, for some reason, the bottles filled with the juice all blow up in the cellar. The following is a scene in which Seisaku’s child is playing with some grapes that Seisaku picked in the field:

The night has set in. Seisaku, having eaten a hearty supper, is in good spirits, and with a red face and breathing heavily, is briskly plucking grapes, throwing them into a big, wooden tub. His wife, too, is plucking grapes, rather quietly. His child is only dangling a bunch of grapes or tossing them onto the floor. However often his parents scold him, he starts doing it again. The child is saying, “Oh, look. They’re green! They’re green! I can see them. I can see them!” There are only one or two tiny green grapes among the black, shiny ones. These green grapes are nearly transparent, and, calmly reflecting lights, they are more beautiful than green gems. Whoops, excuse me! Please forgive me, Miss Green Grapes. I am still talking such nonsense. Everyone, it’s my fault. Gems are gems. Green grapes are green grapes. Besides, should you say to any animal, “You are taller than a frog, aren’t you?” he would be quite offended. Yes indeed, I am to be blamed. Well, Seisaku, put all your grapes quickly into the tub, place the lid on it and go to bed. Good night, everyone. (Z 7: 245-246)

There are two versions of this tale, the first and the second ones, but the differences between the two are minor (e.g., the hero’s name is changed from Seisaku to Kōsuke) and can be ignored here. In this chapter, we shall use the first version.
The charm of the child's behaviour and remarks in this scene seems to lie in the mysterious combination of innocence and the "different space" (ikūkan) which Kenji evokes. Perhaps the child is raising the bunch of grapes up to the lamplight. The child is seeing the "different space" in, or rather through, the green grapes and is delighted with what he sees. His delights are in marked contrast with those of Seisaku, who delights in the hearty meal and the excitement of the illegal brewing of homemade wine. Both his child's play and the green grapes are meaningless from Seisaku's point of view, but for the child they have the highest value and beauty. The green grapes, which the narrator of the tale compares to green gems, are, so to speak, the treasures hidden in the different space which is usually cut off from the eyes of the grown-ups like Seisaku, who live in this world of experience, rationality and survival.

Kenji could see the world in the same way as did Seisaku's child. This way of seeing is also embodied in the character of Kenjū, the mentally retarded hero of another of Kenji's tale, "Kenjū Wood" (Kenjū kōenrin, 虚十公園林) written around 1922. "Kenjū Wood" opens with the following passage:

With his kimono fastened by a piece of rope and a smile on his face, Kenjū would often stroll through the woods or along the paths between the fields. When he saw the green thickets in the rain, his eyes would twinkle with pleasure, and when he caught sight of a hawk soaring up and up into the blue sky he would jump for pure joy and clap his hands to tell everyone about it.

But the children made such fun of him that in time he began to pretend not to laugh. When a gust of wind came and the leaves on the beech trees shimmered in the light so that his face could not help smiling with pleasure, he would force his
mouth open and take big, heavy breaths to cover it up as he stood gazing and gazing up into the boughs.\(^3\)

In Kenji’s tales, the “different space” usually exposes itself only to those who have the innocence of a “child.”

In this connection, it is interesting to note Kinya Tsuruta’s observation about the heroes of the mukōgawa 句う側 (the “other side” or the “world beyond”) novels in modern Japanese literature.\(^4\) According to Tsuruta, most of the male heroes who enter the other space, presided over by a mysterious woman, go through a metaphorical death or regression to infancy. Mukōgawa (or the other side) both in the Western and modern Japanese literature that Kinya Tsuruta analyses in his article, often assumes the qualities of the womb, which can be both paradise and Hades (tomb) as the case may be. Here seems to exist a common ground where the mukōgawa described in Tsuruta’s article corresponds to that found in Kenji’s tales, though otherwise they appear rather different from one another. In Kenji’s tales, the element of eroticism and a mysterious woman figure are scarce, if not nonexistent. Indeed, in Kenji’s literature, one could say that the issue of sex and eroticism is scattered or dispersed throughout the entire universe to such an extent that the reader barely senses it as such. However, both in the works that Tsuruta deals with and in Kenji’s tales, mukōgawa or ikukan is closely related to the issue of innocence, whether

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\(^3\) Bester, p. 153.

\(^4\) See Kinya Tsuruta, "Mukōgawa no bungaku" 俳句の文学 (Literature of the "other side") in Kokubungaku kenkyū shiryōkan 国文学研究所, ed., Bungaku ni okeru mukōgawa 文学における俳句 (The other side in literature) (Meiji Shoin, 1985), pp. 5–35.
this be through childhood (as in Kenji) or through mother-child complex (as in Tsuruta).

This similarity is not a mere coincidence. We can surmise that human existence in this world is sandwiched between two kinds of mukōgawa: one is the "dark realm" (i.e., the womb) from which we come into this life at birth; the other is the equally "dark world" (i.e., the tomb) to which we are supposed to go after death. Man can be said to be "innocent" inasmuch as he belongs to the other side or mukōgawa, and is unconscious of the sophisticated desires and competitions which usually accompany deceptions. Birth, death and innocence are the triadic aspects of the other world. In general in Kenji's tales, mukōgawa or ikōkan, as opposed to this world of desires, competitions and deceptions, is the ideal, perfect realm—the realm of innocence and purity. All those forms of art which strive to achieve some kind of perfection and beauty can be called attempts to realize mukōgawa. After all, all artistic works are "fiction" or "imitation" and do not exactly mirror the reality of our daily lives.

But just as we can distinguish between the broadest sense of the term, symbolism, which all art makes use of, and its narrower sense which is applied to those nineteenth-century French poets whose chief aim was the conscious use of symbols to evoke a transcendential world, we can also distinguish between writers who consciously pursue the other world in the form, for instance, of a mysterious space with a mysterious woman or a mysterious child as separated from the daily world, and those who mainly

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5 It is suggestive that, according to Japanese tradition and customs, the dead, whether they were "good" or "evil" in their lives, are invariably called hotokesama (venerable Buddha, the enlightened one).
deal with the mundane reality of daily life. Kenji definitely belongs to this former group of writers.

It does not necessarily follow, however, that the "different space" in Kenji's tales is handled in an obtrusive and unskillful manner. Often, when dealing with the "different space," Kenji's magical hands are so dexterious that, as in the examples of "Grape Juice" and "The Kenjū Wood," the "different space" is submerged in the context of the ordinary space in such a subtle manner that a careless reader may easily overlook its inconspicuous, yet unmistakable, existence. Or, as in the cases of "The Fourth Day of the Month of Daffodils" and "The Night of the Milky Way Railroad," which we shall analyse in the next chapters, the "different space" is obviously there and yet the reader does not find it obtrusive or unconvincing. Of course, underlying what appears to be the author's technical dexterity is, indeed, a deeper reason: his intuitive, genuine sympathy and empathy with the world he expresses. We shall deal more with Kenji's techniques in creating a different space in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. In this chapter, we shall proceed to a further discussion of the nature of いわがん and its relationship to innocence in Kenji's tales. Here, our attention shall be focused on his sympathy with the "different space."

As is often the case with many writers and artists, Kenji also found いわがん in nature, or more exactly, in nature both inside and outside the human psyche. Like many other artists with a mystic temperament, Kenji believed in paradoxical correspondences between the inner and outer landscapes. The deeper one probes into one's own psyche, the deeper one steps into the world hidden behind the everyday appearance of outer nature. There is a secret loophole that connects the two realms, which are often called respectively macro and micro cosmoses.
Kenji often called his poems "mental sketches modified" or "modified imagery sketches," a description which may also be applied to his tales. While walking in mountains or in fields, Kenji quickly jotted down whatever welled up to the surface of his consciousness. What was written in his notebook was literally an automatic expression of his psyche that was stimulated by the impression of outer nature through his senses. He then later modified his rough mental sketches of outer and inner nature. Most of his poems were created in this fashion. Kenji sets forth his "philosophy of composition" in the prefatory poem, called "Proem," of Spring and Asura, the first and the only collection of his poems to be published before his death:

The phenomenon called "I"
is a blue illuminationof the hypothetical, organic alternating current lamp(a compound of all transparent ghosts)
a blue illuminationof the cause-effect alternating current lampthat flickers busilywith landscapes, with everyonewith such assured certainty(the light persists, while the lamp is lost)

In the twenty-two months, which in my perceptionlie in the direction of the past,
I have linked these pieces on paper, with mineral ink

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6 "Imagery sketches" is Makoto Ueda's translation of Kenji's shinshō suketchi. See Ueda, p. 187.
(they flicker with me,
everyone feels them simultaneously)
each a chain of shadow and light,
a sketch of the imagination as it is,
that I have maintained until now.

For each of them,
the man, the galaxy, Asura, the sea urchin,
eating cosmic dust, breathing air or salt water,
may conjure a fresh ontology,
but that too will be no more than a mental scene.
Yet the landscapes documented here
are as they are documented;
if they represent nothing, that's the way nothing is.
This holds true of everyone, more or less
  (just as everything is everyone in me,
   so I am everything in everyone)

But while these words, supposed to have been copied honestly
in the accumulation of the vast, bright times
of the Cenozoic era and alluvial epoch,
change their structures and contents
in a flash of light and shadow
  (or in Asura's billion years)
the possibility is always there
that both the printer and I feel them as immutable.
Because, just as we feel our senses,
landscapes, and personalities,
just as we all merely feel them,
so the documents, histories, and topographies,
together with their various data,
are no more than what we feel
(under the temporal restrictions of cause and effect)

Perhaps, two thousand years from now,
an appropriately different geology may win the time,
apposite evidence may turn up from the past,
everyone may think two thousand years ago
colorless peacocks filled the blue sky,
fresh bachelors of arts may excavate
wonderful fossils from the top stratum of the atmosphere,
the glittering freezing point of nitrogen,
or discover the enormous footprints of an invisible mankind
among the Cretaceous sandstone strata.

All these propositions are asserted
in the four-dimensional extension
as the attributes of imagination and time.7

We do not have time to analyse this proem in detail here, but its general tenet is clear.8 It is based on the Buddhist world view of dependent-co-origination (Japn.: innen shōki, 因縁生起；Sansk.: pratītyasamtpāda) and the relativity theory of modern physics proposed, particularly, by

7 Satō, pp. 6–7.

8 For a more detailed analysis of this proem in English, see Ueda, pp. 185–190.
Einstein and Minkovski. From the former we have the idea that the individual (i.e., individual) ego called "I" does not have an unchangeable identity and entity, but is a fluid, transparent phenomenon like an electric AC lamp. Therefore, our mental phenomena are also quite fluid and changeable. Kenji says that he simply jotted down what appeared on the screen of his mind, i.e., AC lamp. The reason that his records have some meaning to others is that egos (minds) are transparent and fluid, and thus are interpenetrating among themselves.

Related to this idea of "ego" and "mind," Kenji draws on the relativity principle of modern physics. Since, according to this principle, time and space are relative, a moment can be thought of as eternity and a point as infinity, depending on our viewpoint: "or in Asura's billion years"; "everyone may think that two thousand years ago / colourless peacocks filled the blue sky." Therefore, Kenji's jottings may change both structurally and qualitatively, meaning something entirely different from what he thought the jottings meant in the beginning. The same is true with human histories and topographies. Thus Kenji believes that the human psyche and the images (shinshō 心象) produced by it are in the fourth dimension of space and time.

From this quick overview of his proem, we can say that, for Kenji, the outer world and the inner world as well as past and future are not

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9 Einstein visited Japan in 1919, when Kenji was a student at Morioka Higher School of Agriculture and Forestry. As for Kenji's "fourth dimensional art," some critics consider the influence of Bergson rather than that of Einstein and Minkovski. See, for instance, Ono Ryūshō, "Miyazawa Kenji sakuhin no shinrigaku teki kenkyū" (Psychological studies of Miyazawa Kenji's works), *Takuboku to Kenji* 喜多川と賢治 (Takuboku and Kenji), No. 10 (1977), pp. 6–7.
independent, clearly separable entities. Rather, they interact and interpenetrate. Through these interactions and interpenetrations, the images which Kenji jotted down are modified in two ways: first, because of the very nature of this world, nothing remains the same even for a moment; secondly, our perception is not absolutely objective. This is presumably the reason that Kenji called such works "mental sketch modified."

Let us consider another example that will shed more light on Kenji's ideas concerning "image" and "imagination" in its relation to the "other space" and innocence. In the preface to the collection of his tales, The Restaurant of Many Orders, published in 1924, Kenji writes:

Even if we don't have as much crystal sugar as we want, we can eat crystal clean winds and drink peach coloured beautiful morning sunlight.

Also, I saw often in fields and woods that my terribly tattered clothes had been changed into those of the best velvet and woolen cloth studded with jewels.

I like such beautiful food and clothes.

As for these tales of mine, I received all of them from rainbows and moonlight in the forest, the fields or at a railroad.

Indeed, when I pass through the blue evening of an oak grove alone or when I stand shivering in the mountain winds of November, I cannot help feeling

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10 We may find an analogy for this kind of view in Werner Heisenberg's indeterminacy (or uncertainty) principle in modern physics. For a further discussion of this and related topics, addressed to the general lay-man, see, for instance, Fritjof Capra, The Tao of Physics (Berkely: Shambhala, 1975); Gary Zukav, The Dancing Wu Li Masters (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1979); and the two books by Werner Heisenberg: Physics and Philosophy (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958) and Physics and Beyond, trans. Arnold J. Pomerans (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, 1971).
that this really happens to me. I simply recorded the things as they were that I by no means could deny.

So of these tales collected here, there will probably be some which are meaningful to you and some which are simply there and do not mean anything. I cannot distinguish one group from the other too well. You will probably come across passages which sound like nonsense to you, but they sound like nonsense to me, too.

Be that as it may, how I wish that a few pieces of these small tales might in the end turn out to be our true, crystalline food! (Z 11:7)

This preface is not as abstract and theoretical as the proem to his Spring and Asura quoted earlier. The message Kenji sends us by this simple, yet poetic passage is unmistakably the same as that of the proem. We should note that Kenji starts with the pronoun "we" instead of "I," which echoes back to the line in the proem, "just as everything is everyone in me, so I am everything in everyone."

Another notable feature of this preface is the frequent use of images of transparency, such as crystal sugar, transparent wind, peach-coloured morning sunlight, jewels, rainbows, moonlight, blue evening and crystalline food. The recurrent use of such images of transparency in this preface and in many other of his works seems to be related to his idea of "ego" being like the transparent AC lamp referred to in the proem. Kenji's predilection for transparent images seems to be related to his food symbolism, too, which we shall deal with in Chapter 4 in analysing "The Night of the Milky Way Railroad."

From the preceding consideration of the nature of Kenji's "mental sketch," we can conclude that according to Kenji the ability to see, or rather feel, the "other space" in nature--both inside and outside one's psyche--is
the ability to see things not as rigid and unchangeable but as relative and constantly changing, without being preposterously disturbed by the forces of the other world, as is the case with some psychotics and modern novelists. It may be that for those psychotics and the novelists and poets who suffer from or deal with so-called alienation, the boundary between this world and the other space is more rigid than in Kenji, and consequently the energy of the other realm often appears in the form of dark, chaotic powers that menacingly invade this world—the bright realm of order and rationality. This is true of Kenji, to some extent, but with his tales in general the boundaries between inside and outside, this world and the other world, etc., become relative and transparent, and thus they freely correspond to each other and interpenetrate to create a joyous realm of innocence.

This correspondence or interpenetration of the two worlds can be seen as a reflection of Kenji’s contrasting temperaments: one dark and introverted; the other bright and extroverted. If the former is the world view of the Shin sect of Buddhism, the latter would be that of the Nichiren sect. From the viewpoint of the Shin sect, Kenji’s inner-scape tends to appear as the turmoil of Asura, whereas from the standpoint of the Nichiren sect, his psyche resounds with the bright outer-scape to create the symphonic cosmos of the mandala. To take still another standpoint, Kenji’s tales generally correspond to the bright Nichiren world, whereas his poems incline towards the dark and negative aspects of Buddhism, the Shin sect. Kenji’s literature can be said to be a dynamic interaction of the two worlds.

If the assumption that Kenji’s tales tend to represent bright and extroverted aspects of his psyche is correct, we can assume that his tales
chiefly deal with outer nature, and it is there that we come across the other space. Indeed, a useful way to understand how Kenji envisaged the relationship between the outer and inner natures is to apply the analogy of the two, or rather one, side(s) of the Möbius strip (see Appendix I). In other words, the inner-scape is paradoxically, i.e., in a twisted way, connected with the outer-scape, and so the two worlds are originally and essentially one and the same. To take our analogy and speculation one step further, we can presume that the original residence of "innocence" is neither in the inner-scape alone nor in the outer-scape alone, but rather, in the space that subsumes both realms. This kind of encompassing viewpoint is possible only when one places oneself on the infinitely fine line or boundary between the two realms. This boundary, like a mathematical line, has a locus but no breadth or entity, and in this sense it is empty. This emptiness is replete with the possibilities of the two worlds we have been discussing. The boundary is the meeting place of the two worlds, or rather it is the very locus by which the two worlds come into existence. We could, therefore, assume that alienation from innocence presumably occurs when we lose sight of this overall, cosmic viewpoint to take up the limited sight of the individuated ego that rationalizes the existence of rigid boundaries among ideas and things and stands on either side of the boundary.

Earlier in this chapter we mentioned that, for Kenji, this paradoxical interpenetration between the two realms was largely based on his knowledge of the Buddhist idea of dependent co-origination (innen shōki or pratītyasamutpāda), which, in turn, is connatural with other Buddhist ideas such as "one in many and many in one" (Japn.: ichinen sanzen, 一念三千) and the dharma-world of interpenetration (Japn.: rjimuge hokkai, 理事無})
We shall touch more on these ideas in the next chapters when dealing with symbolism and innocence in Kenji's tales. What we should note here is that these Buddhist ideas are relevant not only to the correspondence and interpenetration between the inner and outer spaces, but also to that between the ordinary and extraordinary spaces in Kenji's literature.

In "Anokutatchi Fantasy" quoted in the beginning of this chapter, the demarcation between this world (the ordinary) and the other world (the extraordinary) is clearly set not only spatially but also temporally. In this poem, *ikükan* or the extraordinary, is spatially somewhere beyond the wall of the evening sky, and temporally it is distinguished from daytime by the image of the sun sinking into and behind the jaws of the rugged mountains. Also in the tale, "Going Across the Snow" (Yuki watari, 雪渡り), the other space is somewhere in the woods of the foxes as segregated spatially from the village of human beings, and it is also separated from the ordinary by the age limit of human beings who are allowed to enter this segregated space. Here grown-ups are clearly and definitely rejected from the realm of the extraordinary.

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11 *riji muge* 理事無礙 literally means "nonimpededness of the noumenal and the phenomenal," while *ji ji muge* 世事無礙 means "nonimpededness among phenomenal things, e.g., a man and a tree." For more on this, see Alfonso Verdu, *Dialectical Aspects in Buddhist Thought* (New York: Paragon Book Gallery, 1974).

12 Here is also the paradoxical interpenetration of time and space, which reminds us of Einstein's four-dimensional time-space continuum.

13 Of course this also constitutes a spatial image of *iküken*. 
A more subtle treatment of the ordinary and the extraordinary can be seen, for example, in "Grape Juice" and "Kenju Wood" which we also touched on earlier. In these cases the extraordinary does not announce itself to be extraordinary. Paradoxically, it seems that what constitutes the extraordinary in the seemingly ordinary scenes is not the extraordinary itself, but the ordinary. In a sense, it is not Seisaku's child or Kenju, the slow-witted man, who really sees the innocence of the extraordinary or of Ikukan, but the eyes of the author and the reader who more or less belong to the world of the ordinary and of experience. Children and the mentally retarded are not really aware of being children or mentally retarded; it takes the perspective of grownups or of "normal" men to see their innocence. They are often indifferent to nature just as nature, i.e., trees, rivers, mountains, etc., is indifferent to itself. It requires the eyes of "man," who is at least partially outside nature and is thus "alienated" from it, to truly perceive the beauty and innocence, i.e., naturalness, of nature. In the same way, the innocence of a child can be fully recognized as such only through the sensibilities of a grownup, who has at least partially lost it. In this sense, the existence of Seisaku in the tale is a crucial element in order for the reader, a grownup, to sense the real beauty of the behaviour of Seisaku's child. We could even say that there is a trace of Seisaku's character, which possesses a bifurcating function of rationality, operating in Seisaku's child himself, and conversely, there are some aspects of child-like innocence in Seisaku, the greedy yet somewhat good-natured "materialist." It may be the discriminatory function of rationality, or rather its initiatory sign, in combination with his predominant innocence and no-mindedness (mushin, 無心) that makes Seisaku's child exclaim in joy when he sees the jewels of green grapes. And it may be the trace of humorous, good-naturedness in
Seisaku himself that makes him the hero of another tale, "The Night of the Oak Grove," in which he and the spirits of the oak trees hold an innocent singing contest. All this is an ironic and paradoxical truth, but this is rather easily understood from the Buddhist world view of the dharma-world of interpenetration and dependent-co-origination. This may also be what is called a cosmic paradox.

This kind of ironic relationship between the ordinary and the extraordinary, or between innocence and experience is also reflected in the narrative points of view. As a whole, the corpus of Kenji's tales can be divided into two groups in terms of point of view: in one group of tales the ordinary is looked at from the perspective of the extra-ordinary or jikūkan; in the other, the reverse is true. In other words, in the first group the narrative point of view is in the extra-ordinary, from which the hero usually goes to the ordinary, whereas in the second group the order is reversed. Naturally, however, there are some works that belong to both categories.

Let us take a quick overview of some examples of these groups. Those which belong to the first group include tales such as "The Edge of the Field" (Hatake no heri, 火田の 農), "The Pig of Flandon Agricultural School" (Furandon'inōgakkō no buta, フランドン農学校の豚), "The April of the Mountain Man" (Yamaotoko no shigatsu, 山男の四月), and "The Biography of Pennennennennen Nenemu" (Pennennennennen Nenemu no denki, ペンネンネンネンネン・ネヌムの伝記).

"The Edge of the Field" is a short tale of a few pages. It represents the world as seen through the eyes of frogs in the fields. After the flax plants have been cut, the stalks of corn standing in a line at the edge of the field loom high. A frog who happens to see the stalks thinks that they might be soldiers from the land called Kamagin. To his astonishment the stalks of
corn all have two or three monsters under their “arms.” The monsters have seventy teeth with pale hairs standing upright from the teeth and with six green mantles that wrap the monsters upside down from head to foot. The frog is horrified because these monsters, he believes, must have eaten up the flax plants, all of whom he thinks were straightforward, good youths. He is more horrified, however, when creatures called human beings with, according to one of his fellow frogs, sixteen hands growing on top of their heads appear and violently pluck the “green monsters” from the corn. The edge of the field is the borderline between the world of fauna and flora and that of man.

The idea that human beings are to be feared by the inhabitants of the “other space” is often expressed in Kenji’s tales. “The Pig of Flandon Agricultural School” contains another example of this. In this tale, the human world is looked at through the eyes of a Yorkshire pig which is soon to be butchered. Here, Kenji vividly captures the characteristics and “psychology” of a Yorkshire pig that speaks a human language. The Yorkshire is bludgeoned to death in the end after reluctantly signing the “agreement to die” under a threat from the school principal. Besides the violence of human beings against other living beings, this tale, together with “At the Edge of the Field” and other tales, points to one of the crucial thematic problems in Kenji’s life and literature: the paradox of one living organism living at the
Man is the only creature on earth that believes he has the capacity and the right to set himself apart from the natural order of expense of other lives.\textsuperscript{14} Regarding this issue, Isogai Hideo writes:

If we push this problem [of Asura] a step further in the Buddho-Pantheistic context, we arrive at the question: "Why one organism must feed on another to live?" One may brush this question away, just by saying, "Oh it's typically a Buddhist question," but it was this horrible question which no one can answer that was the greatest problem for Kenji. This is obvious from the fact that a considerable number of his children's stories have this question as their main theme. . . . As long as Kenji was intensely aware of this paradox [of life], the tone of his literature could not have become unconditionally bright. It is probably due to this brooding of Kenji that his children's stories seldom end with the so-called happy ending. (Isogai, "Nihon kindeibungaku shijō ni okeru Miyazawa Kenji," pp. 173–174)
the food chain. Thus from Kenji's viewpoint, which sees all sentient beings as essentially equal in value, man is to be feared by other forms of life.15

The idea that man's world or this side of the border between this world and the other world generally is the realm of experience as opposed to the other world of innocence is also seen in the tale entitled "The April of the Mountain Man," which belongs to Kenji's early works. A hill man or a wild man of the mountains (yamaotoko, 山男) is a popular figure in the folk tales of Iwate prefecture. Yanagida Kunio 柳田国男 (1875-1962), a famous folklorist and poet, collected and recorded these folk tales under the title, *The Tales from Tono* (Tōno monogatari, 遠野物語) in 1910. It is highly probable that Kenji was familiar with this work and made use of

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15 In conjunction with this it is interesting to note the remarks of Gary Snyder, a poet, a practitioner of Zen and translator of Kenji's poems: "The most revolutionary consciousness must be found in the classes that have most cruelly been exploited: animals, trees, water, air...." (translation mine), quoted by Edgar Morin in his *Journal de Californie* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970), p. 206. See also the following passage from Alan Watts:

For every form of life exists at the expense of some other form, the whole living world constituting a colossal cannibalism, a holocaust in which life continues only at the cost of death. Man lives because of the sacrifice of the wheat and the vine, and he, in his own turn, is a sacrifice to the birds and the worms, or to the bacilli which effect his death. This is the inescapably grim fact of being alive, and which most civilized peoples do their best to conceal. (Alan Watts, *Myth and Ritual in Christianity* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1968], p. 147.)
the yamaotoko (lit. mountain man) and other motifs in his tales. There is a first version of the tale of the mountain man, as is the case of many other tales by Kenji. Here we shall use the second, more complete version. The tale opens with a red-faced and golden-eyed yamaotoko lying on a hillside, looking up at the clouds in the sky. After chasing geese he is tired and soon falls asleep.

In his dreams he goes to a town and there meets a Chinese pedlar, who coaxes him to drink some kind of medicine. This medicine is liquid magic, and Yamaotoko quickly shrinks in size and is put into a small box of pills. Hopping with joy, the Chinese pedlar puts the box into the wicker trunk on his back and starts walking, looking for another victim. In the meantime, one of the pills in the box, which were all originally human beings, tells Yamaotoko how to grow back to his original state. As the Chinese pedlar is trying to lure another victim, Yamaotoko takes one of the pills and grows big—thereby breaking the trunk. Astonished by this, the pedlar, in confusion, drinks the wrong medicine and is made into a giant. The Chinese giant now pounces on Yamaotoko, who tries to run and escape in vain. His legs vainly kick at the ground; he does not go forward. He wakes up.

Although the plot of this tale is very simple, and its motifs, such as entering the other world through a dream and magic pills that make one shrink or grow, are rather familiar ones, Kenji's imagination and skill enable him to create a fascinating character of Yamaotoko. Outwardly,

16 Kenji personally knew Sasaki Kizen (1887-1925), who told the stories in Tōno monogatari to Yanagida.

17 For instance, it is not difficult to see the influence of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, with which Kenji was familiar, in this tale.
Yamaotoko looks untidy and horrible but is harmless and innocent on the inside, so much so that he says in this dream, "If I am going into the town, I have to disguise myself. Otherwise the people would beat me to death." Or he thinks, "I would sacrifice my body so that this Chinese pedlar can make 60 sen and go to an inn to have a humble meal." We can see this good-natured aspect of Yamaotoko in many other characters in Kenji's tales. Kenjū in "Kenjū Wood," Kojūrō in "The Bears of Mt. Nametoko," Yamaotoko in "The Night of the Festival" (Matsuri no ban, 祭の晩), Nighthawk in "The Nighthawk Star" (Yodaka no hoshi, よだかの星), and Earthgod in "Earthgod and Fox" (Tsuchigami to kitsune, 土神と狐) are some examples of this kind of character.

An interesting characteristic of Kenji's ikukan is that its inhabitants, who are sometimes depicted as monsters, are usually gentle and harmless to human beings. They even fear humans. This seems particularly true in Kenji's earlier works. When Kenji's life and health were relatively stable and his creative imagination was most vigorous, he seems to have lived, at least imaginatively, in the other space or ikukan rather than in this world, and could identify himself with the creatures of that world. "The Biography of Pennennennennen Nenemu" was written when Kenji's creativity was at such a point. As the title indicates, this is a biography of Pennennennennen Nenemu, who rises from the lowly status of a woodcutter's son to the highest rank of a great judge in his country. One difference between the usual success story and this one is that all of its characters, including the hero, are monsters. Towards the end of the tale, the judge Nenemu is so proud of and inflated with his position and ability as a judge that he makes a wrong step while dancing and crosses the border into the human world. To appear in the human world is considered a serious taboo in the monster
world. The apparent reason for the taboo is that the monsters feared frightening human beings needlessly, but a deeper reason seems to be that they are afraid of the world of human beings, just like the frogs and Yamaototoko in the tales mentioned earlier. The place where Nenemu has appeared is a border between Nepal and Tibet, also the locale of the poem, "Anokutatchi Fantasy" quoted in the beginning of this chapter, where he sees many talismanic flags standing and flapping in the wind. Seeing this, Nenemu flees and tries to return to his territory, when a group of pilgrims come along. Finding Nenemu, the monster, they chant a spell which makes him faint. When Nenemu comes to, he finds himself lying in a field surrounded by his subordinates who all wear worried looks. He bitterly repents his pride and decides to resign his position. The tale ends here.

The world of monsters for Kenji did not hold the nightmarish apparitions of the suppressed realm of the unconscious, as is often the case with many modern writers and poets, such as Poe, Baudelaire and Kafka, but rather it was a realm of the free, joyful expressions of the cosmo-psychic energy itself. Despite the fact that, because of his pride, Nenemu steps out into the forbidden realm, his dithyrambic dance and songs mingled with the volcanic eruptions in the background forcefully draw the reader into the rapturous joys of cosmic life.18

"The Fourth Day of the Month of Daffodils" is another example of this kind of Nietzschean dithyramb, based on the Dionysian principle, seen in the other realm. This tale, which we shall examine in detail in the next chapter,

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18 In this climactic scene it is suggested by one of the characters, albeit half jestingly, that Nenemu's psychic sympathy with the volcanic eruptions is comparable to Nietzsche's philosophy, presumably that of the Apollonian and Dionysian principles.
also looks at the human world through the eyes of the inhabitants of the other world. In its vivid colour imagery, use of onomatopoeia and animistic presentation of snow and wind, the prose-poem-like tale beautifully captures the horrors and strange charms of a raging blizzard.

One difference between this tale and the others mentioned above is that the narrative point of view of the former is fixed on the borderline between the realm of the supernatural and that of this world. Thus the reader feels that he is looking at both worlds from a third, neutral point of view. Moreover, as we shall see later on, the borderline between the two realms is not rigidly fixed but is flexible and dynamically moving, ultimately becoming one with the ambiguous dark-white vortex of the snow storm, tinged with the brilliant colours of red, gold, blue, green and amber. Therefore, on the one hand, the tale's neutral point of view enhances the aesthetic distancing of the work; on the other hand, it involves the reader in the kaleidoscopic whirlpool of the snowstorm that reflects the galactic vortex of the entire universe.

The colourful flight of Kenji's imagination seen, for example, in "The Fourth Day of the Month of Daffodils," is particularly pronounced in the early period of his career as a writer of tales. All the tales mentioned here belong to Kenji's earlier works. Kenji's tales can be roughly divided into two periods: the first period is that between 1921, when he went to Tokyo to join Kokuchūkai, and 1926, when he resigned his teaching post at Hanamaki Agricultural School. The second period runs from 1926 until his death in 1933. As critics point out, Kenji's early tales are more animistic,
brighter and more fantastic than his later tales. In his career, Kenji's idealism faced the severe reality of society and was partially defeated. Kenji's tales of the latter period are somewhat subdued in their colours and flight of imagination. "Matasaburō, the Wind Child," "The Biography of Gusukō Budori," and "The Night of the Milky Way Railroad"—three major tales from this period of Kenji's literary career—all deal with human children in rather realistic everyday settings. As we have seen earlier, the hero and other characters of "The Biography of Pennennennnenen Nenemu," an earlier version of "The Biography of Gusukō Budori," are all monsters. We can only get a glimpse of the other world from time to time, as the folktale elements in "Matasaburō, the Wind Child" or as the science-fiction elements in "The Biography of Gusukō Budori." When the other world is the main part of the tale, as in "The Night of the Milky Way Railroad," it is placed in the dream of a boy, and the introduction to the boy's dream is carefully constructed so as to lull the reader's suspicious rationality into dreamland.

Like the novels of mukōgawa (the other side), whose michiyuki Tsuruta carefully traced and analysed in his article mentioned earlier,

19 See, for example, Fukuda Kiyoto and Okada Junya, Miyazawa Kenji: hito to sakuhin (Miyazawa Kenji: the man and his works) (Shimizu Shōin, 1978), p. 177. See also Fukushima Akira, Miyazawa Kenji: kokoro no kiseki (Miyazawa Kenji: the trajectory of his mind) (Kōdansha, 1985), pp. 50–52.

20 michiyuki 道行き literally means "going along the road." In traditional Japanese theaters such as noh, kabuki and jōruri, it refers to the part of the play that describes the main characters' travelling to their destinations; hence the "process" of things or an "introduction" to something in general.
Kenji's "The Night" also seems to have required a michiyuki, one function of which is to lead the reader into "unreality." In Kenji's early period, his soaring imagination and his particular form of children's stories compensated for much of this later "michiyuki" process. Kenji could start his tales in medias res and the reader was almost instantly taken into the magic land. Some of his works deal entirely with the other world.

Even in his early tales, however, Kenji's imagination did not always play only in the other world. He took minimum procedure of introduction before he started deploying the other world. These tales belong to the second group mentioned earlier. In this group, which seems to be the most universal type of mukōgawa tale, the narrative point of view begins in this world, and the reader, together with the hero, goes or has a glimpse into ikūkan. The direction of viewpoint is from this world to the other world or ikūkan. Tales from this group include "Going Across the Snow," "The Restaurant of Many Orders," "The Beginning of the Deer Dance," "The Night of the Oak Grove," and "Electric Poles in the Moonlit Night." However, unlike his later works such as "Matasaburō, the Wind Child" and "The Biography of Gusukō Budori," the dominant portions of these tales are occupied by ikūkan. These tales will not be outlined here, but the point to be reiterated is the division between the two groups of Kenji's tales, in which we can observe two points of view: one looking at this world from the other world; the other, the reverse.

As we have noted earlier, the coexistence of these narrative viewpoints in Kenji's tales seems to be essentially related to his world view which sees a complementary relationship between the ordinary and the extraordinary, and between experience and innocence. Besides the analogy of the Möbius strip, used to explain this paradoxical complementary
relationship, we could also give the analogy of the Klein bottle (see Appendix II), whose mouth is connected to its bottom in such a way that the outside of the bottle is the inside and vice versa. We could use still another example in the pictures by M. C. Escher (see Appendixes III and IV), who made use of the relative nature of human vision and points of view. These analogies suggest the relativity and interpenetration of all the rigid dualities made by our rationality, such as inside-outside, this world-the other world, past-future, life-death, innocence-experience, subject-object, man-woman, and man-nature. Kenji’s tales, and his other literary works as well as his own life itself, are based on this idea of the interpenetration of these opposites.

Our rationality first requires us to particularize each of the terms of these pairs, and then usually to regard them as oppositions. Let us take the example of the man-nature relationship, one of the central themes of Kenji’s literature and life. According to scientific and rational ways of thinking nature and man may be said to confront one other. Or otherwise, nature can be defined as greater than man (man is inside nature). In Bertrand Russell’s set theory, for example, nature would correspond to a class and man to its member (and the other way around). In any case, man and nature are clearly separated from one another.

For Kenji, however, this idea of distinct logical types failed to grasp the real nature of the relationship between man and nature. For him, man and nature were not in opposition and neither did they represent different logical types. Rather, their relationship was one of interpenetration. Indeed, Kenji believed in the ultimate unity of the universe and himself, of man and nature, where the differentiations of logical types, and the subject-object distinction between man and nature, did not exist.
Insofar as he saw man and nature as one, Kenji did not hold one set of values for man and another for the natural world. Thus, "cannibalism" in human culture and "cannibalism" in nature upset him equally. From this, his concern with the problem of autophagy (i.e., life devouring itself) becomes more comprehensible, as does his obsessive "love affair" with nature. Clearly, Kenji did not consider nature as an "object" of human rationality but rather as something ultimately inseparable from man.

Opposed to this view of unity is that of bifurcation or rationality—the basic principle of civilization, or rather the kinds of civilizations which are currently dominant on earth. According to the logocentric or anthropocentric views which dominate modern thought, "man" occupies the highest position in the world, presiding over nature to create human civilization and history—allegedly a closed system governed by internal laws and order. In this scheme, every existence that is considered to partake of less rationality than "man" is alienated to the periphery of civilization, to be oppressed and exploited. Besides nature and children, we can include (as Michel Foucault has done) invalids, the crippled and deformed ("monsters"), madmen and criminals as those who have been alienated by human rationality. Kenji's tales emphasizing nature, children, monsters and "mentally backward" adults such as Yamaotoko and Kenjū, show a strong predilection for what might be called, after Yamaguchi Masao, a Japanese

21 See the following passage from Norman O. Brown's Love's Body (Toronto: Random House of Canada Limited, 1966), p. 170: "This world as food feeds on itself. The mystical body feeds on itself. Autophagy. The supper as self-sacrifice...." For more on autophagy, see footnotes 20 and 22 to Chapter 4 of this dissertation.
anthropologist and interdisplinarian, the "periphery" (Japn.: shūen 周縁), another name of which can be the other world or ikūkan. That glimpse of fear of the world of man seen in some of Kenji’s tales may be the fear and protest of the oppressed “innocent” against the self-righteous domination of man’s rationality. This protest against “culture-centeredness” and “anthropocentrism” seems to constitute the core of Kenji’s “Notes for the Outline of Agrarian Art.”

What Tsurumi Shunsuke called “marginal art” (genkai geijutsu 限界芸術) describes one important aspect of Kenji’s ideas of art expressed in his “Outline” as well as in his other works. According to Tsurumi, “marginal art” is “art that non-professional artists create for the non-professionals (i.e., laymen) and it is distinguished both from ‘pure art’ (junsui geijutsu 純粹芸術), which is created by professionals for those with ‘professional tastes,’ and from ‘mass art’ (taishū geijutsu 大衆芸術), which is created by professionals for the masses who have no special training for or appreciation of art.” For Kenji the everyday life

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22 Yamaguchi Masao 山口昌男, Bunka to ryōgisei 文化と弾義性 (Culture and ambiguity), (1975; rpt. Iwanami, 1984). Also for the discussions on the periphery from the viewpoints of writers, a historian and a cinema director, see Chūshin to shūen 中心と周縁 (Center and periphery), ed. Ōe Kenzaburō 大江健三郎 et al. (Iwanami, 1981).

23 Tsurumi Shunsuke 鶴見俊輔, "Miyazawa Kenji no sōsaku" 宮沢賢治の創作 (Miyazawa Kenji’s creation) in Miyazawa Kenji kenkyū 宮沢賢治研究 (Studies on Miyazawa Kenji), p. 24. See also Tsurumi’s "Geijutsu no hatten" 芸術の発展 (Development of art) in Tsurumi Shunsuke chosaku shū 鶴見俊輔著作集 (Collected works of Tsurumi Shunsuke), IV (Chikuma Shobō, 1975), 3–39.
and situation of the individual begets the very circumstances and material
from which he creates his own art. To quote from his "Outline":

[A]grarian art is a concrete expression of Cosmic Consciousness through
the earth, man and personality. It is the creation of consciousness and
unconsciousness using the inner experience of intuition and emotion for
its materials. It always affirms the reality of everyday life and aims to
deepen and heighten it more. It teaches us to enjoy life and nature by
making them into incessant artistic photographs or into endless songs and
poems or into a gigantic theater and dance. It causes spiritual
communication of the people; it socializes their emotions and it finally
aims at leading every existence/being to the supreme state. . . .
(Z 12-A:11)

Thus, for Kenji any everyday activity, whether it be speech, house building,
farming, fishing or cooking, is potentially creative and artistic.

From this point of view Tsurumi asserts that Kenji's "Report on the
School Excursion to Hokkaidō" (Shūgaku ryōkō fukumei shō修学旅行 復命 書), written in May 1924 when Kenji took his students to Hokkaidō on an
excursion, is a beautiful example of "marginal art."24 In his "Report," which
Kenji wrote in a semi-classical Chinese style, he vividly portrays the
students' joys in singing in unison, rowing boats, walking along the streets
of Sapporo at night, and being treated to rich, fresh milk by the president of
Hokkaidō Imperial University. Behind this successful school excursion lie

Kenji's worries about a student's financial problems and about the plans for the excursion—its agenda and purposes. These hidden efforts and worries together with the joyous activities of the students and Kenji in Hokkaido constitute a human drama. Tsurumi considers that this drama is for Kenji a creation of "marginal art," and that Kenji's literary works in the narrower sense are merely one part of this larger drama. Kenji's life and literature, which remained cut off from and ignored by those in Tokyo, the center of Japanese culture, are typical examples of "marginal art" or art of the periphery.

The issue of the center-periphery relationship in Kenji, however, is not merely a monolithic opposition between the center and the periphery, which can be translated into other terms of opposition such as this world vs. the other world, experience vs. innocence, Tokyo vs. Iwate, culture vs. nature, and man vs. nature. As we have seen through the discussion of the paradoxical relationships between the terms of these pairs, the center-periphery relationship is that of interpenetration in the same sense that the "two sides" of the Möbius strip interpenetrate or that in some cases a class and its members are self-referential to each other.

The same paradoxical relationship can be seen in the relationship between Kenji's life and his literary works. If we regard his life as his macro-cosmic artistic work, we can say that his poems and tales are its micro-cosmic counterparts. As we have seen in Chapter 1, Kenji displayed a rather ambivalent vacillation between Iwate (nature or the periphery) and

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25 We have touched on Kenji's financial assistance for a poor student on this excursion in Chapter 1.

26 Tsurumi, p. 8.
Tokyo (culture or the center). We can interpret this vacillation as his attempt to synthesize or harmonize these two seemingly contradictory poles. Kenji's "Notes for the Outline of Agrarian Art," which is based on both science and religion, and his activities among the farmers and peasants are his theory and practice towards this attempt.

This attempt naturally parallels the difficult task of harmonizing the idealistic, romantic idea of the periphery or nature with that of the naturalistic, "realistic" nature where all living things are struggling and fighting with each other for survival. With every possible resource, Kenji tried to realize his ideal world both in his life and art. Or rather, for Kenji life is none other than art, and vice versa. Peripheral art, which is how Tsurumi defines Kenji's art, is the result of this idea. Peripheral art in Kenji, therefore, is not a mere art on the periphery as opposed to the center. The two interpenetrate to realize an ideal world, the other world which Kenji referred to under various names, such as ikūkan (different space) and Ihatove, the dreamland Iwate. Dreamland Iwate, for Kenji, is thus the center of the universe and the abode of innocence embodied by all of its inhabitants such as trees, birds, mountains, rocks, wind, water, stars, animals, children, and last, but not least, adults.

27 Some critics think that "Ihatove" is the Esperanto reading of Iwate prefecture. By giving this name to his prefecture, Kenji seems to have tried to sublimate the real Iwate into a dreamland Iwate or see a dreamland (ikūkan) superimposed onto the real Iwate. See the quotation from Kenji on the second and the third pages of Chapter 5. See also Hara Shiro, ed., "Kenji dōwa o toku kii wādo" (Key words for understanding Kenji's tales), Kokubungaku, 31, No. 6 (1986), 148.
Looked at from a fixed viewpoint, the Tokyo-Iwate dichotomy is rigidly translated into the center-periphery relationship. However, through the ideal of Ihatove as a dreamland, Kenji centralized Iwate and "peripheralized" Tokyo, just as the frogs and the monsters in Kenji's tales centralized their world and "peripheralized" the human world, reversing the common sense order of the distinction between this world of human beings and the other world of non-human beings. This reversal, again, does not remain static, but rather continues its reversal dynamically, ad infinitum, thus manifesting what Kenji called in his proem to his *Spring and Asura* the phenomenon of the "AC lamp," the dharma-world of interpenetration.

For Kenji, then, the realm of innocence is not merely in the other space of *ikükan* as such, to be differentiated and cut off from this world. The true realm of innocence is realized on the borderline or borderland between the two realms, which can be compared to the boundary between the "two sides" of the Möbius strip. This borderland is also the realm of "play," or rather "cosmic play," which we shall further examine in the subsequent chapters through a detailed analysis of the symbolism and style in Kenji's particular works.
Chapter 3
The Symbolism of Interpenetration
in "The Fourth Day of the Month of Daffodils"

Whereas in the previous chapter we examined how Kenji's views of
ikükan and innocence were expressed through his life and literature, in this
and subsequent chapters we shall concentrate on how he treated those
themes in his "children's" tales. More specifically we shall focus on the
two central elements of symbolism and style in Kenji's tales. Symbolism
is closely related to the issue of ikükan in that it gives concrete form to
ikükan, which, otherwise, would remain in the invisible, abstract realm of
ideas. In this sense, symbolism serves as a bridge between this world and
the other world, for it is through symbolic images that the ideal manifests
itself to and in the phenomenal. Style in Kenji's tales, on the other hand, is
related to center-periphery, the "this-world vs. the-other-world" problem.
But we shall discuss Kenji's style in Chapter 5.

Before further elaborating on the relationship between symbolism and
ikükan, it may be helpful first to clarify the meaning of "symbol." Here, a
symbol is considered primarily as a means of bridging a gap between two
apparently disparate things, or more particularly, between those two
separate realms variously referred to as this world and the other world
(ikükan), the worldly and the divine, the material and the ideal, the finite
and the infinite, the temporal and the eternal, and the particular and the
universal, or the archetypal, to use C. G. Jung's term. An apple and the
galaxy, for instance, are ostensibly two very disparate entities, but, when
considered in relation, they may be seen to correspond closely with one
another and resonate with similar rhythms and meanings. Maybe this is because behind each of these lies something universal. This we may also call the ideal, the divine, the eternal, the archetypal, and so on. In other words, it is because the abstract and archetypal power manifests itself through concrete and individual things that we can detect analogies and correspondences between things seemingly far apart or even diametrically opposed to one another. Thus, the paradoxical relationship between the inside and the outside of man’s psyche, touched on in Chapter 2, can be said to arise from this one unifying power or force which pervades all things in the universe.

This kind of view on symbol and symbolism is generated by a world view which has much in common with that of Kenji. See, for instance, the following excerpts from the proem to his Spring and Asura quoted earlier:

The phenomenon called "I"

is a blue illumination

of the hypothetical, organic alternating current lamp

(a compound of all transparent ghosts)

a blue illumination

of the cause-effect alternating current lamp

that flickers busily, busily

with landscapes, with everyone

with such assured certainty

(the light persists, while the lamp is lost)

For each of them,

the man, the galaxy, Asura, the sea urchin,
eating cosmic dust, breathing air or salt water,
may conjure a fresh ontology,
but that too will be no more than a mental scene.
Yet the landscapes documented here
are as they are documented;
if they represent nothing, that's the way nothing is.
This holds true of everyone, more or less
(just as everything is everyone in me,
so I am everything in everyone)\(^1\)

We should also note that in this proem, Kenji's thought draws heavily on Buddhist ideas such as "dependent-co-origination" (innen shōki) and the "dharma-world of interpenetration" (rijī muge hokkai and jijimuge hokkai). Similarly, in one of his tales entitled "Indra's Net" (Indora no ami, インドラの網), a divine child in a Buddhist paradise points to a huge, yet invisible, net covering the entire sky, with each knot of the net reflecting all the other knots, while the heavenly drums quietly pound inaudible sounds. It is obvious that Kenji wrote this story in order to give literary expression to the Huayen (Japn. : Kegon,華厳) philosophy of the "dharma-world of interpenetration." To a great extent, this Buddhist idea corresponds to the definition of symbolism employed in this dissertation; it is a definition of symbolism, based largely on J. E. Cirlot's, which, in turn, is indebted to C. G. Jung's symbology.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) Setō, p. 6.

Given this broad definition of symbolism in its relation with the other world, the general relationship between symbolism and innocence in Kenji's tales becomes more comprehensible. Although its significance is deep and far reaching, this relationship is itself rather simple and obvious. As discussed in the previous chapter, in Kenji's tales, ikūkan is primarily the realm of innocence, where only children or those with child-like sensitivities are allowed to enter. If the function of symbols, as we have argued above, is to provide a bridge between this world and the other world, it follows naturally that in Kenji's tales symbols are used to express innocence—or to be more precise, innocence expresses itself through symbols.

To further explore the relationship between symbolism and innocence, it is necessary to analyse in more detail how symbolism operates in Kenji's tales. In analysing Kenji's symbolism, we shall concentrate on two tales: "The Fourth Day of the Month of Daffodils" and "The Night of the Milky Way Railroad." There are two main criteria for these choices. Firstly, since they belong to the early and the later periods respectively of Kenji's career as a "children's story" writer, they provide us with a relatively balanced representation of Kenji's symbolism throughout his tales; secondly, they are highly artistic and of all his tales, show the greatest symbolic integrity.

In the sense that they represent his ideas and emotions, Kenji's other works may also be described as "symbolic." But then the same may be said not only of almost all literary works, but also of almost all artistic works which are metonymic and function according to what T. S. Eliot called the "objective correlative" of one's inner psychic state. Eliot's conception of "symbol" does not contradict our definition of symbol and symbolism, but ours is more inclusive. Essentially Eliot's definition is contained within the
Buddhist concept of *rijji muge* (or interpenetration between the noumenal and the phenomenal), whereas our and presumably Jung's concept of symbol, because it is based on the idea of *jiji muge* (or interpenetration of the things in the phenomenal world) as well as on the idea of *rijji muge*, is wider in scope. The symbolism of "The Fourth Day" and of "The Night" is a literary embodiment of this idea of *jiji muge*.

Given our approach to symbols and symbolism, it follows that we must necessarily address certain "extra-textual" elements in analysing the symbolism of Kenji's tales. To some extent, this would be necessary in analysing any written text. Take, for example, haiku, where extreme brevity of form demands an extremely frequent use of suggestion and association. As Harold Henderson points out:

> As would naturally be expected, many haiku evoke associations by references to Buddhist beliefs, to social customs, and to episodes in Japanese history that every Japanese would know. Unfortunately these references would be as unintelligible to the Western reader as the connotations of Easter, Thanksgiving, or Guy Fawkes' Day would be to the average Japanese, and therefore haiku containing them call for so much explanation that they have had to be inadequately represented here.³

Once we have learned to look at a work from such a "discovered" perspective, the hidden part will never remain hidden, but rather will always assert itself as an important and integral part of the totality of the work's artistic effect. It is hardly necessary to point out here that one's knowledge of Kenji's biography will also change, to a greater or lesser

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degree depending on the reader, one's perspective towards an aesthetic appreciation of his works. Kenneth Burke argues succinctly that:

There is a strict sense in which, whenever you cry "Wolf," you repeat the same act (as regards the meaning of the word in a dictionary, the "lexical" wolf). But there is another sense in which your cry is quite different if there is no wolf, or if there is a wolf, or if you had been repeating the cry when there had been no wolf but this time there is one. Here, obviously, the nature of the term as an "act" is defined not just by its place in the context of a certain language, but by its extra-verbal "context of situation."

Furthermore, such a nonverbal scene or context of situation is capable of being defined in terms of varying scope, or "circumference." (For instance, I am writing these words "in Florida this January," or "during a lull in the bombing of North Vietnam," or "in a period following the invention of the atomic bomb but prior to a soft landing of electronic instruments on the surface of the moon," and so on.) Thus, the "same" act can be defined "differently," depending upon the "circumference" of the scene or overall situation in terms of which we choose to locate it.4

There is one additional argument concerning the nature of symbols themselves which would further demonstrate the importance of "extra-textual" elements in understanding the symbolism of Kenji's tales. It is generally recognized that symbolism is of three types: universal, cultural, and personal. The first type of symbols, such as day (light) and night (darkness), standing for life and death or for good and evil, are universally

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recognized by all people throughout the world. The second type of symbols, those such as the cross in Christianity and the lotus flower in Buddhism, possess meaning primarily only for those who share a certain cultural tradition. The last type of symbols are those which have symbolic meaning primarily to the individual (in this case, the author) who creates and uses them. For example, the giant, Albion, in William Blake’s personal mythology stands for England in its paradisiac, perfected state, while the recurrent image of an apple in Kenji’s tales and poems seems to symbolize purity and innocence as well as a microcosm. This is quite specific to Kenji and is different from the symbolism of the apple in the Christian tradition or from that of the apple in the Greek myth of Paris. The same can be said of Kenji’s English Beach (Igirisu kaigan, イギリス海岸), the name Kenji used for the bed of the Kitakami River that lies near Hanamaki. Kenji named the shore English Beach because its geological features resembled those of Dover, and because he found the fossils of ancient walnuts there. In Kenji’s personal symbolism, English Beach is shura no nagisa, or the beach of Asura.

On the other hand, in order to understand an author’s “personal” symbols, one must inevitably refer, not only to other works by the same author but also to his entire world view, which necessarily involves a consideration of his biography. The biographical study, in turn, would call for an examination of the cultural, historical milieu in which the author grew up, and to understand this milieu one must understand traditional symbolism. This indicates that the three types of symbols are not completely divorced from each other, but rather that they have much in common.

Indeed, it is well known that Blake based his personal mythology upon the traditional occidental religions and philosophies such as Swedenborg’s
mysticism, Judeo-Christianity, Platonism and Neo-Platonism. Also, his huge Albion lying on the marsh of England's beach stirs our senses to see correspondences between the giant and the British island and also between these two and the entire universe. Kenji's apple and English Beach can be seen in the same way. Kenji's imaginative vision of English Beach as the beach of Asura obviously involves traditional Buddhist ideas about Asura, the realm of arrogant, war-like demons, which overlaps in a universal manner with the idea of decay evident in the fallen state of Blake's Albion. Kenji's "obsession" with the apple, on the other hand, is at least partially related to the geographical situation of Iwate, the northern part of Japan, where apples are traditionally grown, but in more universal terms, the apple can be associated with purity as well as with perfection. In the fresh, sweet-sour taste of its white flesh in cool weather, the apple is an effective symbol of purity. Further, because of its spherical shape, it can partake of the universal symbol of perfection and cosmic harmony. And finally, in a remote way, it can even be connected with the Biblical symbol of original sin. As we will see later on in "The Night of the Milky Way Railroad," we encounter the images of both English Beach and apples juxtaposed with Christian images.

With the above discussion of symbolism in mind, we shall now proceed to analyse "The Fourth Day of the Month of Daffodils" and "The Night of the Milky Way Railroad." In outline, "The Fourth Day" says:

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6 For more about the geographical as well as the moral implications in the apple imagery in Kenji's poems and tales, see Strong, "The Poetry of Miyazawa Kenji," pp. 191-192.
"The Old Snow Woman [Yukibango, 雪婆婆] was away, far away. With her pointed ears like a cat's and her swirling ashen hair, she was far, far away beyond the ragged, gleaming clouds over the western mountains.

Wrapped in a red blanket, his mind full of thoughts of homemade candy, a solitary child was hurrying impatiently homeward past the foot of a snow-covered hillock shaped like a great elephant's head."7

The boy was on his way home from the town where he had gone pushing a sledge of charcoal the previous day. "All the while, up in the cold, crystal-clear regions of the sky, the sun was busy stoking his dazzling white fire" (159).

The Snow Boy [Yukiwarasu, 雪童子] with his two snow wolves [Yukioino, 雪狼]—they were invisible to human beings—was walking on top of the elephant shaped hill. The Snow Boy sings greetings to the invisible stars in the navy blue sky:

Cassiopeia!
The daffodils will begin to bloom soon!

Turn, turn your
Glass water wheel!

Andromeda!
The thistles will bloom soon!
Puff, puff your
Alcohol lamp!

7 Bester, p. 159. The page numbers of the subsequent quotations from Bester's translation of "The Fourth Day" will be given in parentheses after the quotations.
On top of the hill stood a great chestnut tree bearing a beautiful, golden sphere of mistletoe with red fruit. The Snow Boy ordered one of his wolves to fetch him some. Immediately the wolf obeyed the master's order. With his mistletoe in his hand the Snow Boy cast his gaze down to "the handsome town standing far away on the white and indigo plain. The river glittered and white smoke rose from the railway station" (160). He also noticed the child walking along the narrow path that skirted the foot of the hill.

The Snow Boy laughed and flipped his mistletoe towards the child. It flew like a bullet and landed in front of the child, who, startled, picked it up and looked around him wide-eyed. The Snow Boy laughed again and cracked his whip. "Then from all over the cloudless, polished, deep blue sky, white snow began to fall like feathers from a snowy heron; it made that quiet, lovely Sunday of snow on the plain below, of amber light and brown cypress trees, more beautiful than ever" (160).

But then, just as the snow stopped falling, the sun seemed to move farther away in the sky to the resting place where he replenishes his dazzling white fires. From far off to the east, there came a tiny sound as if something had slipped in the sky's mechanism. The wind grew steadily stronger, and soon it seemed to be tearing everything apart. The sky turned dark and the snowflakes came.

All at once, the ridges of the hills began to give out a sound, a kind of creaking and swishing. Horizon and town disappeared beyond the dark vapor, leaving only the white shape of the Snow Boy dimly visible as he stood erect in the storm.

Then, from amidst the rending and the howling of the wind, there came another, stranger voice.

The Snow Boy leaped up as though electrified: the Old Snow woman had arrived.

Crack! went the Snow Boy's whip, and the snow wolves bounded forward. His face grew pale, his lips tightened together, his hat flew away in the wind.

"Whew! Whew! To work, to work! No idling! Whew! Whew! To work! To work! Whew!"

The Old Snow Woman's cold white locks swirled round and round in the snow and wind; her pointed ears and glittering gold eyes were visible among the scurrying black clouds. Already the three snow boys she had brought with her from the western plain were rushing to and fro unceasingly, with deathly pale faces and lips clamped tightly together, too busy even to exchange greetings with one another. Soon hills, driving snow and sky were quite indistinguishable; the only sounds were the shrieks of the Old Snow Woman as she went to and fro, the cracking of the snow boys' whips, and the panting of the nine snow wolves as they rushed about in the newly fallen snow. (161)

And then, in the midst of the chaotic rage of the snowstorm, the Snow Boy heard a faint voice of the child crying. He dashed in the direction of the voice and found that the child was trying to get up from the snow in which he had got firmly stuck.
"Lie back and pull the blanket over you!" shouted the Snow Boy as he ran. "Lie back and pull the blanket over you. Whew!" (162)

But the child heard only the sound of the wind and saw nothing. He still struggled to get up, weeping all the while, his mouth twitching and trembling with fear.

"Whew!" The Old Snow Woman had come up. "Harder to work! No idling, now! On, on! Whew!" He [the Snow Boy] could see the purple slit of her mouth and her pointed teeth looming through the storm. "Ohoh! Here's a funny child! That's right! We'll have him. Why at this time of year we've a right to one or two at the very least." (162)

"Of course we have," said the Snow Boy and gave the child a big buffeting. But he softly whispered to the child, "Lie quiet. You musn't move, do you hear?" The Old Snow Woman was pleased to see what the Snow Boy did to the child and flew off again, leaving them alone. The child tried to get up. Laughing, the Snow Boy gave him another great buffeting. This time the child fell down in the snow and did not get up any more.

Laughing, the Snow Boy stretched out a hand and pulled the red blanket right over him.

"Now go to sleep. I'll cover you with many quilts, so you'll not freeze. Dream now of homemade candy till the morning." (163)

The Snow Boy went over and over the child putting layer after layer of snow over him until the red blanket disappeared under the snow.
"That child still has the mistletoe I gave him," muttered the Snow Boy to himself, looking tearful for a moment. (163)

The snow kept falling all through the night. Then when dawn was near the Old Snow Woman ran one last time from south to north and rushed off to the east, with her mouth chattering and her rough, dry hair swirling.

Plain and hills seemed to relax, and the snow shone with a bluish white light. The sky had cleared, and starry constellations were twinkling all over the rich blue vault of heaven. (163)

The snow boys, collecting their snow wolves, greeted each other for the first time. One of them said, "A child died a while ago, didn't he?" (164) The Snow Boy, who had felled the child, answered, "It's all right. He's only asleep. Tomorrow I'll leave a mark there to show where he is" (164). Then, the three snow boys from the west took leave of the Snow Boy, who stopped them to ask these questions: "There's one thing which has always been puzzling me. They are the triplets of Cassiopeia, aren't they? They are all blue fire, aren't they? But why do we have snow when they burn well?" One of the snow boys answered, "Oh, it's like cotton candy, you know. You see, the machine turns round and round and the crystal sugar all becomes fluffy cotton candy, isn't that right? That's why the more the fire burns, the better it is, you know." "Oh, I see," answered the Snow Boy.

The three snow boys with their nine wolves set off homewards to the west. Before long, the eastern sky began to shine like a yellow rose, then gleamed amber, and finally flared up all gold. Everywhere, hills and plain alike, was full of new snow.
The Snow Boy's wolves were sitting limp and exhausted. The Snow Boy, too, sat down on the snow and laughed. His cheeks were like apples and his breath had the fragrance of lilies.

The gleaming sun rose in all his glory, with a bluish tinge today that made him more splendid than ever. The whole world flooded pink with sunlight. The snow wolves got up and opened wide their mouths, from which blue flames flickered.

"Come, all of you, follow me," said the Snow Boy. "Dawn has broken; we must awaken the child."

He ran to where the child was buried beneath the snow.

"Here, scratch away the snow just here," he ordered.

With their back legs, the snow wolves kicked up the snow, which the breeze scattered at once like smoke.

A figure wearing furs, with snowshoes on his feet, was hurrying from the direction of the village.

"That will do!" shouted the Snow Boy, seeing the edge of the child's red blanket peeping out from under the snow.

"Your father is coming," he cried, racing up the hillock in a column of powdery snow. "You must wake up now!"

The child seemed to stir a little. And the figure in furs came running for all it was worth. (164)

We should remember that this is merely an outline, and an English translation at that; the original reads more like a lyrical poem in prose than an ordinary tale. Large portions of the music and even the colours, two of the important elements of Kenji's symbolism, are inevitably lost or transformed into something else in translation. Translation is often the back side of the beautiful brocade of the original. The following analysis,
therefore, also aims at supplementing the tale's lost implications and aesthetic effects.

What William Empson calls "ambiguity" runs through the entire tale of "The Fourth Day." In the tale's opening passages, the Old Snow Woman (Yukibango) is depicted as both human and beast, or to put it another way, as neither completely human nor beast. "With her pointed ears like a cat's and her swirling ashen hair," the Old Snow Woman can be considered as a borderline being between man and nature and as such exists, from the human point of view, on the periphery. In other words, as an ambiguous existence, she is "marked" and alienated from the ordinary "unmarked" human realm, just as the chaotic, destructive forces of nature, such as typhoons, earthquakes and epidemics, are estranged from human society. Thus the tale opens with the sentence: "The Old Snow Woman was away, far away . . . ."

But immediately after this short opening sentence, the author suddenly directs our attention to the realm of human beings. A solitary human child is intently hurrying homewards around the skirt of a snow-covered hill shaped like an elephant's head. The child is from the town, and thus is, so to speak, wandering away from the center of civilization into the wilderness--the other space, the realm of the Old Snow Woman. Another beast image--that of an elephant--as we shall touch on later in more detail, seems to be significant here in that it contributes to the sense of wilderness in the scene. The Old Snow Woman is yet absent, and the child is still skirting around the fringe of the hill with his mind filled with "homemade candy," an image suggestive of culture and civilization.

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Ambiguity is also working here: the elephant image of the hill; the child's homemade candy as opposed to a city-made fancy cake; and the child himself, a marginal being as opposed to grown-ups with fully developed rationality and common sense. One of the more interesting examples of ambiguity in this tale is Kenji's use of elephant imagery. The hill is likened to an elephant or an elephant's head three times in the tale. Kenji uses elephant images in various other tales, as well. In "The Bear Feet of Light" (Hikari no suashi, ひかりの素足), for instance, Ichirō and his younger brother Narao are "attacked" by a snowstorm soon after they pass by an elephant-shaped hill with chestnut trees, and in "The Young Spirit of a Tree" (Wakai kodama, 若 い 木霊) the young tree spirit is deceived by an ibis by the side of a hill with the shape of an elephant's head and is almost drawn into a dark grove, which may be seen as a symbol of death. On the universal or general level, the elephant's mighty power symbolizes the libidinous sides of nature, both inside and outside the human psyche, thus drawing our attention to the bestial aspects of the Old Snow Woman. On the traditional, cultural level, tamed elephants become gentle and useful vehicles for civilization. Perhaps it was the combination of these two levels of symbolism that produced the other complex cultural symbolism of the elephant in Hindu-Buddhist as well as in medieval European traditions. In the Hindu tradition "[e]lephants are the caryatids of the universe" and because of their colour and shape, they are associated with clouds. Also "[a] mountain-top or cloud, elephant-like in outline, could represent an axis of the universe. . . ." In the Hindu-Buddhist tradition, elephants are the

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9 Cirlot, p. 96.
10 Cirlot, p. 96.
vehicles of various deities and Bodhisattvas, and thus by extension they are the symbols of invincible might, sacred wisdom, the Jewel of Buddhist law, love, compassion and kindness.\textsuperscript{11} In the tradition of the Middle Ages in the West, too, elephants stand for similar ideas such as wisdom, moderation, eternity and pity.\textsuperscript{12}

Thus we can say that the elephant, like many other images, can be a symbol for two opposing forces: one bright and positive, the other dark and negative. In using elephant images as a semi-personal symbol in his tales, Kenji seems to have intuitively grasped these symbolic implications. Suzuki Kenji, in discussing the elephant symbolism in Kenji, argues that the elephant-shaped hill in "The Fourth Day" is related to Vinayaka in Tantric Buddhism. He points out that Kenji jotted down the name of Vinayaka, together with that of Gundali, another deity in Tantric Buddhism, in his notes for writing poems and tales.\textsuperscript{13} Vinayaka is the name for the host of guardian gods of Nandekayeshbara (Japn. : Kangiten, 欽喜天) or the god of the supreme joys. They all have elephant heads and human bodies. Vinayaka is supposed to inflict difficulties and disasters on human beings. In Kenji's tales, whenever the image of an elephant head appears, something ominous happens to the heroes, and the scene in "The Fourth Day," where the child is attacked by the blizzard soon after he passes by the elephant-shaped hill is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} J. C. Cooper, \textit{An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols} (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), pp. 60–61.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Cirlot, p. 96.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Suzuki Kenji, "Zō no atama no katachi o shita oka' ni tsuite" (On "the hill with the shape of an elephant's head") Kenji kenkyū 賢治研究 (Studies on Kenji), No. 31 (1982), pp.31–33.
\end{itemize}
no exception. Though Kenji here uses the elephant to predict disaster, we should also keep in mind the ambiguities of elephant symbolism mentioned above as well as the fact that the malicious Vinayaka gods are also the guardians of the deity of the supreme joys. We shall return to this issue later on.

The closeness of the child's homemade candy to nature is suggested by the image of the sun that Kenji introduces immediately after discussing the candy:

"I'll make a cone of newspaper," he told himself, "and I'll puff and puff till the charcoal burns up bright and blue. Then I'll put a handful of brown sugar in the candy pan, and then a handful of crystal sugar. Then I'll add some water, and all that'll be left will be to boil it, bubble, bubble, bubble..."

No doubt about it, he had no thought for anything but homemade candy as he hurried on his way home.

All the while, up there in the cold, crystal-clear regions of the sky, the sun was busy stoking his dazzling white fire. The light from it shone out in all directions; some of it, falling down to earth, transformed the snow on the hushed uplands into a dazzling sheet of white icing.¹⁴

The burning sun and the bright snow of the hill constitute, as it were, an image of nature-made candy. Kenji's words in his introduction to The Restaurant of Many Orders, which includes "The Fourth Day," are pertinent here: "Even if we don't have as much crystal sugar as we want, we can eat crystal clear winds and drink peach coloured beautiful morning sunlight" (Z 11: 7).

¹⁴ Bester, p. 159.
The ambiguity of the homemade candy corresponds with that of the child and the Snow Boy (Yukiwarasu). In relation to human adults, the child belongs to the marginal realm that borders on *ikukan* but in relation to the Snow Boy, with his three-cornered cap of polar-bear fur and his two snow wolves, he represents the human world. The Snow Boy is the child's double or mirror image in the other world. Towards the end of the tale the Snow Boy has a conversation with other snow boys about cotton candy and the snow sent by Cassiopeia burning blue in the sky. This cotton candy corresponds to the child's homemade candy as well as to the sun and the glittering snow that follow immediately in the tale. Also, in the beginning of the tale, the Snow Boy flips the sprig of mistletoe at the child, who keeps it even during his struggle in the snowstorm. The mistletoe functions as a bond between the two boys.

In this tale, mistletoe has very complex symbolic implications. It is a kind of microcosmos or a mandala that encompasses almost all the other symbols in the work. Being an evergreen plant, it universally symbolizes life and rejuvenation and thus fits in well with the general theme of the tale—the death and rebirth of both the child as a human being and of nature through the seasons. The mistletoe that the Snow Boy throws at the child has a talismanic power that protects the child from death. But at the same time, it is immediately following the scene where the mistletoe is plucked off and flipped at the child that the weather takes a sudden turn and the blizzard "attacks" the child. It seems that the mistletoe's magical power is two-sided.

In his *Golden Bough*, James Frazer (1854-1941) extensively examines the tree worship and mistletoe cults practiced among various peoples all over the world. According to him, in the Norwegian myth, Baldur, Oden's son,
was killed because Hotel threw some mistletoe at him. Frazer sees an analogy between this myth and the legend of the sacred tree on the lake Nemi in northern Italy where once a priest-king is said to have fiercely guarded a sacred tree because if someone were to pluck a twig from the tree, it would kill him. The Celtic Druids believed that mistletoe from an oak, a sacred tree not only for the Celts but also for the Anglo-Saxons, had magical powers, such as the ability to cure diseases and fertilize cattle and women. Frazer points to a similar cult among the Ainu of Japan. Presumably it is on the basis of these cults and beliefs that J. C. Cooper writes about mistletoe: "As neither one nor the other, which, by extension, is the realm of freedom from limitation, so that anyone under the mistletoe is free from restrictions, but also free from protection, and re-enters the world of chaos."

We do not know whether or not Kenji knew these Western traditions concerning mistletoe, in whole or in part, but there is an uncanny correspondence to these Western ideas in what occurs to the child after the wolf has bitten off the mistletoe from the chestnut tree—a member of the oak family—and flipped it at him. Another "coincidence" is that the mistletoe in "The Fourth Day" is described as a "beautiful golden ball with

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17 Frazer, Chapt. 65.

18 Frazer, p. 660.

19 J. C. Cooper, *Symbols*, p. 106. This symbolism seems to shed light on the Christmas custom that a woman standing under the mistletoe may be kissed by any man.
red berries,” while the title of Frazer’s work is *The Golden Bough*, which he is said to have taken from Virgil’s *Aeneid*, VI:

> Then, when they [a pair of doves] came to the mouth of noisome Avernus,
> Swiftly they rose, and, planing the yielding air,
> Came down on the perch they had chosen, a twofold tree
> Where shone through the boughs the contrasting glimmer of gold.
> As the mistletoe plant, the fruit of an alien tree,
> In the cold of winter puts forth fresh green in the woods,
> Embracing the shapely trunks with its light yellow growth;
> So looked that leafage of gold on the dark holm-oak,
> So crackled the thin metal foil in the light-blowing breeze.  

Frazer’s *Golden Bough* was published between 1911 and 1915 in 12 volumes and is said to have been first introduced to Japan by Ueda Bin (1864-1916), a poet-scholar. Yanagida Kunio (1875-1962), a famous Japanese folklorist, also read the works and visited with the author in Geneva in early 1920’s. Kenji may have come across *The Golden Bough* either through Yanagida, whose works he read, or through other sources, such as Ueda. Or considering that he could read English, he may have read the original volumes themselves. But this is not the place to explore Frazer’s influence on Kenji. The point here is that a traditional symbol, which is generally thought to be peculiar to a particular people of a specific place and age of the world, can actually be quite universal as well as personal.

Kenji’s personal interest in the mistletoe becomes obvious through its recurrent appearances both in his literature and in his life. Besides “The

Fourth Day," the mistletoe image appears in such works as "A Young Knife Sharpener" (Wakai togishi, 若い研師) and "Tanerī Seems to Have Chewed [It] the Whole Day" (Taneri wa tashika ni ichinichi kande itayōdatta, タネリはたいかにいちにち噛んでゐたやうだatted). Moreover, in his letter to a former student, which he wrote when he was recuperating from his first major illness, Kenji asks for mistletoe taken from chestnut trees.21 On the whole he associates mistletoe, both in his literature and in his life, with good luck. This is in general true of the mistletoe image in "The Fourth Day" as well, because, though the mistletoe can be associated with the cause of the chaotic snowstorm, it also functions as a protector for the child as well as a rejuvenator of cosmic life and harmony.

In conjunction with the positive connotations of the mistletoe image in "The Fourth Day," we should note the mistletoe's colour and shape. It is golden in colour and spherical in shape, and hence is reminiscent of the sun, which also plays an important role in this tale as well as in many other works by Kenji. Kenji apparently had special admiration for the sun, which brings to mind the sun-worship of various ancient peoples. The sun in the original tale of "The Fourth Day" is called o-hisama, which literally means "the venerable sun," o and sama being respectively the honorific prefix and suffix, which confer a great respect on the object or person to which or to whom they are attached. The sun that plays the drama of death and rebirth in the tale seems to symbolize the "death" and "rebirth" of the human child.

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21 Z 13: 269. In his letter to the same person dated April 4, 1930, Kenji writes: "Thank you very much for sending me the mistletoe. I gave some of it to other people and used the rest at home. It reminded me of the spring mountains where it must have been, such as the ravine of the Hayase River on the way to the Sennin Pass and the gentle highland above Akabane." (Z 13: 273).
who is buried with the golden mistletoe in the snow. It may be that by his gift of mistletoe to the child, the Snow Boy, who has a magical sympathy with nature, has sent him a drop of the sun.

This association between mistletoe and the sun is only one of the innumerable correspondences we can detect between mistletoe and other images in the tale. Kenji creates the association as mentioned earlier, because mistletoe functions as a mandala or microcosmos in "The Fourth Day." Both because it is a miniature, i.e., a "child," of the parent tree, the great chestnut, and because it has red fruit on it, mistletoe can be associated with the red blanket of the child as well as with the Snow Boy's cheeks, which were red like apples. We should also note that the Snow Boy let his gaze sweep over the quiet scenery of the handsome town on the plain as he picked up the mistletoe. It was Sunday, a "holy day"—and his act thus symbolized cosmic harmony. This harmonious cosmos is also symbolized by the elephant-shaped hill crowned by a great chestnut tree at its crest. Both the hill and the tree can be read as symbols of the center of the universe. The chestnut tree, in particular, with its mandala-like mistletoe, seems an apt symbol for the axis mundi (the world-axis).

We can see a concentric or nest-box like gradation in the images surrounding the hill and the chestnut tree: the red fruit in the mistletoe; the mistletoe itself; the child and the Snow Boy with his snow wolves; the Old Snow Woman with her snow boys; the swirling snowstorm; the earth; the sun; the stars and the galaxy; and the entire universe. We should also note that these images are not simply presented in a static way. The Old Snow Woman with her swirling ashen hair; the child walking hastily, wrapped in the red blanket; the sun busily stoking his dazzling white fire; the snow wolves' bright tongues, lolling, like flames; the Cassiopeia stars sending
pulsating blue waves down to the earth, responding to the Snow Boy’s greeting songs; the Snow Boy dancing up with rage scolding his wolves; the gleaming, white light of his shadow; the wolves darting back to their master, one of them bouncing up like a ball to chew off the mistletoe, which the Snow Boy flips to the child; and the Snow Boy laughing and cracking his whip, which makes feather-like snowflakes fall from all over the blue sky—all these images pulsate with an organic rhythm, mutually correspondent. In what seems a peaceful scene, all acts anticipate the impending snow storm. Just as the ancient shamans and magicians evoked the extraordinary atmosphere by swaying their sticks and wands, the author of “The Fourth Day” makes skillful use of these swaying and waving images to foreshadow the swirling snow storm, a microcosmic re-enactment of the vortical play of the larger universe. Together, the chestnut tree and the hill constitute the axis of the cosmic swirl of the blizzard. The great chestnut tree as the central pillar of the universe, is, in a sense, a cosmic wand that invites the cosmic snow storm.

At the same time as they function as “centre” markers, the chestnut tree and the hill also function as “boundary” markers. Just as the child, the Snow Boy and the Old Snow Woman are “marked,” so the space where the tree and the elephant-shaped hill exist is differentiated from “ordinary” space. Although the tree and the hill, when looked at from the point of view of “ordinary space,” stand at its periphery, they can also be said to stand at the center of the entire universe insofar as they are on the boundary between this world and the other world or between this world on earth and the other world in heaven, both of which together constitute the entirety of the universe.
The ambiguous and paradoxical status of the tree and the hill, which simultaneously "mark" both the center and periphery, is one of the innumerable paradoxes of this tale. These paradoxes and ambiguities ultimately converge into the paradox of life and death—which is the tale's central theme. The great chestnut tree, a fruit-bearing tree, standing with the golden mistletoe and its red berries on the snow-covered hill in winter, is an apt symbol of the paradoxical unity of life and death. The elephant-shaped hill, as we have seen earlier, has both negative and positive implications in the images of Vinayaka and Bodhisattva. The chestnut tree and the elephant-shaped, snow-covered hill, around which the snow storm swirls, are the axes where what Arnold van Gennep might call "pivoting" of values takes place. Around them the clear-cut demarcations between things such as life and death, earth and sky, and day and night are obliterated.

Just as elephant-shaped hills have a special symbolism in Kenji's tales, so also do chestnut trees. In "Polano Square" (Prāno no hiroba) and in "Taneyama Highland" (Taneyama ga hara), we come across a haloed chestnut tree, and in "Matasaburō, the Wind Child," in which "Taneyama Highland" is included in its revised form, chestnut trees assume a divine aura as in the following passages:

When the boys reached there [the entrance to the highland], they looked down towards the west. Beyond the hills overlapped in shades and lights stretched the real plain along the river in the hazy blue.

"Say, that's a river!"

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"It's like the sash of the god Kasuga," said Matasaburō.

"Like what?" asked Ichirō.

"Like the sash of the god Kasuga."

"Have you seen a god's sash?"

"I've seen one in Hokkaidō."

The boys had no idea about what Matasaburō was saying, and they became silent. Indeed, the place where they were standing was the entrance to the highland. In the midst of the clearing, where the grass was cleanly cut, stood a great chestnut tree with its trunk burnt black like a cave at its base and with old ropes and torn straw sandals hanging down from its boughs. (Z 10: 186)

Once arriving on the highland, the boys chase some horses from the villages below the hill. Two of the horses jump over a fence and flee. Matasaburō and Kasuke, one of the boys, chase them. Kasuke loses sight of Matasaburō in the fields of tall thistles and pampas grass. Then suddenly a huge ravine appears before his eyes. The other side of the ravine disappears in the mist as if it is bottomless. When the wind blows, the blades of pampas grass stretch out their slender hands as far as they can, busily swaying them as if they are saying, "Ah, Mr. West! Ah, Mr. East! Ah, Mr. West! Ah, Mr. South! Ah, Mr. West!" It is so abominable a scene that Kasuke looks aside, only to see a black path in the grass. He follows the path:

However, the path was unreliable, for its width fluctuated from five inches to three feet and besides, it looked like it was circular. And finally it diverged into many vague paths when it reached under a huge chestnut tree whose top was burnt. Perhaps that was the gathering place of the wild horses, because it looked like a round open space in the mist. (Z 10: 191)
Kasuke then falls down in the grass and sleeps. In his sleep he sees Matasaburō with his glass mantle and glass shoes on:

On Matasaburō’s shoulder fell a green shadow of a chestnut tree, while his shadow fell green on the grass. The wind was blowing on and on very strongly. Matasaburō neither laughed nor spoke, but he was silently looking up at the sky with his small lips firmly closed. Suddenly he jumped up into the sky. His glass mantle glittered dazzlingly. (Z 10: 192)

Opening his eyes, Kasuke sees one of the horses standing in front of him, looking sideways as if it feared Kasuke. Kasuke jumps up to grasp its halter, when he hears the calls of Ichirō and his brother. Later, after the boys are refreshed with fire and dumplings, the sun reappears to chase away the mist, and “The blue field in the far west smiled abashed as if it had just stopped crying, while the chestnut tree over there emitted a blue halo.” (Z 10:195)

A chestnut-tree image appears once more in the next section where the boys pick wild grapes after school. Here and there in a south-facing hollow stand chestnut trees, and under the chestnut trees are bushes of grape vines. The boys begin picking the grapes, but Kōsuke alone has been rather mean to Matasaburō on their way to the site, and then Kōsuke says to the other boys, “This is the place I found, so don’t pick too many, O. K.?" To this Matasaburō replies:

"I am going to pick the chestnuts," and picking up a pebble he threw it at a chestnut tree. A ball of green chestnut burrs fell from the tree...

Soon Kōsuke passed under a chestnut tree to move on to another bush, when suddenly dewdrops showered upon him from the tree, soaking him all over
as if he had been dunked in water. Taken aback, with his mouth wide open, Kōsuke looked up and saw that, before he knew it, Matasaburō had been up in the tree and he, too, was smirking as he wiped his face with his sleeves. (Z 10: 197)

In these scenes, Kenji uses the chestnut trees to evoke the supernatural. They have a close relationship with the strange child, Matasaburō, whom the children believe to be the spirit of the north wind. It is not very difficult to see similarities between these scenes and the chestnut tree scene on the hill in "The Fourth Day." The Wind Child, Matasaburō, corresponds to the Snow Boy. Taneyama Highland, with its horses both domestic and wild, corresponds to the elephant-shaped hill with its snow wolves, while the bushes of the grape-vines under the chestnut trees quoted above might be compared to the mistletoe with the red berries. More than anything else, the chestnut trees in both works serve as center-boundary markers: they constitute the cosmic axis as well as both a horizontal and vertical boundary, or rather a bridge, between this world and ikūkan.

We can cite still another tale in which chestnut trees are used to create a holy space. The last scene of "The Bears of Mt. Nametoko" is perhaps one of the most beautiful and moving scenes of its kind in world literature. Of course, to appreciate the beauty of such a scene one requires a keen, yet tender sensitivity towards life in general, and particularly towards non-human life. Kojūrō, the old hunter of the tale, is one such sensitive man. Although he kills bears for his livelihood, Kojūrō, unlike the two hunters from Tokyo in "The Restaurant of Many Orders," does not enjoy killing them at all. Rough and uncouth, but good-natured, Kojūrō is one of

23 The fact that Matasaburō came from Hokkaidō, the northern island, is suggestive in this connection.
the bears—he understands the bears' language and the bears seem to like him—rather than one of the shrewd human beings in town. One January day on a snowy hill-top surrounded with chestnut trees and snow-capped high mountain peaks, Kojūrō runs into a huge bear that attacks him like a black storm. His gun fails, and the bear knocks him down in one mighty blow.

The next moment, a great noise filled Kjūrō's head and everything about him went white. Then, far off in the distance, he heard a voice saying, "Ah, Kojūrō, I didn't mean to kill you."

"This is death," thought Kojūrō. All about him he could see light twinkling ceaselessly like blue stars. "Those are the signs that I'm dead," he thought, "the fires you see when you die. Forgive me, bears." As for what he felt from then on, I have no idea.

It was the evening of the third day following. A moon hung in the sky like a great ball of ice. The snow was a bright bluish white, and the water gave off a phosphorescent glow. The Pleiades and Orion's belt twinkled now green, now orange, as though they were breathing.

On the plateau on top of the mountain, surrounded by chestnut trees and snowy peaks, many great black shapes were gathered in a ring, each casting its own black shadow, each prostrate in the snow like a Muslim at prayer, never moving. And there at the highest point one might have seen, by the light of the snow and the moon, Kojūrō's corpse set in a kneeling position. One might even have imagined that on Kojūrō's dead, frozen face one could see a chill smile as though he were still alive. And Orion's belt moved to the center of the heavens, it tilted still further to the west, yet the great black shapes stayed quite still, as though they had turned to stone.²⁴

²⁴ Bester, Winds from Afar, p. 37.
From such examples, it is clear that, for Kenji, chestnut trees held considerable personal symbolic value. Certainly, they play a central role in his mandala scenes.\footnote{It is also interesting to note, in passing, that for the haiku poet, Basho, the chestnut tree carried Buddhist implications in that the character for chestnut (Japan.: kuri) consists of the two radicals: one for west , the other for tree , which associates the tree with the Amidist Western Paradise as well as with the Buddha's alleged enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. For further discussion on the chestnut tree symbolism in Basho, see William R. LaFleur, The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan (Berkely Los Angeles London: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 149-159.}

In the above mandala scene from "The Bears of Mt. Nametoko," Kojūrō's mystic smile can be compared to the serene smile of the Cosmic Buddha. If this scene, with old Kojūrō's smile at its center, is an expression of the serene harmony of the universe, one aspect of cosmic innocence, the stormy scenes of "The Fourth Day," with the crackling laughter of the Snow Boy resounding throughout the tale, would be an expression of the dynamic aspect of cosmic innocence. The Snow Boy's laughter is, one might say, the comico-cosmic laughter of "chaosmos" (chaos + cosmos).

His laughter is comic or playful in the sense that, unlike the serious Old Snow Woman (an adult) for whom snowing is a grave duty, the Snow Boy regards snowing as part of his play. For him, snow can be cotton candy, and he can save the child's life, laughing and disobeying the Old Snow Woman's command. His laughter is cosmic, for it can elicit the response of the universe with the falling snow flakes. After the chaotic snowstorm, the Snow Boy again laughs in the rosy morning sunlight that has restored the cosmic harmony, signifying the creation of the world. His laughter, so to
speak, is that of the universe itself—the universe which in reality may be neither chaos (death) nor cosmos (life), but "chaosmos."

The Snow Boy's laughter symbolizes or expresses the self-referential laughter of the universe, or more exactly Kenji's universe, which has nothing else but itself to laugh at. We have already touched on this self-referring aspect in the make-up of Kenji's universe in the previous chapter, using such analogies as the Möbius strip, M. C. Escher's pictures, and autophagy. We can apply the idea of self-reference to the relationships between the Snow Boy and the child and between Kojūrō and the bears. In the latter case, the autophagic mutual killing of the hunter and the bears and their mutual forgiveness and worship in the tale's last scene greatly enhances the sense of cosmic innocence and life, while in the case of the former, the Snow Boy in the end saves his double, thus accentuating the rebirth and rejuvenation of the child and the universe. In both cases we can perceive almost intuitively that Kojūrō (man) and the bears (nature or the universe), the Snow Boy (nature) and the child (man) are in the relationship of
interpenetration, and thus we cannot distinguish one from the other even using Russell's distinction of logical typing.26

The heightened sense of life and cosmic innocence in "The Fourth Day of the Month of Daffodils" is enhanced by the "sandwiching" structure of the tale: at first we have a peaceful scene of a snow-covered plain, then the violent chaos of the blizzard, followed by the restored peace and order. Underlying this kind of linear-cyclic or diachronic interpretation of the time scheme of the tale is the synchronic or cosmo-mystic time scheme: time, or rather non-time, expressed in the self-killing, self-saving, self-referring cosmic laughter of the Snow Boy, who, like the snow, both kills and protects the child. The chestnut trees and the hill in their ambiguous status as the center-periphery also indicate this point. "The Fourth Day" ends with an ambiguous line: "The child seemed to stir a little. And the figure in furs came running for all it was worth."27 The demarcation of life and death in "The Fourth Day" is ambiguous, but it is perhaps this ambiguity

26 Referring to this "incapability of decision" involving the difference between hierarchies or the levels of logical typing, Karatani Köjin, a Japanese literary critic, writes: "Laughter, too, is fundamentally based on the inescapable paradox. Man laughs not because he is free but because he is destined to have this 'incapability of decision,' which machinery does not possess. To put it differently, it is exactly this human condition that makes man free, and there is not even a necessity for us to eagerly regain our 'freedom.'" Karatani Köjin 柄谷行人, "Gengo to iu nazo" 言語という謎 (An enigma called language), originally published in Chūōkōron 中央公論 (The central review), March, 1982, and later included in his Inyu to shite no kenchiku 隠喻としての建築 (Architecture as a metaphor) (1983; rpt. Kōdansha, 1984), p. 188.

27 Bester, p. 164.
that underlies and generates the tension between life and death, intensifying the sense of life (or rather Life that subsumes both life and death) all the more: the Snow Boy cries, "Your father is coming. You must wake up now!" "racing up the hillock in a column of powdery snow"\textsuperscript{28} and the child's father, described ambiguously as "the figure in furs," comes running with all his might.

\textsuperscript{28} Bester, p. 164.
Chapter 4
The Symbolism of Death and Rebirth
in "The Night of the Milky Way Railroad"

In the last scene of "The Night of the Milky Way Railroad," we find Giovanni, the young hero of the tale, also running with all his might towards home, where his sick mother awaits him on the night of the Centaur Festival. If Giovanni runs energetically, it is because he has just "returned" from a journey into the realm of death, a journey which has left him rejuvenated, or even reborn. Like "The Fourth Day," "The Night" is also centrally concerned with the issue of rebirth, and though in a more subdued and grave manner, it, too, deals with the cosmic theme of what Mita Munesuke would call "sonzai no matsuri" (lit. the festival of existence)\(^1\)--or initiation through death and rebirth. In his recent travels, Giovanni has undergone just such an initiation, and thus, as he runs for home, he is, in fact, running back into sonzai no matsuri. But before analysing how Kenji develops this theme in detail, let us first recall the main narrative elements of "The Night."\(^2\)

"Well, then, everyone, what do you think this misty, white thing is which is said to be a river or a trace left by flowing milk?" (Z 10: 123), says

\(^1\)Mita Munesuke 見田宗介, Miyazawa Kenji: sonzai no matsuri no naka e 宮沢賢治存在の祭りの中へ (Miyazawa Kenji: into the festival of existence) (Iwanami Shoten, 1984), pp. 163-206.

\(^2\)Kenji kept revising this tale almost until the last moment of his death. Here, we will use what is considered to be the tale's final form by the editors of the Kōhon zenshū, with occasional references to what is considered to be the early version in the ninth volume of the Kōhon zenshū.
Giovanni's teacher to his class in the first chapter of the tale. Giovanni thinks that he knows what "the white thing" is, but when pressed by the teacher to answer, he hesitates and cannot. Indeed he is too tired and sleepy at school to answer any of the teacher's questions properly or to play with his friends, particularly with Campanella, whose father, a doctor, used to be a good friend of Giovanni's father. With his father away in the North Sea and his mother sick in bed, Giovanni has to work before and after school to support the family. And because he does not play with his friends, they begin to ostracize him; thus when Giovanni is unable to answer his teacher's question, Zanneri, one of his classmates, sneers at him.

But soon realizing that no one can answer his question, the teacher provides the answer himself, explaining:

"If you see this misty white river through a good telescope, a big one, you'll see lots of small stars. Isn't that right, Giovanni?" . . . The teacher continued. "So, if you consider this heavenly river to be a real river, each of these small stars corresponds to the sand and the pebbles on the river's bed. And if we take it to be a huge flow of milk, then that comparison would describe it more accurately. I mean, those stars all correspond to the tiny bits of oil that float in the milk. What corresponds to the water of the river, then? Well, it is called "a vacuum," a thing which propagates light at a certain speed, and our earth and the sun are also floating in it. In other words, we are also living in the water of the Milky Way. And if we look around from within the water, just as water looks bluer the deeper the water is, so the farther or deeper the bottom of the Milky Way, the more the stars appear to be densely gathered, and thus the more that part looks misty and white. Look at this model."
The teacher pointed to a large double convex lens with many shining grains of sand in it. "The shape of the Milky Way is just like this. Let's say that each of these shiny grains of sand is a star that emits light by itself—like our sun. Our sun is situated in about the middle of this lens, and the earth is right next to it. Suppose that you stood in the middle of it at night and looked around yourself. Then because this side is thin, you could see only a small number of stars, whereas these sides are thick, so you would see lots of shining sands or stars and the farther ends of those sides would look hazily white. This is the theory of the Milky Way of today. As to the question of how big this lens is in reality or as to the various stars in it, we are running out of time, so we shall talk about these matters next time. Today is the festival of the Milky Way, so everyone should go out and take a good look at the sky. That's all for today. Put away your books and notebooks." (Z 10: 124-125)

Chapter 2 is entitled "Printing House." Leaving his friends, who are talking about the lantern-floating that is to take place that night, Giovanni stalks out of the school gate and into the town. He goes into the printing house where he works, and finds that even though it is still day time, lamps are lit and workers are chanting and counting as if singing along with the noises of the rotary presses, which, with their wheels spinning, are busily at work. Giovanni works there until about six o'clock. Then, receiving some silver, he drops by a bakery to buy a loaf of bread and a bag of cubed sugar and runs straight home.

In Chapter 3, entitled "Home," we discover that Giovanni's mother is sick in bed, her face covered with a piece of white cloth. Giovanni talks to her about his father, who, he believes, is soon to return home from a fishing expedition to the North Sea. Giovanni's classmates disagree and say that his father is not fishing, but is actually in jail in the north, and it is for this
reason that they so frequently tease him. Giovanni tries to deny this rumour, citing such evidence as the specimens of giant crab or the reindeer antlers donated by Giovanni's father to the school. Giovanni then tells his mother about Campanella and his model train that is powered by an alcohol lamp on a circular rail. Following this, he mentions the floating of gourd lanterns on the river that is to take place for the festival of the Milky Way. He wishes, he says, to see the lanterns on his way to fetch milk for his mother. His mother consents but warns against entering the river. Promising that he will be back in an hour and a half, Giovanni goes out the dark doorway of his house.

The fourth chapter is entitled, "The Night of the Centaur Festival." As he walks down a slope lined by black cypress trees towards the center of the town, Giovanni begins to imitate the movement of a locomotive. At the bottom of the slope is a lamp post, and as he passes it, his shadow quickly circles around him, once behind but now in front. Suddenly Zanneri appears and again teases him about his father. Dejected by the teasing, Giovanni passes in front of a jewellery store and stops. There his attention is caught by many wonders: an owl-shaped clock, with its red eyes circling round once every second; glistening jewels, shimmering brilliantly like stars, all displayed on a rotating, sea-green plate of glass; a model of a centaur, revolving slowly on a turntable, coming steadily around towards him. Placed in the center of these is a round planisphere, decorated with asparagus leaves, and on the planisphere is a picture of the Milky Way, drawn like a hazy sash, its lower end blurred and indistinct as if many tiny explosions were occurring. Behind the planisphere is a telescope, glowing yellow on its three-legged stand, and on the farthest wall hang drawings of all the constellations, in the forms of mysterious creatures and beasts.
Giovanni watches these models and pictures in a state of semi-trance, wishing that he could travel on and on endlessly through the night sky with the centaur and the other imaginary constellation-creatures.

But then, suddenly remembering the milk he is to fetch for his mother, he leaves the store and walks through the town, which, decorated with green fir and oak leaves and illuminations, looks like a mermaid palace under the sea. In the town children merrily run around whistling the song of stars and shouting, “Centaur, send down dew drops!” while burning fireworks of magnesia. Giovanni, however, totally immersed in different matters, hurries towards the pasture at the edge of the town, where poplar trees stand tall, pointing up against the starry night sky. He enters the dark gate of the pasture and approaches a farm house. There he asks for the milk which was to be delivered to his house during the day. But the farm house is hushed. It is as if no one were there, and the woman, who, at Giovanni’s second call, finally does come out, comes out slowly, looking very ill and weak. She says that she knows nothing about his milk and that no one except herself is there at the moment. She then disappears like a ghost, leaving the boy at a loss.

Following this, Giovanni leaves the house and goes back to the town, where a group of his classmates make fun of him once more. Zanneri is among them, and Giovanni also notices his closest friend, Campanella, who, together with the other boys, disappears towards a bridge over the river, where they intend to float their gourd lanterns. Rejected by his friends, the boy flees to the edge of the town. There, in the early version of the work, he finds a river running over a vague white riverbed and a bridge with an iron railing crossing over it. Giovanni crosses the bridge and runs, again with all his might, towards a dark hill.
Chapter 5 is entitled, "The Pillar of the Weather Wheel" or literally, "The Pillar of the Heavenly Atmospheric Wheel" (Tenkirin no hashira, 天気輪の柱). As Giovanni climbs up a path through a grove of dark pine and Japanese oak trees, he suddenly comes upon an open space on the hill's summit. Wild flowers are blooming as if they have fragrantly come out of a dream world and a bird chirps over the hill. Here, under the Great Bear of the North, stands the Pillar of the Weather Wheel. Exhausted, Giovanni throws himself onto the cold grass at the foot of the pillar and cools his body, which is throbbing from the exertion of climbing. From the top of the hill, he can see the lights of the town shimmering as if they were undersea palaces or the Milky Way, and he can hear faint fragments of children's songs and whistles, carried on the winds from afar that gently sway the grass and cool his sweat-soaked shirt. The sounds of a train also reach his ears from the faraway fields. Giovanni sees a row of bright yellow windows on the train, and imagines the passengers who are probably peeling apples, talking to each other and laughing. This makes him feel sad beyond description, and he looks up at the Milky Way. The blue Lyre's legs stretch and shrink like a mushroom, and the lights of the town below become blurred into a big lump of smoke.

In the next chapter, entitled "Galaxy Station," Giovanni hears from somewhere a strange voice calling, "Galaxy Station! Galaxy Station!" and suddenly a blinding explosion of light takes place before his eyes. Before he knows what has happened, Giovanni finds himself on a night train. In front of him is a tall child, sticking his head out the window. His jacket looks black as if he had gone through water. The boy turns out to be Campanella, with whom Giovanni will travel for the rest of the journey. Giovanni's train runs through a field of silvery pampas grass, dotted here and there with
yellow-bottomed cups of gentians. He can also see the multi-coloured signals with various colours and the water of the Galaxy, which is transparent like hydrogen, yet glittering purple and rainbow-coloured from time to time depending on the angle of his viewpoint. Excited, Giovanni briskly shakes his head, which makes the colours in the field blink and quiver as if they are breathing.

Chapter 7 is entitled, "Northern Cross and Beach Pliocene." "Will my mom forgive me?" Campanella says abruptly. "I will do anything to make my mom happy. But what will indeed make her happy?" Surprised by this, Giovanni shouts, "Nothing is wrong with your mom, is it?" "I don't know, but anyone who has done something really good becomes happiest, doesn't he? So I believe that my mom will forgive me," says Campanella as if he were firmly determined about something. Suddenly the inside of the train becomes bright. In the flow of the Milky Way is an island with a bluish white halo rising up from it, and on top of the island is serenely standing a beautiful, white cross capped with a clear-cut, golden aureole. The cross looks as if it were cast in the frozen clouds of the North Pole. From in front of and behind the boys rise the voices of prayer, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" Campanella's cheeks brighten like ripe red apples. But soon the train leaves the island of the cross behind and stops at Swan Station in front of the large clock that says 11 o'clock.

Getting off the train, Giovanni and Campanella go to the shore of the Milky Way, where an archaelogist is excavating something with his assistants:

"Are you on school excursion?" said the scholarly looking man to Giovanni and Campanella, his glasses flashing. "You saw a lot of walnuts over there, didn't you?"
They are, I'd say, about one million, two hundred thousand years old. They are very young. This area used to be a seashore about a million, two hundred thousand years ago, that is, soon after the tertiary period, and so you can dig out seashells from the ground. Just where the river flows brine water was flowing and ebbing. You mean this beast? This is called... hey, don't use a pickax there. Work gently with a chisel... This is called bosu, the ancestor of the present ox, and there were lots of these before."

"Are you going to make it a specimen, sir?"

"No. I need it for evidence. I mean, to us this place is made of a beautiful, thick stratum and provides us with various proofs to support the theory that this area was made about a million, two hundred thousand years ago. But to others, does this area still appear to be such a stratum? Or does it not perhaps look like winds, water or empty space or something? Got it? However,... hey, you. You can't use a shovel there, either. Don't you remember that the ribs are buried underneath?" The bachelor of science scurried away from the boys. (Z 10: 142)

Giovanni and Campanella return to the train.

Chapter 8 is entitled, "The Bird Catcher." "Is it alright if I sit down here?" says a coarse, yet gentle voice behind the boys (Z 10: 143). The owner of the voice is a red-bearded man with a crooked back and shabby clothes. He has bundles strung on his shoulder. He explains that he is a bird catcher who catches various birds such as cranes, geese, swans and herons on the shore of the Milky Way. These he presses for preservation, and what is strange is that when Giovanni eats some of the birds the bird catcher has given him they taste like chocolate or some other sweet. What is more, according to the bird catcher, the birds around the Milky Way are made of the sands of the Milky Way. Giovanni and Campanella witness the truth of
the bird catcher's words when he disappears suddenly and stands on the shore of the Milky Way to catch herons:

"He is over there. It's very strange, isn't it? He must be about to catch birds again. I hope the birds come down before the train runs away." The moment [Giovanni] said this, herons that looked like the ones they saw a while ago came down all over the place with rasping cries from the empty, dark violet sky as if they were snow flakes. (Z 10: 147)

The bird catcher catches the herons one after another and puts them in the bag. Then the birds flicker blue in the bag a few moments like glow worms, but in the end they turn vaguely white and close their eyes. Most of the birds that are not caught by the catcher land on the sands of the shore. As soon as their legs touch the sands, they melt like snow leaving only the outline of their shapes on the sands, and after flickering bright and dark a few times they become assimilated into the ground. The bird catcher returns to the train in the twinkling of an eye. "How did you come here all at once from over there?" Giovanni asks. To this the bird catcher answers, "Well, I'm here because I wanted to come over here. Where on earth are you from?" (Z 10: 148)

Chapter 9, the last and the longest chapter, is entitled, "Giovanni's Ticket." While the boys and the bird catcher are talking about the observatory that stands in the middle of the Milky Way, the conductor of the train comes around to examine tickets. Both the bird catcher and Campanella produce their tickets from their pockets with a matter-of-fact air to show them to the conductor, but Giovanni is upset and fidgets. Finally, in his confusion, he puts his hand in the pocket of his jacket, and to his surprise he finds a post-card size sheet of paper folded in four. He
hands it to the conductor, who scrutinizes it carefully, while eagerly tidying the buttons and other parts of his uniform. "Did you bring this from the third dimensional space?" asks the conductor. "I really don't know," answers Giovanni. "Very well, sir. We'll arrive at Southern Cross in the third hour." With this the conductor leaves Giovanni and Campanella.

The piece of paper which was in Giovanni's pocket has black arabesque all over it, and about ten strangely shaped characters are printed in the middle of the design. These characters are highly unusual, for if you look at them quietly, it feels as if you were being sucked into them. The bird catcher, who has been watching the paper from the side, says to Giovanni, "My, this is something! This ticket will even allow you to go to Heaven. No, not only to Heaven, but to any place. No wonder that you can travel anywhere on such an incomplete, fourth dimensional fantasy Railroad. Aren't you something!" Giovanni suddenly feels sorry for this bird catcher, who works so hard catching birds and who so kindly flatters Giovanni about his ticket. Giovanni thinks that he would like to give the bird catcher anything he has or catch birds for him, standing on the shore of the Milky Way, for 100 years. But when he looks back at the bird catcher to ask him what he wants, the bird catcher is gone.

Immediately after this, the boys smell the fragrance of apples and wild roses, when all at once there appears in front of them a bare-footed boy of about six with black hair and a red jacket. The boy looks very surprised and is trembling. Beside the boy stands a tall young man, holding the boy's hand firmly. And behind the young man is a girl of about 12 with brown eyes, holding the man's arm. The young man lets the boy and the girl sit beside Giovanni and Campanella, respectively. The lighthouse keeper, sitting behind them, asks where they are from. The young man, who turns
out to be the tutor of the children, explains that their boat had collided with an iceberg and they had been drowned before they came to the sky.

Upon hearing the young man's story, the lighthouse keeper offers everyone big, beautiful apples—red and gold in colour—which he has had on his lap. The lighthouse keeper explains:

> Around here they also do farming, but there is a tacit understanding that most of the time plants grow by themselves, yielding good crops. Farming does not require too much effort. Usually, if you sow the seeds you choose, they quickly grow by themselves. Even rice, unlike that grown in the Pacific region, is huskless and ten times as big and smells good. However, in the place you are heading for, there is no agriculture any more. Food, whether it's an apple or a cake, does not leave any waste, so depending on the individual, it turns into various fragrances to evaporate from the person's pores. (Z 10: 155)

When the passengers peel the apples that the lighthouse keeper has given them, the peels evaporate into the air before they reach the floor.

After this, various scenes appear and disappear one after another outside the train windows. These scenes include a beautiful wood of red shining fruit on the other side of the river, many magpies perched on the shore of the river, peacocks, and a man with a red hat who is signalling with red and green flags to the migratory birds that cross the river. While watching these scenes and listening to the sound of hymns that they had also heard at the beginning of their journey, Campanella and the girl sitting next to him merrily converse with each other. Giovanni feels left out, and tears well up in his eyes, which makes the Milky Way look blurred and far away.
Then the train gradually turns away from the river and runs instead along a cliff. Soon it stops at a small station in the middle of corn fields, in front of a clock that indicates the second hour. Within the train one can hear the New World Symphony and the passengers, all except Giovanni and Campanella, are peacefully asleep. Giovanni thinks that this may be the highland of Colorado. Indeed an Indian appears outside the window, dancing. This awakens the passengers. The Indian soon shoots an arrow into the sky, which brings down a crane. The Indian catches the falling bird in his arms.

From here, the train goes rapidly down the highland towards the river. When the train reaches the river, the passengers witness an engineering corps who are using dynamite to build a bridge. The explosion blows water—and with it many big trout and salmon—up into the air. This cheers Giovanni, who has so far been rather sulky because Campanella is so friendly with the girl.

Suddenly the outside of the windows flares up bright and red. The light comes from a crimson fire, called the Scorpion's Fire, that is burning on the other side of the river. The story of the Scorpion's Fire, as is retold by the girl who heard it from her father, is as follows:

Once upon a time in a field named Bardora there lived a scorpion. He lived on small worms and insects, but one day a weasel found him and chased after him. The scorpion ran and ran but was finally caught by the weasel and was about to be eaten, when he fell into a well. In the well, he began to drown. Thereupon he said, "Ah! How many lives have I taken so far? However, when I was about to be eaten by the weasel I desperately tried to escape, but finally ended up falling into such a situation. Ah! Nothing is reliable in this world. Why didn't I give my body to the weasel quietly? Then the weasel would have lived one day longer. Oh, God,
please look into my heart. Next time please let me not waste my life in such a vain way, but please use my body for the sake of the true happiness of all beings."

Then the scorpion found his body in flames, emitting beautiful crimson hues that illuminated the dark night around him. He is still burning. (Z 10: 163)

As the Scorpion's Fire passes out of sight, the passengers hear sounds and noises of people and music, as if the train is nearing a town where a festival or something of the sort is taking place. "Centaur, send down your dew!" suddenly cries the boy who has been sitting beside Giovanni and has been sleeping. "Ah, yes. Tonight is the night of the Centaur Festival, isn't it?" "Yea, this must be the village of Centaur," replies Campanella immediately (Z 10: 164).

The young man tells the boy and the girl to make themselves ready because the train will soon arrive at Southern Cross. The train then stops in front of a shining cross with a pale ring of apple-flesh coloured clouds circulating around its top, and here, the young man and his pupils, together with the other passengers, get off the train, leaving Campanella and Giovanni alone. Soon after their train leaves Southern Cross, the boys observe a "black hole":

"Oh, that is the 'Coal Sack,' the hole of the sky," said Campanella as he pointed to one part of the Milky Way, while slightly averting his eyes from that direction. Giovanni, looking in that direction, was startled. There was a great, black hole in one place in the Milky Way. However hard one might try to discern how deep the hole was or what hid in its depths, one could not see anything. The attempt only hurt one's eyes. Giovanni said, "I am no longer afraid of being in that kind of huge darkness. I'm determined to go in there, looking for the true happiness of all beings. Campanella, let's go forward on and on—the two of us, OK?" "Surely we
shall. Oh, how pretty the field over there is! See, all of them have gathered
together there. That must be the real heaven. Look! That’s my mother. She is
over there!” Campanella suddenly cried, pointing to the beautiful field they could
see far away outside the window. (Z 10: 167)

Giovanni also looks in that direction, but the only thing that he can see there
is misty whiteness. Giovanni feels unbearably sad and lonely, when he
notices two electric poles standing side by side on the other side of the
river. With their red crossarms extending to each other, they look as if they
are arm-in-arm with each other. “Campanella, let’s go forward together,
shall we?” Giovanni turns around to Campanella, but Campanella is not there
any more. Giovanni gets up like a shot and, sticking his body out the
window, shouts with all his might and starts crying.

Giovanni opens his eyes and finds himself lying in the grass on top of
the hill, his cheeks cold with tears but his heart strangely hot. The town
looks almost the same as it did before he fell asleep a while ago—just a
little more heated than before—and the Milky Way also spans vaguely white
across the whole sky. At the place where the sky meets the horizon it is
particularly hazy, and on the right are the scintillating, beautiful red stars
of the Scorpion. It seems that the entire constellation has barely moved.

Suddenly remembering his mother, waiting all this time without
supper, Giovanni runs down the hill to the pasture at the edge of the town.
He stands in front of the cowshed, where there is a man with large white
trousers on. The man looks as if he has just returned from somewhere.
Giovanni receives a bottle of milk which is still hot and comes to the
crossing in the town where he had previously seen Campanella and his other
classmates going to the river to float lanterns. There is a group of women
huddled together, whispering to each other and looking in the direction of
the bridge, and one of them tells Giovanni that a boy fell into the river. Giovanni runs down the riverbed and runs into Marso, who was with Campanella when Giovanni left them. Marso informs Giovanni that Campanella jumped into the water to save Zanneri, who fell in the water and was drowning. Zanneri was saved, but Campanella disappeared under the water. The townspeople, including Campanella's father, a doctor, have been searching for Campanella for some time now. At this news Giovanni is so shocked that his legs quake.

Downstream, the dark river fully reflects the Milky Way and, as it is, looks like the waterless night sky. Giovanni somehow feels strongly that Campanella is no longer anywhere but at the farthest edge of the Milky Way reflected in the river. Campanella's father, holding a watch in his hand, says firmly, "It's hopeless now because 45 minutes have passed since my son fell in." Giovanni goes running to him, wanting to tell him that he knows in which direction Campanella has gone, but his throat chokes. Apparently thinking that Giovanni has come to greet him, Campanella's father thanks Giovanni for coming to help look for Campanella. The tale ends with the following passage:

"Has your father returned yet?" the doctor asked Giovanni, as he held his watch firmly in his hand.

"No, sir," Giovanni faintly shook his head.

"Isn't it strange? I received a letter from your father the day before yesterday, in which he wrote that he was doing very well. He should have arrived around today. The boat must have been delayed, I believe. Giovanni, please come to my house with your friends tomorrow after school." With these words the doctor
again cast his gaze downstream where the Milky Way was reflected all over the surface of the water.

Giovanni's heart was filled with so many things that he could not say a word; he left Campanella's father and, thinking that as soon as possible he would take the milk to his mother and let her know that his father would return, he ran along the riverbed towards the town with all his might. (Z 10: 171)

As is clear from the above outline, "The Night" may be divided roughly into three parts: the prelude to Giovanni's dream (Chapters 1-5); the world of the dream (Chapters 6-9); and Giovanni's awakening (the last few pages of Chapter 9). In the introductory part, Kenji uses symbolic images in such a way that the reader, together with the hero, is easily drawn into the world of the dream. Furthermore, the images presented in this part often echo those presented in the later chapters, thus forming a microcosm to the macrocosm of the whole of the tale.

The first chapter, entitled "The Afternoon Class," immediately draws our attention in that it establishes, from the very beginning, the central images of milk and the Milky Way in both the reader's and Giovanni's minds through the teacher's question and explanation. In this chapter, many other images and elements carry symbolic implications. For instance, the space and time of the "afternoon class" are significant. The classroom is a place of initiation where Giovanni goes through such trials as the teacher's question and Zanneri's derision. Being afternoon, when the senses begin to be lulled, the time is also suitable for the initiation. The misty, white picture of the galaxy hung on the blackboard, together with Giovanni's hazy, fatigued consciousness, create an oneiric atmosphere. If we add to this Giovanni's memory of the photograph of the Milky Way that he saw with Campanella at the latter's house, we can say that the pattern of Giovanni's
initiatory journey with Campanella that occurs in his dream of the Milky Way is already anticipated here on a microcosmic scale. In his dream, Giovanni's journey takes place outside the classroom, after he experiences such hardships as the illness of his mother, the absence of his father, and the ostracism of his friends. In the early version of the tale, during Giovanni's dream, a slender man with a cello-like voice teaches him of the ultimate make-up of the universe and of his mission in life before allowing Giovanni to return to this world. Can we not see a resemblance between this slender man and the teacher of the afternoon class, who, after explaining the structure of the universe to Giovanni and the other boys, sends them into the town? There is another correspondence between the small-scale initiation in the afternoon class and the large-scale initiation in Giovanni's dream: after both initiations Giovanni returns to his mother. The image of returning, in turn, corresponds to the circular image of the gigantic vortex of the galactic universe—the tale's central image. In the introductory chapters, we can see many other images of circles and cycles both large and small, all of which appear to reflect the macrocosmic vortex of the galaxy.

These images support the theme of initiation in various ways. In the first place, they form a close relationship with the hero's fatigue and his lulled consciousness, which are indispensable for his sleep or trance in Chapter 5. This is because gyrations cause dizziness and a dimming of consciousness. The first image of rotation and circle in the tale appears in Chapter 1 in the form of the round double convex lens used as a model of the Milky Way. This model is related to dizziness not only because it is round, but also simply because it is a model. A model or imitation is a kind of mimicry, and it is well known that imitation and mimicry often accompany
festivals, in which trance is a central aspect. This galactic model may be a goshintai (御神体, a holy object in which a deity resides) of the Milky Way Festival. Furthermore, together with other model images that appear later on, it has the effect of destroying our ordinary sense of time and space through its micro-macro relationship with the real galaxy. In other words, with this galactic model, and with the teacher's explanation, the reader as well as Giovanni has the illusion of looking down at the Milky Way from the outside and looking up at it from the inside simultaneously. Up and down are reversed, just as in dizziness.

The numbing of the senses through the images of circles and revolution, which often overlap with the images of models, is repeated and strengthened in the subsequent chapters. In Chapter 2, entitled "Printing House," although it is still daytime, the lights are on and many rotary presses are at work with their wheels spinning noisily, while the adults read and count something as if they are singing. The confusion of day and night, the spinning of the rotary presses, the voices of the people that sound like incantation or sutra reading—all of these further numb Giovanni's senses, making him feel dizzy and sleepy. In Chapter 3, "The Home," we find the image of a model train that runs on circular rails, which, of course, foreshadows the Milky Way Railroad in Giovanni's dream, and Giovanni mentions his paper route: "Even now, I go circulating papers every morning, you know" (ima mo mai asa shinbun o mawashi ni iku yo). Also in the fourth chapter, "The Night of the Centaur Festival," mimes and models are related to dizziness. Going down

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the slope of cypress trees, Giovanni mimics a locomotive, while his shadow, in turn, imitates the boy's movement, and as he passes the lamp post, it quickly circles around from behind until it is in front of him. Is Giovanni's ghost-like shadow his double that goes on the night journey in the boy's dream while his body is fast asleep, lying on the hill? Or is his shadow his only friend, conjured up out of his loneliness? Or is it literally foreshadowing Campanella's spirit, who is to journey with him on the Milky Way Railroad? Perhaps, it embodies all of these.

At the bottom of the slope, Giovanni again comes across the images of circles and rotations. We have already touched on the owl-clock with its red eyes circling each second, the jewels displayed on a rotating plate, and the centaur model revolving on a turntable that Giovanni sees in the display window of the jewellery store. What is notable in this scene is that, just as in the case of the galactic model in the first chapter, the author manipulates these images in such a way that the sense of space of the hero as well as of the reader is "confused" before he knows it. It is not a mere coincidence that the jewellery shop is located at the bottom of the slope. Nor is it accidental that the jewellery table, which reminds us of the lens of the galactic model, has a deep sea green colour, and that the air in the town is "crystal clear, flowing through the stores and the streets just like water... making the place look as if it is palace of mermaids." The yellow telescope, which makes things look large, and the constellation map with its images of strange celestial creatures are also effective in deranging our ordinary sense of space. Needless to say, the reversal of "up" and "down" is closely related to the image of rotation.

If our sense of space is put out of order, it naturally follows that our sense of time is also confused. The fact that Giovanni forgets himself in
front of the jewellery store is suggestive. Indeed, in this tale two kinds of
time are operating, sometimes merging with, and at other times diverging
from each other: one is ordinary time, the other, extraordinary. To the
former belong such elements as light, consciousness, rationality and life,
whereas to the latter belong darkness, death, etc. We could also call the
former the time of mundane life and the latter, holy time or the time of
ritual and festival. In the first chapter of this work, the distinction between
mundane and holy time is blurred. The afternoon class is the time when
Giovanni becomes sleepy, for it is the time when evening is approaching, but
it is also the space of mundane time. The students have to use their
rationality in the classroom, while the teacher says, "As to the various
stars in it [the model] I will touch on it in the next lesson, for we're running
out of time now." In the following chapter, "The Printing House," as we have
seen, festival time is dominant—the order of day and night is reversed and
the wheels of the rotary presses are busily spinning, but on the other hand
we could say that the movable types partake of rationality; also Giovanni
leaves the house "soon after the 6 o'clock chime of the clock," and so in a
sense, Giovanni has returned to the time of every-day life. In the third
chapter, "The House," Giovanni's sick mother is lying in bed with her face
covered with white cloth, thus evoking the atmosphere of the house of the
dead or of a funeral ceremony. In other words, the time of the dead (or of
the extraordinary and of the ritual) as opposed to that of life or of the
ordinary is dominant in this chapter. At the same time, however, Giovanni
and his mother operate on the level of ordinary time when they talk about
Giovanni's sister, who left the house around 3 o'clock, or about his school
excursion the year before last, or about his going out on an errand for an
hour and a half that night.
In the fourth chapter, Giovanni descends into festival time, the time (or rather, non-time) of the unconscious. But in the flow of this festival time Giovanni finds the jewellery store. Interestingly enough, in the shop window, where Giovanni sees an owl clock whose eyes rotate every second, he also finds the various models and images that hypnotize him into the dream world. It is in front of this jewellery store that Giovanni both falls into a daydream and suddenly comes back to reality (“then, suddenly remembering the milk he is to fetch for his mother, he [Giovanni] leaves the store...”). The jewellery store scene constitutes a good example of the intertwining of these two kinds of time.

After this scene and until Giovanni falls asleep, dream time becomes predominant, and only rarely does ordinary time show itself on the surface of the story. The images of the Great Bear and Pleiades may be hinting slightly at the latter kind of time, but in fact these images are more strongly expressive of dream time. In Giovanni’s dream, something quite akin to the time of everyday life is often mentioned in such expressions as “arrival at exactly 11 o’clock” and “30-minute stop.” But this, combined with Campanella’s father’s words, “It’s hopeless now because 45 minutes have past since my son fell in,” uttered after Giovanni’s awakening, may be a device to strengthen the impression of how the time covered in the dream is long or “timeless.”

The subtle interaction of the two types of time in this tale suggests that, underlying what is thought to be ordinary time flows extraordinary or “timeless” time. We could, in fact, say that ordinary time symbolizes extraordinary time in this work. The tale’s last scene, in which the boundless flow of the Milky Way merges with the limited flow of the river
on earth, forming a gigantic circle of heaven and earth, is a typical example of such symbolism.

The interaction and conflation of time and space in the everyday consciousness and in the unconscious are also symbolized by the image of the Centaur. The model of the Centaur, the surrealistic, imaginary creature in Greek mythology, which Giovanni sees in the show window of the jewellery shop, is an image appropriate to the context of a dream. The Centaur is, after all, a combination of the human (consciousness) and the beast (the unconscious), and dreams are usually born in the borderland between the conscious and the unconscious. The Centaur is therefore an apt symbol of the unity of ordinary and extraordinary time. Perhaps this is also one reason that Kenji uses “The Centaur Festival” and “The Milky Way Festival” synonymously, and that the former becomes the title of the fourth chapter.

It follows that if the Centaur (a man-horse hybrid) is in the sky, then mermaids (human-fish hybrids) are under the sea. Certainly the recurrent images of the depths of the sea and water we come across in the introductory chapters of this tale are related to the drownings of Campanella and the young tutor and his pupils that occur later on. But what is more interesting is the falling image of drowning as it is superimposed on the rising image of ascension. The descent into the unconscious or death is directly transformed; it becomes an ascent into the spiritual realm, or the ultimate state of consciousness or life. This circular, Möbius strip-like ambiguity of life and death or of “up” and “down” is only one more variation on the numerous images of gyration which we have already touched upon. The interesting point here is that this circular ambiguity is expressed through the seemingly casual images of the Centaur and mermaids.
The symbolic meanings of the Centaur are not limited to those mentioned above. Immediately after the jewellery store scene, there is a scene in which some children, whistling the song of stars, run around shouting, "Centaur, send down dew drops!" as others play with the blue flames of the magnesian fireworks in front of a power company where the atmosphere is like that of the palace of mermaids. Is there any relationship between the Centaur’s dew and the magnesian fireworks? What first comes to mind are the recurring images of the floating gourd lanterns that appear before and after this scene. The blue fire of the gourd lanterns and that of the magnesian fire overlap, as does the river water and the dew of the Centaur. Furthermore, *ama no gawa* 天の川 (lit. heaven’s river) or the Milky Way, insofar as it gives us the impression of lanterns floating in heaven, is at once an image of both fire (stars) and water (river). The same can be said of the Centaur’s dew and its stars (fire). We come across this fusion of fire and water in various other works by Kenji. In his poem entitled “A Daze on a Hill” (Oka no genwaku, 丘の眼), for instance, Kenji writes: “The snow on the bamboo leaves / burns down / burns down” (Z 2: 15). And in “The Fourth Day of the Month of Daffodils,” as we have seen earlier, there is a scene in which the snow boys talk about snow and the blue fire of Cassiopeia. It may be that fire and water are not as dramatically opposed as they appear at first glance. Water is synthesized through the combustion of hydrogen. The children may be burning the magnesian fireworks in order to call down Centaur’s dew. According to

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4 Coincidence of opposites as seen in the fusion of fire and water, of course, is not the invention of Kenji alone. Other poets and writers made use of it. But this point will be treated in the next chapter when we discuss Kenji’s style.
myth, the Centaur was born out of the union between a man and a mare in the Greek district of Magnesia, where the mineral, magnesia, is produced. This may be the reason that the dew of the Centaur is invoked by the magnesian fireworks.

Such a coincidence of opposites as water and fire often accompanies intoxication and dizziness. Conversely, intoxication abolishes the distinction that our bifurcating consciousness has created between the two poles. In any case, coincidence of opposites ultimately implies unity and harmony. Perhaps the sense of ecstasy and beauty originates here.

Presumably innocence also has its origin in such harmony. One essential reason that children are thought to embody, or at least to be close to innocence is probably that they are in the state of unity and harmony first with their mothers and by extension with the rest of the world. We can generally say, therefore, that to the extent that man grows up and becomes independent, and thus "alienated," from his mother, he runs the risk of becoming alienated from nature and from the universe. Alienation is the loss of innocence.

At the same time, however, alienation is the discovery of innocence, for it is through the loss of innocence (i.e., distancing or alienating ourselves from our innocent childhood) that we realize for the first time that we possessed, or rather we were in, innocence. This is another paradox of coincidence of opposites; still another paradox is that through alienation we not only realize that we were in innocence but also that we are still in innocence. This is because, in one sense, we are children of nature, or part of the universe. Restoration of innocence, therefore, seems to be crucially dependent upon one's realization that man is at once an adult independent of nature and a child dependent on nature. We are reminded here of Kenji's
words about what he calls "Cosmic Consciousness" in his "Notes for the Outline of Agrarian Art": "The new age is moving towards the state where the whole world becomes one consciousness, one creature. To live correctly and strongly means to become aware of the galaxy in one's self and to respond to this consciousness" (Z 12-A: 9) and "First of all become, together with others, the shining modica of the universe and be scattered throughout the limitless sky" (Z 12-A:15). Kenji's entire life as well as his literature, particularly his tales, can be interpreted as an appeal to us that we are, even as adults, the children of the universe.

The abundant images of circles and gyrations in "The Night" are related on the one hand to the idea of coincidence of opposites which, in turn, is related to that of innocence. In a circle, the starting point (life) is identical with the goal (death) and the past is none other than the future. Curves and circles can also be closely associated with femininity and motherhood, or more exactly with the womb, both human and cosmic and with the fetus, or the egg—the sources of innocence. It is quite natural, therefore, that this tale, whose main theme is the hero's initiation into restored innocence through death (a return to the womb) and rebirth (a prospect for growth into adulthood), abounds in images of circles that are connected to Giovanni's fatigue and sleepiness. As mentioned earlier, the images of circles and those of the Centaur and of mermaids become interrelated through the idea of coincidence of opposites.

Initiation, so to speak, is realized at the meeting point between such apparently "oppositional" pairs as the ordinary and the extra-ordinary, man
and nature, the conscious and the unconscious and life and death.\(^5\) Initiation is a transition, both physical and psychic, of the initiate from one state to another or from one realm, e.g., this world, to another, e.g., the other world, and vice versa. In initiation, the initiate crosses over the boundary between the two states or realms. The trance that often accompanies initiation etymologically means to cross over (transire). Thus we come across many images of boundaries in "The Night," which is a story of initiation. When we examined the images of circles and the Centaur we were already touching upon the issue of boundary, but in the following we shall re-examine the introductory part of the tale more specifically in terms of its images of "boundary."

The school gate, through which Giovanni stalks into town in the first chapter, obviously marks the boundary between the space of initiation called school and the rest of the world, namely, the town. Before he falls asleep, Giovanni crosses over various boundaries other than the school gate. In Chapters 2 and 3, boundary images include the entrance to the printing house, the large door inside and the three entrances to Giovanni's tenement house, one of which (the one to Giovanni's apartment) is later called "the dark entrance"; in Chapter 4, one finds the slope lined by cypress trees, the tall poplar trees at the edge of the town, the black gate of the pasture, the bridge towards which the vague figure of Campanella, who is later drowned, walks, the bridge Giovanni crosses before he climbs the hill in the early version of the tale, the hill of the Pillar of the Weather Wheel, the dark path

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\(^5\) Of course, these pairs are not opposites from the viewpoint of restored innocence, which sees them as interpenetrating each other or mutually subsuming. These pairs appear to be in opposition to rationality, the principle of bifurcation and alienation.
surrounded by pines and oaks that Giovanni has to pass before he reaches the empty field of grass (a symbol of the unconscious?) near the hilltop, the hilltop itself and the Pillar of the Weather Wheel that stands on the hilltop under the Great Bear.

These images of boundaries are related in some way or other to the death of everyday consciousness and to dizziness. Above all, the scene of the slope with the black cypress trees draws our attention. Here the images of mime and gyrations (Giovanni's shadow and the wheels of the locomotive) touched on earlier are naturally superimposed upon the descending image of Giovanni's going down the slope. Considering the fact that Giovanni sees Campanella, who is to be drowned soon after this, at the bottom of the slope, the slope may be functioning as the boundary between this world and the other world. This seems to be substantiated by the fact that in Japanese saka 坂 (slope) originally meant sakai 境 (boundary). Indeed, in the myth of Izanagi and Izanami in Records of Ancient Matters (Kojiki, 古事記), there is a slope between this world and the world of the dead, and the same is true of the Orpheus myth and of Dante's Divine Comedy.

What is notable in this slope scene in "The Night" is that the image of the slope, which indicates Giovanni's descent to the realm of dream and the unconscious, at the same time contains the image of ascent in the form of
the cypress trees. It seems that the slope with the cypress trees—like the galactic model, the printing house and the jewellery store that we have already seen—also functions to confuse Giovanni’s and the reader’s common sense distinction between “up” and “down,” thereby producing the same effect of dizziness that is caused by the images of gyration not only in this tale but also in other tales and poems by Kenji. (See for example, “The Fourth Day” and “Spring and Asura.”) In the introductory chapters of “The Night,” the images of boundaries, both horizontal (the doorway, the gate, the bridge, etc.) and vertical (the slope, the trees, the hill, etc.), are combined in such a way that the hero as well as the reader are smoothly drawn into the oneiric realm.

Among the boundary images in this work, there is one which demands particular attention. It is the Pillar of the Weather Wheel that stands under the Great Bear of the North. As we noted in the previous chapter, from most ancient times, and in various places of the world, a pillar—together with a tree and a hill—was believed to possess magical and divine powers as objects in which the spirit of man or of a god was thought to reside or as

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6 As for the symbolic meanings of the cypress trees, poplars, and other trees in this work, see Amazawa Taijirō 天沢泰二郎, “Naze 'Kampanera no shi ni au' ka: ginga tetsudō no kaneta josetsu” なぜ「カムパネルラの死に遭ふ」か 銀河鉄道の彼方・序説 (Why “[Giovanni] encounters the death of Campanella”: an introduction to “The far side of the Milky Way Railroad”), in Irisawa Yasuo 正林 康夫 and Amazawa Taijirō 天沢泰二郎, Tōgi “Ginga tetsudō no voru” to wa nani ka 討議『銀河鉄道の夜』とは何か (What is “The Night of the Milky Way Railroad”? a discussion) (Seidosha, 1976), pp. 66–86.

7 Note, for instance, the following passage from “Spring and Asura”: “and from heaven’s bowl that caves in and dazzles, / throngs of clouds like calamites extend,” (Satō, Spring and Asura, p. 1).
the cosmic axis that pierced through heaven, the earth and the underworld.\(^6\)

Just as this pillar was believed to provide the Siberian shaman's soul with access to the underworld, so it may be that, by climbing up the pillar, Giovanni's soul has journeyed to the world of the dead, and, climbing down the same pillar, has returned from its journey of initiation to this world. Just what Kenji intended when he spoke of this "Pillar of the Weather Wheel" is not entirely clear, but according to the editor of "A Concordance to Kenji's Tales" (Kenji dōwa goi jiten, 賢治童話語彙辞典),\(^9\) it likely corresponds either to the jizō guruma 地蔵車 (the wheel of "Jizō," the guardian deity of children) or to the nembutsu guruma 念仏車 (the wheel of "nembutsu," a prayer to Amitabha Buddha). At one time, these structures were erected at various "boundaries," in such places as temples, graveyards, and village perimeters in order to commemorate dead children. They consisted of a monolithic stone slab through which, at about the height of an average arm's reach, a single hole was bored. To this hole was attached an iron wheel which could be turned. It is this type of structure which appears in "The Night," symbolizing the boundary for children between this world and the other world.

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Above the Pillar of the Weather Wheel is the constellation of the Great Bear of the North, another image rich in symbolic value. Because the imaginary line between the alpha and beta stars of the Great Bear’s shoulder points in the direction of Polaris, the Great Bear has been considered the "indicator" of the North Star, which not only symbolizes the center of the universe, but also the ultima thule (the remotest region of the world or borderland)—the place where Giovanni’s lonely wandering takes him before his sleep. The epithetic phrase "of the North" attached to the Great Bear may be suggesting the "ultima-thule-ness" of the hill with the Pillar of the Weather Wheel on it. The image of the bear, as in the cases of the Centaur, the snow wolves, the Old Snow Woman with cat’s ears, and the Snow Boy with his cap of polar bear fur, also suggests the quality of the ultima thule in the sense that it has associations with the primitive, bestial nature lurking in man’s subconscious, the ultima thule of man’s psyche. The Pillar of the Weather Wheel that stands on the hill, a microcosmos, and under the Great Bear of the North, can be said to stand on the border between such realms as reality and dream, the conscious and the unconscious, and microcosm and macrocosm, while at the same time it can be said to stand in the center of the universe. It is, so to speak, the cosmic navel that subsumes and unifies these realms of opposites. And in this sense, the symbolic meanings of the pillar very much resemble those of the great chestnut tree on the elephant-shaped hill in "The Fourth Day."

In the "Pillar of the Weather Wheel," if the pillar itself is intended to symbolize the center of the universe, the weather wheel attached to the pillar may be seen as a symbol of the galactic universe which is revolving around the earth’s axis, itself a pillar of sorts. Tenki 天気 (weather) in the expression tenkirin 天気輪 literally means "heaven’s atmosphere,"
suggesting the atmospheric strata and even the Milky Way or *ama no gawa* (lit. heaven’s river), and the wheel is one of many circle images, the greatest of these being that of the galactic universe and that of the gigantic vortex of the whole universe itself implied by this galaxy. And if, as the concordance to Kenji’s tales states, the pillar has an iron wheel on it, this wheel may be signifying the wheels of the Milky Way Railroad that Giovanni is soon to ride.

As the preceding discussion has shown, while its symbolism is multi-layered, the image of the weather wheel is basically a composite of the circle image and the boundary, or center, image. Its polysemous nature stems from this combination. The circle symbolizes the totality of the universe, while the boundary which cuts the universe in two stands for the primal duality inherent in this “whole” universe. Indeed, “boundary” symbolizes every kind of difference and distinction in this world that inevitably arises from this initial duality. “The Night” can be considered to be a work that describes or tries to describe the hero’s psychic process of coming to terms with the various forces of disintegration threatening him, such as the father’s absence, his mother’s illness, his friends’ ostracism, and the death of his close friend, as well as with death or cosmic nihility itself symbolized by the pitch black hole in the corner of the Milky Way. The attempt of Giovanni’s psyche to subsume and integrate all these forces of disintegration, or of “experience” to use Blake’s term, is nothing but an attempt to regain lost purity and innocence. Before, and even after, he enters the dreamland, Giovanni’s psyche continues to vacillate, swaying to and fro and hitting against the walls of various alienations. We can interpret the recurrent images of the crossing of boundaries and those of
gyrations that cause dizziness as the efforts of Giovanni's psyche to overcome this problem of disintegration.

It is under the Pillar of the Weather Wheel that Giovanni's psyche shows its greatest vacillation in crossing over the boundary between the two realms mentioned above. It is also under this pillar that Giovanni experiences the greatest sense of dizziness. When the city lights that Giovanni looks down upon appear at once to be the lights of the palace under the sea and the stars in the night sky, and thus when the vacillation between, and reversal of, "up" and "down" almost reaches a cosmic scale, Giovanni sinks down into the subconscious of his psyche, but at the same time he floats up into the night sky. As if corresponding to the up-and-down movements of his gaze, and as if integrating and subsuming all the circular movements as well as vacillations, both vertical and horizontal,¹⁰ that Giovanni has repeatedly experienced since the beginning of the first chapter, the blue stars of the Lyre or the Ring Nebula "scintillate, multiplying to three or four, with their legs going in and out many times, and finally stretching long like a mushroom" (Z 10: 134). Only vaguely aware of this, Giovanni descends into, or ascends towards, the dreamland.

The pulsation of the Lyre is not merely mechanical but is full of organic rhythm. Many of the images of circular movement and of oscillation that appear before Giovanni reaches the hilltop give us an impression of being rather negative, and sometimes mechanical, representing death as opposed to life (e.g., the printing house, Giovanni's house and the pasture). The hill of the weather wheel pillar also emits dense darkness and the

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¹⁰ The polarity of the colours white and black, conspicuous in this tale, seems to be related to the issue of vacillation, too.
image of death, but this darkness and death is, so to speak, alive and breathing. The flowers, blooming fragrantly, the cold dewy leaves of grass that cool Giovanni's exhausted, throbbing body, the winds that carry the faint whispers of the children's singing and the sounds of the distant night train to Giovanni's ears, a bird that flies over the hill, chirping, and the Lyre whose legs stretch and shrink—all these things palpitate and breathe with life. The hill of the weather wheel pillar, like the snowy hill with the chestnut tree on top of it in "The Fourth Day" and the plateau surrounded by chestnut trees in "The Bears of Mt. Nametoko," seems to be a kind of mandala, where life and death meet and merge with one another, where darkness and light melt into one hazy vortex, symbolizing the galactic universe.

Of the scenes and characters that Giovanni encounters on his journey on the Milky Way Railroad, most have been anticipated symbolically in the introductory chapters which culminate in the mandala scene on the hill, but the events that take place in the dream segment are of a much different quality from those registered in Giovanni's waking consciousness. They are much more deformed and surrealistic, with the result that the dream world becomes clearly differentiated, sandwiched as it is between the two "everyday" worlds in the introduction and conclusion to the tale. What is notable in this "sandwiching" strategy is Kenji's subtle, perhaps intuitive, manipulation of the distance between the two realms. As we shall soon see, Kenji's strategy or technical device in distancing is an inevitable correlate of his mystic vision—a vision based on Buddhist philosophy and modern science. In the following, we shall examine the main images in Giovanni's dream, trying to clarify their subtle distancing and symbolic effects both in the aesthetic and thematic contexts of the tale.
The first important image in the dream is the name of the station which Giovanni hears repeated somewhere as Ginga Sutēshon (Galactic Station). This name differs in kind from other station names on the Milky Way Railroad, for while the latter are all taken from the constellations in the galaxy, whereas the former is the name of the galaxy itself. This seems to indicate that Galactic Station is the starting point as well as the terminus of the railroad. The name is apt in the sense that the hill of the Pillar of the Weather Wheel is the place, the macrocosmic image of the galaxy, where Giovanni starts and ends his galactic journey.

The first station that comes after the Galactic Station is Swan Station, which may be a reference to the night bird that crossed over the hill as Giovanni climbed it. Interestingly, many bird images recur after this. These include Eagle Station, the birds that shut off the light of the lighthouse, the swans, geese, cranes and herons that the bird catcher catches to use as ingredients for his chocolate-like food, the innumerable migratory birds that cross the Milky Way, the blue peacocks whose cries are like the sound of a xylophone and the crane that the Indian shoots down towards the end of Giovanni's journey. One effect of these bird images is that they help to create the atmosphere of a heavenly journey.

As was the case in the introductory chapters, the image of water, along with its correlative images, (i.e., the sea, a boat, a river, a beach, a well, fish, and drowning) also appear during the journey. These images, combined with those of birds and the sky, confuse our ordinary sense of direction or spatial distinctions. The scene at Beach Pliocene is interesting in this respect. The etymology of this name is not exactly known, but it definitely overlaps with the image of English Beach (Igirisu kaigan) on the Kitakami River where Kenji found fossilised walnuts. On Beach Pliocene in
the sky, too, Giovanni and Campanella find fossilised walnuts, while an archeologist is digging the ground to unearth the fossilised animals called bosu, which are believed to have flourished more than one million years ago. This scene also reminds us of a passage in the proem to Spring and Asura, which was quoted in Chapter 2:

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Perhaps, two thousand years from now,
an appropriately different geology may win the time,
appropriate evidence may turn up from the past,
everyone may think two thousand years ago
colorless peacocks filled the blue sky,
fresh bachelors of arts may excavate
wonderful fossils from the top stratum of the atmosphere,
the glittering freezing point of nitrogen,
or discover the enormous footprints of an invisible mankind
among the Cretaceous sandstone strata.11
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Another significant point that both the passage from the proem and the excavation scene in the dream indicate to us is the relativity of time and space: the heavenly archeologist, the future bachelor of arts in the proem, is digging deep down into the ground (the image of descent) and also into the sky (the image of ascent) in search of the lost animals of the past. This is symbolic of Giovanni's journey in his dream. He may appear to be moving forward towards the future on the train, but he is also travelling backward towards the past. Giovanni's train arrives first at Swan Station, where Beach Pliocene is, at 11 o'clock, and then at a small station in a corn field

11 Satō, p.7.
at 2 o'clock and finally at Southern Cross Station, the last station mentioned in the journey, at 3 o'clock. Giovanni wakes up from his sleep some time after the last station. Perhaps deliberately, the author does not clarify whether these times are p.m. or a.m. If they are p.m., they give the impression that Giovanni's sleep deepens as time proceeds until midnight and gradually becomes shallow after that. If they are a.m., then this would counterbalance the former effect. By not specifying whether it is night or day, Kenji evokes the misty, ambiguous atmosphere of the borderland. The Milky Way along which Giovanni travels may be, as Nakamura Fumiaki points out, the boundary between this world and the other world.12

Related to the relativity of time and space expressed in the excavation scene at Beach Pliocene is the image of the fossil specimens of the animals and plants. The image of specimens has already appeared in the second chapter of the tale where Giovanni mentions the specimens of giant crabs and the reindeer antlers his father had donated to Giovanni's school. In both cases, the specimen images function as evidence of the existence of something or someone. They are messages from the past to the present, but at the same time they are symbols of death and absence, apt images for the dreamland that borders on the world of death. As Irisawa Yasuo and Amazawa Taijirō argue, they may be symbolizing Giovanni's sense of loneliness and hollowness.13 Also, inasmuch as they are samples of

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13 Irisawa Yasuo and Amazawa Taijirō, Tōgi "Ginga tetsudō no yoru" to wa nani ka, pp. 21-22.
something "real," the specimen images echo, if only remotely, model images in the tale.

In Chapter 8 the bird catcher appears. The bird catcher resembles the archeologist in the previous chapter, in that he keeps the birds he catches in the form of pressed flowers—as specimens. This device enhances the smooth transition between the two chapters. Of the various possible functions of the bird catcher, two are relevant here. Firstly, he introduces the first food symbolism in Giovanni's dream, and secondly he becomes the object of Giovanni's sympathy and thus acts as the generator of Giovanni's first realization of what his mission in life might be: to strive to achieve a world where everyone, including people like the good-natured, hard-working bird catcher in tattered clothing, becomes happy. The role of food in Kenji's literature as well as in his life is significant. The fact that the birds trapped by the bird catcher all turn into chocolate-like food seems related to Kenji's strong sense of taboo against eating meat. As stated in Chapter 1, Kenji did not grow rice or other grains in his fields at Sakura. His extreme attitude, which we may call "abhorrence," towards eating in general seems to be reflected in his literature. Besides the instance of the "bird-chocolate," the apples that the lighthouse keeper gives to Giovanni and other passengers do not leave any waste after digestion; on the contrary, all the residue turns into fragrant perfume which evaporates into the air through the pores. Also the grains of rice naturally produced in the dreamland are four or five times bigger than ordinary ones, reminding us, according to Sugaya Kikuo, more of berries than of grain.14 The images of

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cakes, berries and fruit, which we have also come across in "The Fourth Day," can be connected to Kenji's idea of innocence and purity in at least two interrelated ways: firstly, they have a strong association with children and festivals; secondly, as accessory food they give a much "cleaner" impression than do other types of food, i.e., staple foods, which result ultimately in putrefaction. The images of coldness and transparency are not unrelated to this issue. In the sense that the apples do not leave waste, they are transparent. They are, in addition, the fruit of the northern regions.

There is more to the symbolism of the apple, but here let us turn our attention to the second function of the bird catcher. Soon after this character appears, the episode of Giovanni's "ticket" is mentioned, and then we learn of Giovanni's sympathy for the bird catcher:

Suddenly without knowing why, Giovanni felt very sorry for the bird catcher who was sitting next to him. When he thought of the catcher who was enjoying the refreshing sensation of the work of catching herons, or who was rolling the birds in white cloth, or who peeked at Giovanni's ticket from the side as if surprised and hurriedly started to praise it, Giovanni felt that he would give him anything—food or anything—that he had or he would keep standing 100 years on the shore of the shining Milky Way to catch birds for the bird catcher, if it made him really happy. Thinking this way, Giovanni could not keep quiet any more. Giovanni wanted to ask the catcher, "What is it that you really want?" but he thought this to be a little too abrupt, and so, hesitating, turned around to him, but the bird catcher was not there any more. (Z 10: 150)

The story of Giovanni's consideration for the bird catcher is, in turn, followed by the anecdote of the shipwreck, which reminds him of someone, presumably his father, working hard in the North Sea. Once again Giovanni
thinks that he must find a way to make the bird catcher and other people like him happy, even at the cost of sacrificing his own life. How to create the ideal state where everyone, or rather every sentient being, becomes happy—this is the mission that Giovanni gradually recognizes to be the sole aim of his life while on the Milky Way Railroad. In order to effect this awareness in the hero, the author has him go through various experiences, and the bird catcher is the first in a series of such experiences. (His mother's illness and his own unhappiness arising from it in the introductory chapters have prepared us for these experiences.) While the anecdotes of the bird catcher and the shipwreck are two conspicuous and initial examples of Giovanni's initiatory experiences, there are numerous other instances. They include the story of the scorpion that, at the moment of his death by drowning repents of his life of killing other creatures; Campanella who is drowned while saving the life of Zanneri; and the thin-faced man in the black coat who appears in the first version of the tale to teach Giovanni of the real nature of the universe, (i.e., the philosophy of dependent-co-origination and of the dharma world of interpenetration, and his mission of his life). The last instance may well be dismissed here just as Kenji dismissed it himself in the last version of the tale, for even without the man's somewhat overt explanation both Giovanni and the reader are able to ascertain the message of the tale through its subtle symbolism.

Chapter 9, the last but longest chapter of the tale, presents us with many significant images and scenes. First, the "ticket" that was in Giovanni's pocket and of which he was unaware, involves interesting symbolism. It is a kind of certificate for Giovanni's journey of initiation. With incantatory syllables written on it, it assumes the nature of a magic
carpet or of a written mandala. The owner of this ticket is supposed to have a special power that enables him to travel to any space and time in the universe. We could even say that because the ticket is a mandala, its owner becomes a Cosmic Buddha figure sitting in the midst of the mandala, a symbol of the universe. At the same time, however, it is suggested that the owner of this ticket has a special duty and mission in life, and in this way, he is likened to a Bodhisattva figure. The ticket ties in well with the central theme of the tale which has already been hinted at through references to such things as a shipwreck and the bird catcher. Also, in being a kind of mandala and talisman, it has the same nature as the magic mistletoe in the "Fourth Day," where the child with the red blanket was saved because of the mistletoe.

The symbolism of the ticket is linked to that of the apple which we have already mentioned. The apple image is first introduced through the tutor and his pupils, Kaoru and Tadashi; their appearance on the train is heralded by the fragrances of apples and wild roses. Then, after the tutor's story of how they came upon the shipwreck, the lighthouse keeper (an appropriate character for the story of the shipwreck) passes the strange golden and crimson-coloured apples out among the passengers. He thus prefigures the image of the apple in Chapter 4, where Giovanni sees a row of bright yellow windows on the train from the hilltop and imagines the

15 Some critics think that the ticket is o-mandara (the mandala) or the seven syllable mantra, namu myōhō renge kyō (lit. We embrace the Lotus Sutra) that the followers of the Nichiren sect chant and worship. See, for instance, Nishida Yoshiko 西田良子, Miyazawa Kenji ron 宮沢賢治論 (A treatise on Miyazawa Kenji) (Ofusha, 1981), pp. 30–80.
passengers peeling apples, talking to each other and laughing. According to the lighthouse keeper, in the regions towards which the passengers on the Milky Way Railroad are heading, there is no agriculture; everything grows by itself, and apples and cakes do not leave any waste but evaporate into the air through their pores, emitting a lovely fragrance. Indeed, the peels of the apples that the lighthouse keeper brought evaporate into the air by the time they reach the floor. The emphasis on the fragrance and the transparency of the apples is one of many images of transparency in the tale and seems to indicate the purity and innocence in the work. The transparency of the apples is also related to the magical power of Giovanni's ticket which makes things transparent, nullifying all barriers and boundaries, and thereby enabling its owner to go anywhere he wishes.

We should also note the apple's shape and colour. Like many other images of circles and spheres we have seen so far, including the galactic model of convex lenses, the apple image in this scene gives us another mandala image—a miniature or a symbol of the galactic universe. Combined with the significance of its transparency, it is an apt symbol of the

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16 The round shape and the golden-red colours of the apples remind us of the mistletoe of "The Fourth Day."
Buddhist idea of the dharma world of interpenetration. Mita Munesuke, discussing the apple symbolism in Kenji's literature, including "The Night," writes:

Kenji uses an interesting apple image:

Konna yamiyo no nohara no naka o iku
toki wa
kyakusha no mado wa minna suizokkan
no mado ni naru
(kawaiita denshinbashira no retsu ga
sewashiku utsutte irurashii
kisha wa gingakei no reirörenzu

ökina suiso no ringo no naka o kakete iru
ringo no naka o hashitte iru
keredo mo koko wa ittai doko no teishaba da
makuragi o yaite kosaeta sakura tachi
(hachigatsu no yoru no shizuma no agazeru)

When the train goes through the field of such a dark night,
the windows of the passenger cars all become those of an aquarium.
(A row of dry electric poles seems to be busily reflected on them running behind the train.
The train is running through a gigantic apple of hydrogen,
the crystal lens of the galaxy.)
It is running through an apple.
But what kind of station is this?
A fence made of burnt ties is standing
(The still agar of the August night.)

(Z 2: 154)

Here we have a variation of the effect of the reversal of "up" and "down" or of "inside" and "outside," which we have seen in the various images of circles and gyrations in "The Night," particularly in that of the double convex lens of the galactic model, presented in the introductory chapters of the tale.
The most obvious feature of the apple is that it is round and spherical, but unlike a rubber ball that allows no entrance, it is not a closed sphere, but a sphere with holes, and these holes are not like those bored from outside as in a bowling ball, but are innate to the sphere, leading at one breath deeply into its center. The apple is in our hand as something like a model of the fourth dimensional world, where the "front" and the "back" or the inside and the outside of a closed sphere are reversible by the fact that it [the apple] induces the sinful imagination that advances straight ahead towards the secret core of being, just as it is chosen for the symbol of the "key" in the well known myth about the source of the forbidden wisdom of mankind.18

Mita's analogy of the apple's two "holes" that sink down into its core reminds us of the Pillar of the Weather Wheel and the hill, the symbol of the navel and axis of the galactic universe. Mita also points out a similarity between the sinking or sucking-in nature of the apple's "holes" and Giovanni's mandala-like ticket that seems to be "sucking" in the gaze of the person who looks at it and the similarity between the apple's holes and the "coal sack" in the sky, the black hole of the galaxy.19 These holes are all the entrances or exits, as the case may be, to ikükan or the other space. But in Kenji's cosmology the exit to the other space (outside) is also the entrance to this world (inside), and vice versa. The Milky Way Railroad that runs through the core of the huge apple of the galaxy at the same time runs along the circumference (the boundary) of the galaxy. As Nakamura says, the train is running along the boundary between this world of the living and the other world of the dead. Here is also the meaning of the remarks by the bird

18 Mita, p. 5.
19 Mita, p. 8.
catcher about Giovanni's ticket, that its owner can travel to any place in the universe.

The above discussion of time and space is, of course, nothing but a discussion of the manipulation of distancing in both dimensions. Kenji's ideas on and manipulations of tempo-spatial distance are such that the reader, together with Giovanni, experiences a strange, but quite fresh and exciting galactic journey throughout the tale.

The depth of the apple symbolism does not end here. We should once again consider the issue of the tale's food symbolism in terms of the apple's holes. Kenji's "peculiar" and even "abnormal," i.e., "marked," views on food both in his life and in his literature are a natural outcome of his views on time and space. The apple's holes in the tale above all imply the interpenetration of "inside" and "outside," and thus of the subject (ego) and the object (the other). The symbolism of the apple-eating on the train, and by extension of eating in general, is that by eating (i.e., taking in) the apple, the eater is taken in (i.e., eaten) by the apple. When the eater (the "inside," the "subject," the "ego" or "I") takes in the apple (the "outside," the "object," the "other," "he," "she," or "the galaxy"), exactly the reverse is happening. This is presumably the secret of the transparency--not only of the apples and other food--but also of human beings and various other objects in the galactic journey. On the one hand, the image of transparency is the symbol
of cosmic autophagy, which is the aporia (lit. impasse, hence an insolvable problem), or to use the words of the man with the black hat in the earlier version of the tale, "the chain of Plesios" (Z 9: 142) that Giovanni must solve to realize (rather than "achieve") the ultimate happiness, i.e., innocence, of man and the universe. But on the other hand, or rather at the same time, the image of transparency signifies perhaps the only and inevitable solution of the problem of autophagic reality in the universe and in human existence. It is both the presentation of the Gordian knot and its

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20 See the following passage from N. O. Brown:

Autophagy. The identity of the eater and what he eats; but in a reversal of the naturalistic view: the eater is changed into what he eats. We become his body, and his body is food. We become his body by becoming food. By being eaten we become food. (N. O. Brown, Love's Body, p. 170.)

For more on autophagy see notes 22 below, 15 and 21 to Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

solution at the same time. Here is also the paradox of the inversion of the apple's "holes."

This paradoxical inversion of the tempo-spatial structure of the universe is also the reason that Giovanni must first "realize" rather than "achieve" the true happiness or innocence of man and the universe. *Ikükan* or the realm of innocence is not out there to be strived for, but in the "here," and the temporal *ikükan* or the innocence of man's paradisiacal time supposedly lost in time immemorial is not lost but is right in this moment called "now." All is a matter of "realization." There is no need to strive for it; innocence is always already achieved. But again the paradox within this paradoxical inversion is that, in order to "realize" it, one must first go

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22 Concerning this paradox, see the following passage from N. O. Brown:

Eating is the form of the fall. The woman gave me and I did eat. Eating is the form of sex. Copulation is oral copulation; when the Aranda ask each other, "Have you eaten?" they mean, "Have you had intercourse?" The schizophrenic girl refused to eat; the case of Simone Weil. Eating is the form of war. Human blood is the life and delightful food of the warrior. Eating is the form of redemption. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. We must eat again of the tree of knowledge, in order to fall into innocence. (N. O. Brown, *Love's Body*, p. 167. Underlining mine.)
through hardships as Giovanni does, which virtually means to strive to achieve the "realization." 23

In the scenes describing Giovanni's ticket and the apples, the nadir of the galactic journey is reached. After this, Giovanni's oneiric train gradually descends or ascends towards the earth, this world of "awakening" and "realization." The passengers get off the train one by one: first the bird catcher disappears right after the ticket scene; then the tutor and his pupils leave the train at the Southern Cross Station at 3 o'clock "in the morning"; 24 soon after Campanella suddenly disappears; and finally Giovanni himself, waking up, gets off the train.

Other images also signal the approaching conclusion of the night journey. Being jealous of the intimacy of Campanella and Kaoru, the

23 This paradox seems to be the one that has afflicted many mystics and visionaries in one way or another and at one time or another on their way to "realization" or enlightenment. Dōgen (1200-1253), the founder of the Sōtō sect of Zen Buddhism, as a young man is said to have had this doubt: "If man is said to have the dharma body and the dharma nature as he is [i.e., if he is enlightened from the very beginning], then why did the past buddhas have to practice meditation to attain enlightenment?" (Shibata Dōken 柴田道賢, Zenji Dōgen no shiso 禅師道元の思想 [Zen Master Dōgen's Thought] [Kōronsha, 1975], p. 128.)

24 The text does not specify whether the time is a.m. or p.m., so here it could be p.m., but this ambiguity seems to be one of the examples of "coincidence of opposites" seen in this work. In "The Night," as has been discussed, past and future as well as "up" and "down" are often reversible. In other words, the world inside Giovanni's dream and that outside his dream are often interpenetrating and even interchangeable. Therefore, if the "3 o'clock" means 3 p.m. this can be interpreted to mean that the time in Giovanni's dream is also flowing parallel to that outside his dream.
drowned girl, Giovanni says to himself: "Campanella, I'm going now. I haven't even seen a whale" (underlining mine) (Z 10: 157). Irritated, Giovanni looks outside the window only to discover that the Milky Way has been separated by an island. He sees a tower standing on the island, and on the tower there is a man, signaling to migratory birds to let them know when they can cross the river. Giovanni's sadness continues and his eyes:

brim with tears again, making the Milky Way look as if it has gone far away in the misty white.

That moment the train gradually started to divert from the river to run along on a cliff. The other side, too, as the train went down the river, gradually became high. (Underlining mine) (Z 10: 158-159)

At 2 o'clock the train stops at a small nameless station in the midst of a highland planted in corn with dew-soaked leaves. When the train starts running again, it is filled with the sounds of the New World Symphony. As the music wells up still more strongly from beyond the horizon, an Indian appears outside chasing the train. The sleeping passengers awaken. The Indian shoots down a crane and soon falls far behind the train. The train then speeds down a slope from the highland towards the river at the bottom of the canyon. There, engineers are building a bridge across the river, and for a moment this cheers Giovanni. Then Kaoru tells the story of the scarlet fire of the scorpion that is drowned in the well. When Kaoru finishes her story, the passengers hear various sounds of music, whistling, and human voices as if the train is nearing a town where a festival is going on. A boy sleeping beside Giovanni suddenly wakes and shouts, "Centaur, send down your dew!" Looking outside the window he cries, "Ah, yes. Tonight is the night of the Centaur Festival, isn't it?" "Yea, this must be the village of
Centaur,” says Campanella. Then at Southern Cross Station the tutor and his pupils leave the train. In front of the station stands a cross which looks like a tree. Dazzling with various hues, its top is encircled by a ring of pale, apple-flesh-coloured clouds which shine like a slowly turning halo. Some time after the train has left the station, Giovanni and Campanella witness the “coal sack of the sky” that sucks everything in, and soon after Campanella disappears, leaving Giovanni alone on the train. Giovanni hangs his upper body far out the window to shout and cry with all his might. The next moment he finds himself lying on the hilltop under the Pillar of the Weather Wheel.

With this quick, yet carefully selected look at the imagery of the last part of Giovanni’s galactic journey, we can see how subtly the author arranges images so that Giovanni and the reader gradually wake up from their dream. These images include those of separation, descent (from heaven to the earth), waking up, the crossing over of boundaries (the migratory birds and the bridge building), the highland (a reminder of the hill of the weather wheel pillar), the dawn of a new phase (The New World Symphony, the time being 3 o’clock) and the Centaur festival in a town. The process of Giovanni’s awakening is the direct reversal of his falling into sleep, so we can see many of these images overlapping with those presented in the prelude to his dream. Moreover, we cannot overlook the images of ascent in the awakening segment, such as the Indian shooting his arrow up into the sky, signal fires going up into the sky and the engineers’ dynamite blowing the river water and the fish up into the air. (We should also remember that before Giovanni started his galactic journey, he witnessed tiny explosion-like white blurs at the lower end of the Milky Way in the planisphere displayed in the jewellery.) These ascending images, combined
with the descending images, seem to be a recapitulation of the scene on top of the hill just before Giovanni fell asleep, though with the opposite effect of shaking him into wakefulness. These ascending images are relatively few and insignificant compared with their counterparts, which definitely dominate the last part of the journey.

We should also note that many of the awakening images mentioned above not only recall the images in the introductory chapters but also anticipate the coming scene—the last few pages after Giovanni's awakening. Particularly significant is the cross image at the Southern Cross Station. It performs an awakening function by echoing back to the Northern Cross in the beginning of the journey as well as to the Pillar of the Weather Wheel before Giovanni's sleep. At the same time, it anticipates what comes after his awakening. Interestingly, the cross image appears when the train reaches the bottom of the canyon slope. This slope image overlaps with the cypress slope scene in Chapter 4, where Giovanni imitates a locomotive, and with the scenes in the town at the bottom of the slope, particularly with the cross road, where Giovanni meets and parts with Campanella and other classmates. It is also at the cross road of the town that Giovanni, after coming down from the hill of the Pillar of the Weather Wheel, is first informed that a boy, i.e., Campanella, has fallen into the river. Like the Pillar of the Weather Wheel, the cross of Southern Cross Station, with its cloud halo, is another mandala image that symbolizes the meeting and parting place of people, other sentient beings and the two realms of space and time. In other words, it stands for, and thus teaches Giovanni, the secret reality of the universe—the dharma-world of interpenetration or, to
use Mita's expression, *sonzai no matsuri*, the festival of existence, the cosmic festival, or to use still another simile, cosmic innocence.

With the appearance of the cross image, we are informed that the tale's great circle of the galactic journey is nearing its end. Soon Giovanni is to part with Campanella and to wake up under the Pillar of the Weather Wheel, the symbol for the coincidence of opposites, for the starting point as well as the goal. Giovanni's spirit has travelled along the Milky Way from its northernmost to its southernmost regions. But the starting point of his journey has turned out to be its terminating point. His spirit returns to the origin, leaving the huge trajectory of the cosmic circle. While sleeping under the Pillar of the Weather Wheel and without moving even a step away from its base, Giovanni travels to the farthest end of the galactic universe. Like Kojūrō of "The Bears of Mt. Nametoko," Giovanni then becomes the Cosmic Buddha figure situated at the center of the Cosmic Mandala.

Towards the closing of the tale, another impressive mandala image appears to symbolize the cosmic order, subsuming and harmonizing all kinds of apparently opposing elements such as life and death, consciousness and the unconscious, height and depth, microcosm and macrocosm, and this world (the phenomenal) and the other world (the noumenal). We can see it in the scene where the Milky Way, the river in the sky, and the river on earth, which has drowned Campanella, all merge downstream, forming a gigantic circle. Giovanni thinks that Campanella, who was with him just a while ago, is there no more but is at the farthest end of the universe. Campanella, whom Giovanni could almost call his other half, is dead and over there, whereas Giovanni himself is standing over here, alive. One

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25 Mita, Chapt. 3.
exists at once here and over there. This may be the very meaning of the words, "Everyone is Campanella," which the man with the black hat and a cello-like voice said to Giovanni in the earlier version of the tale.

Through a dream, Giovanni learns the secret meaning of these words. Is it that the tears he is shedding at the time of his awakening are the dew drops of the Centaur, scooped from the river in heaven? The pasture which, enlivened, seems to become something else, the information about his father's return, and his own return to his mother—everything converges towards the denouement. The *goshintai* of the galactic model, the microcosm, which appeared in the beginning of the tale has turned into the macrososm that links the corporeal river on earth and the ideal river in heaven. The boy runs to his mother at home, carrying the milk he received from the cosmic Mother for the sake of his earthly mother in the shadow of death. The journey from mother to mother through Mother, the journey from life (death) to life (death) through death (life) has closed its circle, leaving, however, a strong sense of the beginning of a new cycle, a new journey for the hero, Giovanni, and the reader.
Chapter 5
Style and the Idea of Innocence in Kenji’s Tales

In its widest sense, style refers to "the arrangement of words in a manner which at once best expresses the individuality of the author and the idea and intent in his mind." According to C. Hugh Holman, style encompasses such elements of a work as its imagery and symbolism, we may say that the preceding chapters have all been concerned with the broad issue of style. In this chapter, however, we shall examine various other aspects of Kenji’s style—his diction, sentence structure, rhythm, onomatopoeia and genre—not only in themselves, but more particularly in terms of how they are related to the concept of innocence in Kenji’s tales. By analysing how Kenji used such stylistic devices to express his ideas of innocence, we hope to show how intrinsically—and how inevitably—those ideas are welded with his style.

In Kenji’s literature, the issue of style and innocence is related most fundamentally to that of centre-periphery. Indeed as we have seen, innocence in Kenji’s work is above all a matter of the “marginal,” which, in the present context, overlaps with the idea of the “marked” as opposed to the “unmarked.” To reiterate an earlier argument, insofar as they do not play the central power roles that society reserves for “mature adults,” children represent marginal existences; they are non- (or rather sub-) adults, and hence are “marked off” as beings not yet fully human. For Kenji, however, it is the “marked”—or the “children” and their fellow beings (the aged, the mentally retarded, animals, plants, water, air, rocks, etc.)—it is,

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in other words, all those entities in the universe besides adult humans, with their manipulative intellect, that are potentially close to innocence.

In Chapters 2, 3 and 4, we examined how Kenji used *ikükan* as well as "a marked space" and various symbols as means of expressing, or rather "marking" the innocence (or the capacity for innocence) of such beings. Kenji also conveys his ideas about innocence through stylistic means, "marking" his writings with various signs of "markedness." In Kenji's prose works, perhaps the most apparent "marking" is the fact that he chose to write them in the form and style of the children's story, rather than in the more popular, orthodox and hence "unmarked" style of the novel. The reasons behind this choice are significant. Of course, the most obvious reason was that the children's literature movement was in full swing when Kenji thought seriously of pursuing a literary career. A deeper reason for this choice was perhaps Kenji's intuitive knowledge that the genre of the children's story was, along with poetry, best suited to the expression of his particular ideas and emotions, which were radically different and thus "marked off" from the prevailing intellectual and emotional climate of the time.

Kenji writes in the advertisement for the collection of his tales, *The Restaurant of Many Orders*:

*Thatove is a place name. If we dare to locate the place, it is considered to be in the same world as the fields that Big Claus and Little Claus used to till and the land in the mirror that the girl Alice visited, located in the far north-east of Tepentar Desert and in the far east of Ivan's kingdom. Indeed, it is the Iwate prefecture of Japan as a dreamland that really exists in the mind of the author taking such forms as above.*
There, everything is possible. One can instantly jump over the field of snow and ice to travel towards the north, riding the great wind that circles around the earth, or one can talk with ants that crawl under the red cups of flowers. There, even sins and sorrows radiate in pure, holy light. A deep grove of beech, winds and shadows, grass of meat [sic], a row of electric poles that continues as far as the mysterious city, Bering—we see all of these in the really enigmatic, yet happy land. The series of tales in this collection is, indeed, a part of the mental sketch of the author's psyche. It takes the form of a literature aimed at those readers who are in between the end of boyhood or girlhood and mid-adolescence.

(Z 11:388)

From this standpoint Kenji then enumerates four characteristics of his tales, the third of which reads as follows:

3) These tales are neither falsehood and fabrication nor plagiarism. Although they were given some amount of reflection and analysis, they faithfully represent what occurred in the author's imagination at particular moments. Therefore, however ridiculous or abstruse they may appear, everyone, deep in his psyche, should certainly understand them. They are unintelligible only to mean and jaded adults. (Z 11:389)

The tenor of the above passages is related to Kenji's temperament and his world view. Certainly his visionist temperament and Buddho-Pantheistic

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2 One critic argues that this is the printer's typographical error. According to the critic, Kenji intended the words to be "evening primroses" instead of "grass of meat." See Kihara Yoshiki 木原芳樹 "Kenji memorandamu: 'mukaibi ni tsuite no nōto" Memorandum on Kenji: a note on "spirit inviting fire") in Kenji kenkyū, No. 40 (1986), pp. 41-43.
(or animistic) world view are far more compatible with the style of fantasy than with that of the novel. Kenji would undoubtedly have found the novel more suitable to "those mean and jaded adults," who are incorrigibly satisfied with the visible and tangible world around themselves. As Ian Watt suggests, the rise of the novel genre may be understood in terms of the growth of bourgeois culture in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, a culture committed to industrial capitalism as well as to new views of individualism and citizenship.\(^3\) The novel, it has been argued, was a genre which responded to the bourgeois taste for realism and for knowledge of the ordinary reality of everyday life. Even though a certain degree of sentimentalism and romanticism may be tolerated or even called for in the novel, therefore, its essence is verisimilitude. In contrast to Kenji's tales, it is a genre in which "everything is not possible." The novel is intended primarily for adults, the "un-marked," and, if the novel speaks more to the conscious part of the adult, the children's story speaks more to the unconscious part. In this most fundamental sense Kenji's literature was "marked."

His style is related to innocence in various other ways as well. A dominant feature of his tales, for instance, is his frequent use of the Iwate dialect, known in Japanese as \textit{iwate ben}. We have already had a sampling of this dialect in the first chapter, in the grass cutter's song sung by a tree spirit in \textit{The Night of Taneyama Highland}, and in the second chapter, in the words of Seisaku's tot: "Ō, aei aei. meru meru" (Oh, look. They're green! They're green! I can see them. I can see them!). Kenji often put \textit{iwate ben} in the mouths of both his child characters as well as his good natured, and

sometimes mentally retarded, adult characters (such as Kojūrō in "The Bears of Mt. Nametoko" and Kenjū in "The Kenjū Wood"). This use of dialect is said to have been one of the reasons that his works were ignored by children's story writers from Tokyo in Kenji's own time, but today it strikes us as one of the most charming aspects of his literature. To the eyes (or rather to the ears) of the reader who is a non-speaker of the Iwate dialect, Kenji's Iwate ben sounds very fresh and attractive. The main reason for this perhaps relates to a general principle of literary and artistic effect: the principle of presenting something different from what the reader is accustomed to in everyday life. But this is, of course, a general argument. A more subtle secret of its effect seems to be in the connection between this dialect and innocence, for both are "marked" and peripheral. Through the use of the Iwate dialect, Kenji's works, and especially his tales, begin to resonate with fresh and surprising tones. The dialect gives us an impression not only of simplicity and uncouthness but also of innocence and purity. This is particularly true when the words are spoken by both children and adults: both children and "mentally retarded" adults represent marginal existences, and hence the Iwate dialect, often the target of ridicule and disdain among "standard" Japanese speakers, is an appropriate language for them.

At the same time, however, Kenji often has his child characters speak a very refined Tokyo "dialect." More than that, he often gives them Western names and lets them act in quite international (often Western) settings as seen, for instance, in "The Night of the Milky Way Railroad." This can be explained partially by Kenji's haikara shumi (his stylishness or dandyism), which, in the Japan of his time, was more or less equivalent to modernism and Westernism. But the deeper reason lies in his
cosmopolitan, or rather cosmic, attitude and temperament. Along with his knowledge of Buddhism, his education in natural science as well as in European languages such as English, German and Esperanto gave him a certain cosmic cosmopolitanism. Tokyo, where he often went and stayed from one to several months, was for Kenji a quasi-West or surrogate "West." The charm of Kenji and his literature lies in the fact that he does not regard Tokyo and the West in opposition to Iwate, but rather sees them as equivalent kinds of provincial locales—and this because of his transcendental or cosmic point of view. His cosmopolitanism is based on a cosmic vision. Kenji is at once ultra-modern and ultra-primitive. To quote Takamura Kōtarō in his description of Kenji: "Those who have a cosmos within themselves, are always at the center of the world, even when they are at the fringe of the world, but those who do not have a cosmos within will end up with a local existence, even if they live in the center of the world." Like Giovanni in "The Night," Kenji and his literature are at once peripheral and central. The mixing of the refined Tokyo "dialect" and Western names with Iwate dialect, then, is Kenji's temperamental strategy for expressing his cosmic vision.

Related to his use of Iwate dialect are certain syntactic anomalies that are characteristic in his style:

Ano hito tori goshieterundeshō ka. (Is he signalling to the birds?) (Z 10: 158)

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4 Quoted by Kusano Shimpei in Aporon kasetto raiburari (Aporon Ongaku Kogyō), VIII, KSA 2008, n. d.
Soshite sonokoro nara kisha wa shinsekai kōkyōkyoku no yō ni narimashita. (And if around that time, the train resounded like the New World Symphony) (Z 10: 159)

Hi ga tsuyoku teru toki wa iwa wa kawaite masshiro ni mie, tate yoko ni hashitta hibiware mo ari, ōkina bōshi o kamutte sono ue o aruku nara, kagebōshi wa kuroku ochimashitashi, mattaku mō igirisu atari no hakua no kaigan o aruite iru yōna kiga surunodeshita. (When the sunshine was strong, the bedrock dried up, looking very white, with even, criss-cross fissures in it, and if you walked on it with a big hat on, your shadow darkly fell onto it, and indeed you felt as if you were walking on the cretaceous beach somewhere around England.) (Z 9: 35)

The English translations, or rather glosses, in parentheses inevitably provide only a rough clue to the concepts of the original, rather than faithful translations of the textual nuances that arise from such stylistic features as imagery, rhythm, diction and syntax. Speakers of Japanese who are familiar with the Tokyo dialect will intuitively sense slight grammatical deviations in these quotations. The examples quoted above are a mere fraction of Kenji’s syntactic idiosyncrasies. His literature is full of such pleasant deviations. But it would be almost impossible to explain analytically exactly why his anomalous sentence structures sound quite so pleasant and refreshing to our ears, except to state that his deviant, somewhat uncouth expressions remind us of things written or said by children or “uneducated” adults. Kenji’s “child-like” style disarms our sophisticated, rigid, and rational attitude towards the world and takes us back to the realm of innocence and simplicity. By twisting, deforming, and thus “marking” what is considered to be the “normal,” “unmarked,” standard syntax of the language, Kenji shows us ikukan or the other space.
The anomalous character of Kenji's child-like style is also related to other issues, such as rhythm, onomatopoeia, songs and incantation. We are frequently startled by unusual uses of onomatopoeia and songs that appear suddenly in his tales. "Matasaburō, the Wind Child," for instance, opens with an onomatopoeic song of the wind:

\[
\text{Dododo dododo dododo dodō} \\
\text{Aoi kurumi mo fukitobase} \\
\text{Suppai karin mo fukitobase} \\
\text{Dododo dododo dododo dodō}
\]

\[
\text{A small school was standing by the side of a mountain stream.}
\]

Or to quote the Snow Boy's greeting songs to the stars in "The Fourth Day":

\[
\text{Kashiopiiya mō suisen ga sekidesu zo} \\
\text{omae no garasu no mizuguruma} \\
\text{kikki to mawase}
\]

\[
\text{Cassiopeia, daffodils will bloom soon!} \\
\text{Turn, turn your glass water wheel!}
\]

\[
\text{Andoromeda azemi no hana ge mō saku zo} \\
\text{omae no ranpu no arukōru} \\
\text{shūshū to fukase (Z 11: 47)}
\]

\[
\text{Andromeda, thistles will bloom soon!} \\
\text{Puff, puff the alcohol of your lamp!}
\]

The sudden appearance of these songs surprises us and at the same time pleasantly excites our aesthetic sensitivities. This is probably because we strongly feel the energy of nature or the universe expressing itself through the words of the songs. They are strange and even slightly incongruous in
the contexts in which they are placed. But it is this very strangeness or "incongruity" that becomes the source of energy and the sense of life that revitalizes us. These "songs" sound strange to human ears because they are, in a sense, the sounds or cries of nature itself, and as such do not make much sense to human rationality.

In fact Kenji's songs are like incantations, and in this connection it is significant to recall his longstanding fascination with sutras. We have seen how as a small child, Kenji could chant the sutras of his family's religion fluently, apparently without knowing their meanings, and how he later became obsessed with the Lotus Sutra. A significant characteristic of sutras is that, when chanted, they are intended primarily for their incantatory effects, not for their discursive meanings:

Kifuku no yuki wa
akarui momo no shiru o sosogare
aozora ni tokenokoru tsuki wa
yasashiku ten ni nado o narashi
moichido sanran no hikari o nomu

(harasamugate bōju sowaka)
(I 2:24)

Machi ya hatoba no kiraraka sa
sono se no nadarakana kyūryō no tokiiro wa

The snow on the undulating hills
is poured with the bright peach juice
and the moon that remains unmelted in the blue sky
purring gently in heaven
drinks once more the dispersed light

(The brilliance of the town and the port
The pink of the gently-sloping hills)
ichimen no yanagiran no hanada is that of the orchid flowers blooming all over
Sawayaka na ringosei no kusachi to The fresh apple green meadow,
kuromidori to todomatsu no retsu the dark green and the row of white firs

(namo sadarumapufundarikasasūtora) (Namo Saddharmapundarikasūtra)
(Z 2: 172)

Thus, it seems that the songs and onomatopoeia in Kenji's literature have much to do with the incantatory effects of the sutras he chanted. In this regard, Kenji's tales come very close to nonsense, or play with words, which, in turn, is back-to-back with innocence.

In the above quotations from Kenji's poems, we notice that the incantations from the Buddhist scriptures are placed in parentheses and indented so as to be "marked off" from the rest of the text. The sudden appearance of songs and onomatopoeia in his tales has an effect similar to that of the sutra incantations in his poems. In both cases, they function as windows bored in his tales to reveal the other space.

This kind of window in the text can also be created by imagery and diction. His use of mineral images is one outstanding example. In discussing

5 The 7-5 and 7-7 syllable patterns prevalent not only in Kenji's poems but also in some of his tales seem to be related to the issue of incantation as well. See Sugaya Kikuo, Shiteki rizumu (Poetic rhythm) (1975; rpt. Yamato Shobō, 1978), pp. 193-246; Sugaya, Miyazawa Kenji jōsetsu, pp. 184-207; and Ueda, pp. 215-224.

6 Refer, for example, to English nursery rhymes, and other "nonsense" songs for children such as "Zui zui zukkorobashi." Also refer to the greeting songs to the stars and the comic-cosmic laughter of the Snow Boy in "The Fourth Day."
"The Night" in the previous chapter we touched on the coincidence of opposites in the imagery of fire and water. Such a coincidence of opposites as seen in the union of fire and water, is not, of course, Kenji's invention. Other poets have made use of it. W. B. Yeats, for example, writes in his poem "Vacillation" about a tree "that from its topmost bough / Is half all glittering flame and half all green"; similarly, in his play *At the Hawk's Well* he describes a dried up spring at which an old man burns hazel leaves to make the spring well up again. But compared with Kenji's fire and water imagery, that of Yeats is rather intellectual and mechanical. Yeats' images do not express a *union* so much as a *juxtaposition* of water and fire.

Be that as it may, Kenji's imagery, when placed in the context of traditional Japanese sensitivity, is unique. Somehow Kenji's image of water is chemical and mineral rather than organic. The same can be said of his fire images when they are connected with mineral images, such as those of the stars and of magnesia. Take, for instance, the images of fire and water in the noh play, *Maple Leaf Hunting* (Momijigari). Here the rainstorm, lightning, and blood of the demons are all prefigured and subsumed in the organic image of the crimson maple leaves coloured by the autumn rain or of the maple leaves that the beautiful demon-lady burns to warm *sake* for Koremochi, the warrior-hero. Kawabata's imagery of water and fire in *Snow Country* is similar, at least on the surface, to that of Kenji, but still the former is much closer to traditional sensitivities in presenting such images as a hot spring resort in the mountains, geisha, shamisen, noh chanting and maple leaves.

The strange sense of "incongruity" or "gap" in Kenji's imagery seems to come, partially, from the blending of his "primitive" sensitivity with a knowledge of natural science and an ultra-scientific Buddhist philosophy.
Certainly his mineral imagery can be ascribed to his primitivism, while the cosmo-
logy of modern science and that of Buddhism are also related to mineral imagery.7 Another possible source of this characteristic incongruity is his conscious avoidance of sex and eroticism, both in his life and literature because sex is typically an “organic” matter. Kenji’s nature imagery is somehow non-organic, a typical example of which is seen in the tale entitled “The Diamond of Ten Powers” (Jūriki no kongōseki, 十力の金剛石), in which the plants and other nature images are all described through jewellery images. But this avoidance or repression of sexual libido seems to have found a secret vent in his literature. The prose-poem entitled “Woman” quoted in Chapter 1, is one example of this. The comparison of the cherry blossoms in “The Diary of an Agricultural Student” (Aru nogakusei no nisshi, oru 隻学生の日誌) to frogs’ eggs is another example. As in the following excerpts from his poems, nature often assumes an erotic female figure:

Atatakaku haramite kurokumo no
Nobara no yabu o wataru ari
A dark cloud, warmly pregnant,
floats over wild rose bushes.

Aruiwasarani majirai o
Motomu to tsuchi o haeru ari
While seeking for further intercourse,
another one crawls over the ground.
(Z 5: 10)

Sono ososhii kurokumo ga
mata watakushi o torō to kureba
When that horrible, dark cloud
comes down to take me again

---

7 See, for instance, the frequent use of the images of gold, silver and jewels in describing the land of the buddhas in the Lotus Sutra.
I writhe alone feverishly distressed.

That I would marry that nimbus, covering the valley of Kitakami or that I loved the deluvian plateau, bearing both the woods and the fields on it I declared to other people half jestingly and to myself half seriously, just to brace myself up.

Thus the blue mountains and rivers I considered to be myself as they were

Ah, that tortures me now.

Thus, Kenji's libido is so dispersed throughout nature and the universe that it often becomes cosmic and asexual. This is also working behind Kenji's appeal in his "Notes for the Outline of Agrarian Art": "First of all become, together with others, the shining modica of the universe and be scattered throughout the limitless sky" (Z 12:15).

To further elucidate Kenji's peculiar "inorganic" nature imagery in relation to his sexuality, it is worthwhile to compare his use of images with that of another writer. The images of the iris in Kenji's poem, "Taneyama Highland" (Taneyama ga hara 種山の原), and in Mishima Yukio's novel, The Temple of the Golden Pavilion (Kinkakuji, 金閣寺), provide a useful comparison. Kenji's poem, entitled "Taneyama Highland," contains the following passages:

Passing through this beautiful field on a mountain,
I have collected many irises
that burn rich purple in the sunlight.
I am indeed a greedy caliph
under the hushed Turkish heaven,
for I have looted as tall and
as gorgeous flowers as possible.
Besides, having stabbed this gentle slope of the highland a number of times
to measure and record the quantity of humus and the depth of the topsoil,
I am a caliph drunk with triumph.
Now, holding the flowers overflowing from my bosom,
I have come into this grove of low alders.
Here are the cool shadows of zinc and
the carpet of jasmine-coloured young ferns,
while the moss is richly moist.
Perhaps, until their petals burn out
the flowers' grace will last
... A cuckoo suddenly flies over me, crying...
I am now going to take in my hand each of the supple flower stalks
made of wax and silk
and let the beautiful twin floral envelopes
sway in the sparkling south wind
... Cuckoo! What are you so afraid of
to pass over me, chirping so loudly... (Z 3: 732-733)

As Onda Itsuo points out, we can detect in this passage a slightly sadistic attitude towards irises, a symbol of the female. 8 Besides, as is usual with

8 Onda Itsuo, Miyazawa Kenji ron, 1, 102-104.
Kenji, he uses inorganic, or otherwise unusual, images for organic plants as in the "zinc shadow" and in the flower stalks of "blue wax and silk." But on the other hand, there is no doubt that "I" in the poem is enjoying a strong sense of communion with nature. Furthermore, at the end of Part 1, "I" repents of what he has done to the irises.

A somewhat similar, yet essentially different, iris image is seen in Mishima's *Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, where Mizoguchi, the hero, steals some irises for his friend, Kashiwagi:

Near the Sosei, a small waterfall, half surrounded by a weir, carried the water from a lotus pond into the large Kyoko Pond. It was here that the irises grew in the greatest profusion. They were exceptionally beautiful at that time. As I approached, I heard the clusters of irises rustling in the night wind. The lofty purple petals trembled within the quiet sound of the water. It was very dark in that part of the garden: the purple of the flowers and the dark green of the leaves looked equally black. I tried to pick a few of the irises, but in the wind the flowers and the leaves managed to avoid my hands, and one of the leaves cut my finger. 

The image of the irises in this passage resembles that of the wax and silk stems of the irises in Kenji's poem in the sense that both give us the impression of precision-made, artificial flowers. In both cases the sexual connotation is rather obvious. But the resemblances between the two end there. Unlike Kenji's irises, those of Mishima are placed in the traditional Japanese aesthetic atmosphere, but strangely, they fail to give the reader

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the satisfying organic sensation that he usually receives from *tanka* and other traditional Japanese literary works. One reason for this seems to lie in Mishima's style, which is by no means rigid or stilted, but is, in a word, extremely neat, refined and orderly. Even when he describes the rustling and the trembling of the flowers, he does it in an orderly fashion. The life and energy of the wind, of the irises and of the night are thwarted from freely expressing themselves. In this, we can detect a sense of frustration, unrest and hatred against life and the world. Thus Mishima's irises rustle and tremble with uneasiness, and their cutting blades of leaves "attack" Mizoguchi, the misogynist. Mizoguchi later on witnesses his friend, Kashiwagi, another misogynist, arranging the flowers, cutting the stems with scissors, and sticking them on a flower holder (a *kenzan* or "a mountain of swords"), all with sadistic coolness and accuracy:

The movement of Kashiwagi's hands could only be described as magnificent. One small decision followed another, and the effects of contrast and symmetry converged with infallible artistry. Nature's plants were brought vividly under the sway of an artificial order and made to conform to an established melody. The flowers and leaves, which had formerly existed as they were, had now been transformed into flowers and leaves as they ought to be. The cattails and the irises were no longer individual, anonymous plants belonging to their respective species, but had become terse, direct manifestations of what might be called the essence of the irises and the cattails.

Yet there was something cruel about the movement of his hands. They behaved as though they had some unpleasant, gloomy privilege in relation to the plants. Perhaps it was because of this that each time I [Mizoguchi] heard the
sound of the scissors and saw the stem of one of the flowers being cut, I had the impression that I could detect the dripping of blood.\(^{10}\)

Shortly after this, Kashiwagi has a fierce fight with a war widow, his mistress and flower arrangement teacher, who tears down the flowers he has arranged. The iris image in Mishima indicates a strong fear and hatred of the feminine and of life in general on the part of the male characters discussed.

Kenji, too, occasionally writes poems that have a slightly misogynist flavour, as seen, for example, in the prose-poem entitled "Woman" quoted in Chapter 1, but this can be explained as a natural and "normal" result of his ascetic life and sexual abstinence. Even so, he also writes some works that eulogize the simple, yet "healthy" beauty of village girls and young wives, such as "A Village Girl" (Mura musume, 村娘）and "Ladies of the Highland" (Kōgen shukujo, 幡原淑女). He even parodies himself in various humorous poems that describe his "love affair" with nature. The above passage from "Taneyama Highland" is one example of this, and the following excerpt from "Ippongi Plain" (Ippongi no, 一本木野) is another:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Watakushi wa mori ya nohara no koibito} & \quad \text{I am the beloved of the woods and fields.} \\
yoshi no aida o gasagasa ike ba & \quad \text{When I make my way through the reeds} \\
tsutsumashiku orareta midori iro no tsushin wa & \quad \text{green messages, coyly folded,} \\
tsukai poketto ni haitte irushi & \quad \text{slip into my pockets.} \\
hayashi no kurai tokoro o aruite iru to & \quad \text{When I walk in a shady forest} \\
mikazukigata no kuchibiru no ato de & \quad \text{crescent-shaped lipmarks}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{10}\) Mishima, p. 145.
Unlike Mishima's nature imagery, which is precise but artificial and dead, Kenji's use of unconventional nature imagery strangely enhances the sense of life. The fissures created in the texture of Kenji's literature do not jar our senses, but on the contrary create a pleasant tension between death and life, between the other space and this world. What is more, we feel that, in Kenji's literature as in Escher's pictures, the two realms are not set as far apart from one another as in Mishima's work. Indeed, the fissure between the two realms in Kenji's style is more apparent than real; one turns into the other before the reader even realizes it, just as "this side" of the Möbius strip turns out to be the "other side" before one is aware of it. Pampas grass suddenly turns into flames of silver, and the leaves of an alder tree become an iron mirror cracked into a thousand pieces, dazzling in the setting sun, as in the climax scene of "The First Deer Dance":

Now the sun had reached the middle branches of the alder tree and was shining with a slightly yellowish light. The deers' dance grew slower and slower. They began nodding to each other busily, and soon drew themselves up in a line facing the sun, standing perfectly straight as though they were worshipping it. Kajū watched in a dream, forgetful of everything else. Suddenly, the deer at the right-hand end of the line began to sing in a high, thin voice.

See the setting sun decline,
Blazing out behind the leaves
That delicately shine

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11 Ueda, p. 198.
Green upon the alder tree.

Kajū shut his eyes and shivered all over at the sound of the voice, which was like a crystal flute.

Now the second deer from the right suddenly leaped up and, twisting his body to and fro, ran in and out between the others, bowing his head time and time again to the sun till finally he came back to his own place, stopped quite still, and began to sing.

Now the sun's behind its back,
See the leafy alder tree
Like an iron mirror crack
And shatter in a million lights.

Kajū caught his breath and himself bowed low to the sun in its glory, and to the alder tree. The third deer from the right began to sing now, bowing and raising his head busily all the while.

Homeward though the sun may go,
Down beyond the alder tree,
See the grass aglow,
Dazzling white across the plain.

It was true—-the pampas grass was all ablaze, like a sea of white fire.

Long and black the shadow lies
On the shimmering pampas grass
Where against the skies
Straight and tall the alder grows.
Now the fifth deer hung his head low and started singing in a voice that was hardly more than a mutter.

See, the sun is sinking low
In the shimmering pampas grass.
Ants now homeward go
Through the moss upon the plain.

Now all the deer were hanging their heads. But suddenly the sixth deer raised his head proudly and sang:

Shy white flower, content to pass
Your days unnoticed in the tall
And shimmering pampas grass—
You are dearest of them all!

Then all the deer together gave a short, sharp call like the cry of a flute, leaped up in the air, and began to dash round and round in a ring.

A cold wind came whistling from the north. The alder tree sparkled as though it really were a broken [iron] mirror. Its leaves actually seemed to tinkle as they brushed against each other, and the plumes of the pampas grass seemed to be whirling round and round with the deer.\(^\text{12}\)

These lines depict what Kenji calls ihatove or "dreamland Iwate." Compare this with the following passage from Mishima's *The Decay of the Angel* (Tennin gosui, 天人五衰), the last volume of his tetralogy *The Sea of Fertility* (Hōjōno umi, 豊饒の海), where Tōru, the young hero, and his

\(^{12}\) Bester, pp. 132-136.
fiancée, Tomoko, are sitting by the side of a pond in a traditional Japanese garden:

There were autumn cicadas in the evening groves, and the roar of the subway came through the calls of the birds. A yellow leaf dangled from a spider web on a branch far out over the swamp, catching a divine light each time it revolved. It was as if a tiny revolving door were floating in the heavens.

We gazed at it in silence. I [Tōru] was asking what world would be opening beyond the dark gold each time it turned. Perhaps, as it revolved in the busy wind, it would give me a glimpse of the bustle in some miniature street beyond, shining through some tiny city in the air.\(^\text{13}\)

Mishima’s hero, Tōru, tries to see the other world behind and beyond a leaf, a revolving door to the different realm. This indicates how alienated he is from this world. But ironically the more Tōru detests this world in favour of the other world, the more the latter eludes his grasp. This is comprehensible if we assume that the universe has, as we have noted in the previous chapters, a Möbius strip-like or a Klein bottle-like twist built into it, and thus this side, or the inside, is no other than the other side, or the outside. Just as Mizoguchi in The Temple of the Golden Pavilion wanted to be both inside and outside the temple, and just as Noboru, the precocious boy, in another of Mishima’s novellas, The Sailor Who Fell From Grace With the Sea (Gogo no eikō, 午後の曳航), desires to be both inside and outside his room at once, Tōru inevitably vacillates between both worlds without the ability to belong to either of them—with the catastrophic

impulse to annihilate the entire universe, as seen in the quasi-Buddhistic ending of the tetralogy.

In Kenji's literature, too, we sense a strong tone of dissatisfaction with this world as it is. And sometimes his heroes escape from this world to the other world in the form of stars or birds, but the overall tendency of Kenji's heroes is to return to this world to change it into the other world, or rather to realize the other world in this world.

We can cite two Japanese writers for comparison in order to clarify the point in question--Kenji's view of the distance or relation between this world and the other world. Kawabata Yasunari's sensitivity towards the other world seems to lie somewhere between that of Mishima and Kenji. For instance, in the chapter "Wings of the Locust" of his The Sound of the Mountain (Yama no oto, 山の音), Shingo, the old hero, is watching butterflies flitting behind the bush clovers in his garden:

There were butterflies beyond. Shingo could see them flickering past gapes in the leaves, more than one butterfly, surely. He waited to see whether they would alight on the bush clover or come out from behind it. They went on fluttering through the leaves, however.

He began to feel that there was some sort of special little world apart over behind the shrubbery. The butterfly wings beyond the leaves of bush clover seemed to him extraordinarily beautiful.

He thought of the stars he had seen through the trees on the hilltop, that night a month earlier, when the moon had been nearly full.14

As Shingo watches the butterflies, they fly up from behind the bush, and from an unexpected direction, another butterfly flies across the garden, barely touching the tip of the bush. Immediately after this passage follow Shingo’s words to Yasuko, his wife: “This morning I had two dreams about dead people,” and he goes on to describe his dreams about a cabinet-maker and his friend Aida, both of whom have been dead for some time. The cabinet-maker had six daughters, and Shingo has sexual intercourse with one of them in his dream. At first glance, this sudden shift from the butterflies to the dreams appears to be an illogical jump from one topic to another, but, as some critics have pointed out, this kind of seemingly illogical shift is not unrelated to the technique of association in Renga poetry. Indeed, upon closer examination, we find nothing particularly illogical about it. Shingo’s dream about the dead people and about his sexual encounter with the girl are thematically connected with the butterfly scene: both scenes contribute to the other-world theme of the novel. The aging Shingo’s fear of death and his desire to be united with Yasuko’s beautiful sister in the distant world of the dead are symbolically expressed through these scenes. One might say that Kawabata’s cryptic style, usually consisting of short sentences, is, itself, like bush clovers and pampas grass with many gaps among the leaves and stems, through which one can glimpse the hidden world behind.

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15 Kawabata, p. 30.

Like Mishima and Kenji, Kawabata was deeply attracted by the other world. However, he treats "nature" rather differently from both of these authors; Kawabata's nature is not artificial in the way that Mishima's is, and neither does it assume that quality of other worldliness or explosive joy that characterizes Kenji's nature. On the contrary, Kawabata calmly tries to see a different world behind and beyond nature, a world which is totally organic and steeped in traditional Japanese sensitivities such as yūgen and mono no aware. Even this tendency becomes subdued at times, as in the image of the red maple leaves that Shingo and his son Shūichi see on the train towards the end of the story or in the famous ending of the novel where the image of the trout at dinner suggests the possibility of Shingo's peaceful merger with nature.

If one pushes Kawabata's nature to its logical end, one approaches the "nature" characteristic of Shiga Naoya's work. Compare the following passage from Shiga's short story, "At Kinosaki" (Kinosaki nite, 金刀比羅にテ) with the above quotations from Kenji, Mishima, and Kawabata. The hero of the story is recuperating at Kinosaki, a spa, from the injury he received from a streetcar accident. One evening he takes a walk outside the town:

There was a large mulberry tree beside the road. A leaf on one branch that protruded out over the road from the far side fluttered rhythmically back and forth. There was no wind, everything except the stream was sunk in silence, only that one leaf fluttered on. I thought it odd. I was a little afraid even, but I was curious. I went down and looked at it for a time. A breeze came up. The leaf
stopped moving. I saw what was happening, and it came to me that I had known all this before.\textsuperscript{17}

Though the image of the leaf evoked here is similar to that of Mishima's in \textit{The Decay of the Angel}, the hero of "At Kinosaki" is not at all interested in knowing the other world that may be concealed behind the fluttering leaf. To him, a leaf is simply a leaf. It does not stand for anything ideal or abstract, nor is it steeped in the traditional emotion usually associated with nature as is often the case with Kawabata's bush clover and pampas grass. And certainly, Shiga's leaf does not assume the flaming and dazzling other-worldliness of Kenji's alder leaves and pampas grass. In fact, Shiga's images are so "concrete" that we feel as though we are actually feeling or touching the particular thing being described by him. Immediately after the mulberry leaf scene quoted above is the following passage:

\begin{quote}
It began to get dark. No matter how far I went there were still corners ahead. I decided to go back. I looked down at the stream. On a rock that sloped up perhaps a yard square from the water at the far bank there was a small dark object. A water lizard. It was still wet, a good color. It was quite still, its head facing down the incline as it looked into the stream. \ldots I wanted to startle the lizard into the water. I could see in my mind how it would run, clumsily twisting its body. Still crouched by the stream, I took up a stone the size of a small ball and threw it. I was not especially aiming at the lizard. My aim is so bad that I could not have hit it had I tried, and it never occurred to me that I might. The stone slapped against the rock and fell into the water. As it hit, the lizard seemed to jump five inches or so to the side. Its tail curled high in the air. I wondered what had happened. I did
\end{quote}

not think at first that the rock had struck home. The curved tail began quietly to fall back down of its own weight. The toes of the projecting front feet, braced against the slope with knee joints cut, turned under and the lizard fell forward, its strength gone. Its tail lay flat against the rock. It did not move. It was dead.  

In this passage, besides the accurate and concrete description of the lizard, what draws our attention is the apt use of onomatopoeia (represented by the verb “slapped” in the translation). The onomatopoeic sound “kotsu” mimicking the sound of the stone hitting the rock, is exactly the sound that we would hear in such a circumstance. It is a sound of everyday-life, and it does not conceal anything transcendent. One who notes the relative frequency with which these novelists employ onomatopoeia sees that, while Mishima uses it very rarely and Kawabata somewhat more (though still sparingly), Shiga employs it rather frequently. Even when Kawabata does away with onomatopoeia, he achieves in his imagery the sort of concreteness or down-to-earthedness that typifies Shiga. This is evident, for example, in The Sound of the Mountain where Kikuko “apparently could not hear him [Shingo] over the sound of the dishes.”

Kenji’s onomatopoeia, in contrast, does not exactly mimic the sounds we would hear in daily life, but rather it is somehow “marked off,” and in this way it gives us an impression of coming from the other space, ikukan. But considering that it represents sounds from that other space, it is nevertheless very accurate, concrete and vivid—full of life-force; it seems to reactivate our sense of life. As has been suggested a number of times,

18 Shiga, pp. 276–277.

19 Kawabata, p. 276. Compare this with the mysterious sound of the mountain that Shingo hears in the beginning of the novel.
this is probably because, in spite of our "rationality," we still feel the other
space, the "primitive" space of the universe, which, according to modern
astronomy, is still rapidly expanding following the cosmic explosion that
took place at the creation of the universe, and which is also predicted to
shrink to its original state after reaching its maximum expansion.

The marginal or "marked" nature of Kenji's style seems to originate in
his strong sensitivity to this explosive expansion, as well as to a possible
contraction, of the universe. His centrifugal and centripetal style allows us
to experience the thrills of those who have become one of those innumerable
modica, scattering and dispersing throughout the entire universe. Kenji's
reader feels at times as if he were on a cosmic merry-go-round or roller
coaster in some gigantic playground—in this case, the entire universe.
Compared with his dynamic, centrifugal style, both Shiga's and Kawabata's
styles are rather quiet and centripetal. Both Shiga's and Kawabata's heroes
often experience unity with the universe, but that unity is usually achieved
through a quiet merger. Indeed, in metaphorical terms, they typically tend
to achieve unity through some form of contraction—they shrink into tiny
particles (which correspond to sperm) and retreat into a tiny corner of the
universe (which may be likened to the womb). In contrast, in Kenji's
literature, the main metaphor is explosion and dispersal.

This difference becomes more apparent if we consider some further
examples from Shiga and Kawabata. Seeing a dead bee among industrious
living bees, the hero of "At Kinosaki," for instance, feels:

The industrious living bees gave so completely a sense of life. The other beside
them, rolled over with its legs under it, still in the same spot whenever I looked
at it, morning, noon, night—how completely it gave a sense of death. For three
days it lay there. It gave me a feeling of utter quietness. Of loneliness. It was lonely to see the dead body left there on the cold tile in the evening when the rest had gone inside. And at the same time it was tranquil, soothing.

In the night a fierce rain fell... The body of the dead bee was gone.... It was likely somewhere covered with mud, unmoving, its legs still tight beneath it, its feelers still flat against its head. Probably it was lying quiet until a change in the world outside would move it again. Or perhaps ants were pulling it off. Even so, how quiet it must be—before only working and working, no longer moving now. I felt a certain nearness to that quiet.20

Kensaku, another of Shiga's heroes, in *A Dark Night's Passing* (Anya kōro, 暗夜行路), unites himself with the universe in the form of a poppy seed, a metaphor for a sperm implanting itself in the womb of the universe:

> He felt his exhaustion turn into a strange state of rapture. He could feel his mind and his body both gradually merging into this great nature that surrounded him. It was not nature that was visible to the eyes; rather, it was like a limitless body of air that wrapped itself around him, this tiny creature no larger than a poppy seed. To be gently drawn into it, and there be restored, was a pleasure beyond the power of words to describe. The sensation was a little like that of the moment when, tired and without a single worry, one was about to fall into a deep sleep.21

Similarly, at the end of *The Sound of the Mountain* Kawabata's Shingo compares himself to a small female trout that goes down the river to the sea to die after laying her eggs upstream. Kawabata, however, is a little

20 Shiga, pp. 273–274.

closer to Kenji than Shiga in that he shows, as we have seen, a predilection for transcendence and cosmic sensitivity. The symbolic meaning of Shinshū and the dreams in *The Sound of the Mountain* is a good example of this.\(^{22}\) Moreover, in the eucharistic last supper scene of this work, Shingo, in comparing himself to a falling trout, can be said to offer his body to be eaten symbolically by the rest of his family. This seems to resemble closely the cosmic autophagy motif in Kenji’s literature. A still further example of Kawabata’s transcendent, cosmic sensitivity is the last scene of *Snow Country* where Shimamura, the hero, and the Milky Way interpenetrate in a manner symbolic of sexual union. We can see a close affinity between this and Kenji’s remarks in his “Notes for the Outline of Agrarian Art”:

> A new age lies in the direction where the world becomes one consciousness, one life.
> To live correctly and strongly means to become conscious of the Galaxy in oneself and to respond to it. (Z 12-A: 9)

Furthermore, as Tsuruta argues, we can see Shimamura oscillate, vertically between the earth and heaven and horizontally between Komako, the heroine, and himself.\(^{23}\) At least on the theoretical level, Kawabata’s world view that everything is ultimately one and the same (banbutsu ichinyo) largely overlaps with that of Kenji.

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\(^{22}\) As for the analysis of the symbolism of Shinshū and the dreams of this work, see Kinya Tsuruta, *Kawabata Yasunari no geijutsu*, pp. 136–195.

Of the three writers compared here, Mishima may come closest to Kenji in his impulse to transcend this world. Even with the sketchy examination of Mishima's style given here, one clearly senses his affinity for the transcendent, but in the final analysis, Mishima seems to fail in his attempt at transcendence. By negating this imperfect world, he inevitably negates the other world because the structure of the universe is presumably such that the two worlds cannot be separated. Mishima's heroes vacillate between the centrifugal impulse for transcendence and the centripetal desire for immanence and finally end up with the annihilation of both worlds. This denouement is expressed in the images of violence and destruction prevalent everywhere in his works (and in his chosen way of death).

Kenji's style also expresses "vacillation." Or more exactly, his style itself vibrates, reflecting the rhythmic diastole and systole in the life of nature and the universe. Sometimes it captures the life of a tiny ant that goes among pebbles under a flower; at other times it rides the wind up into the strata of the atmosphere to circle the galactic universe. In the above-quoted opening passage from "Matasaburō, the Wind Child," the reader's viewpoint which, drawn by the tempestual song of the wind has expanded outwardly, suddenly contracts. This is followed by the centripetal scene of the small school in a valley with a tiny tennis court and a spring. This stylistic "vacillation" is also present in other impressive scenes from the tales we have analysed or briefly noted in the previous chapters: it is evident in the centrifugal image of the blizzard and the centripetal image of the quiet plain with the child buried in the snow and covered with the red blanket in "The Fourth Day"; in Giovanni's journey on the Milky Way Railroad; in the small galactic model in "The Night"; and in the concentric mandala
scene of the universe with the body of Kojūrō at its center in "The Bears of Mt. Nametoko."

Through the above examination of Kenji's style in its relation to innocence, we can conclude that what makes Kenji's style unique is the dynamic and rhythmic manner in which it seems almost to oscillate in accord with the vibrations of nature and the universe. Both Kawabata and Shiga sometimes capture the rhythm of the universe, but in a more subdued, down-to-earth manner. This can be said, more or less, of most modern Japanese writers. Mishima is perhaps one of the few exceptions—for though he was, like Kawabata, influenced by traditional Japanese aesthetics, he seems, unlike Kawabata, to have harbored ambivalent feelings towards them. However, in his hatred of life and his impulse to destroy the whole world, including himself—that is, in his thoroughly necrophilic inclination, his style diametrically opposes Kenji's, which is essentially biophilic and bubbles with the innocent joys and sorrows of the world. This vivacious style rests upon various signs of "markedness" such as his use of the Iwate dialect, of songs and onomatopoeia and of scientific, and most particularly, mineral imagery.

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24 Kawabata, too, sometimes shows this inclination, but usually his necrophilia enhances the sense of life.
Conclusion

In the New Testament there is a famous passage:

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence. (Matthew 19: 13-15, 1611 King James Version)

Kenji would have agreed wholeheartedly with this view of the "little children," for like Jesus, he associated children, both metaphorically and literally, with the realm of innocence. For Kenji, the word "child-like" carried with it images of simplicity, of integration and of the fresh, uncorrupt and energetic joys of life. Indeed, it seems that "child-likeness" was the one essential ingredient in Kenji's ideal realm of innocence and supreme happiness, and it was this ideal state that he tried to realize in this and in his imaginative world.

His life was a constant struggle between his strong predilection for innocence and the sordid reality of the adult world (experience), which Kenji recognized both in the world and within himself. The first major confrontation between innocence and experience can be seen in his conflict with his father concerning the family religion. The Shin sect of Buddhism, with its emphasis on the dark, depraved (i.e., experienced) aspects of the world and the human psyche, did not completely satisfy the young Kenji. Thus to balance the pessimism of Shinran, he embraced the Nichiren sect and its bright, optimistic teachings about the Cosmic Buddha and cosmic joy. Other tensions between Kenji's ideal and the real worlds can be seen in
various conceptual dichotomies which characterized his thought: country vs. city, the earth vs. the universe, the conscious (this world) vs. the unconscious (the other world or ikōkan), science vs. religion, life ("reality") vs. literature or art (imaginary world), and life vs. death. We can observe all of these opposites not only in Kenji's life but also in his literature.

For a better understanding of how these dichotomies operated in Kenji's life, we can consider the center-periphery opposition, which is synonymous here with the "unmarked-marked" opposition. The significance of this conceptual dichotomy in Kenji's life is evidenced by his frequent vacillations between Iwate (the periphery) and Tokyo (the center); his academic training in soil science that eventually extended his awareness outwards to the entire universe; his consciousness in daily life which often journeyed to the unconscious, the realm of his fantasies and visions; his attempts to unite science (theory) and religion (practice); his devotion to art and literature which was largely ignored by his father and by the literary circles in Tokyo; and finally his life as opposed to his death as well as the deaths of other "innocent" living things sacrificed for his life.

In these interrelated pairs of opposites, primal innocence would usually be placed on the side of the periphery or the "marked." What is notable in Kenji as well as in other writers with a mystical vision, however, is that the oppositional terms of these pairs do not stay in rigid opposition. Rather they are easily transformed in such a way that the center-periphery relation is reversed before one knows it. We could in fact say that they interpenetrate one another just as "this" side of the Möbius strip interpenetrates the "other" side. For Kenji the periphery or the "marked" realm is often superimposed on the center, the "unmarked," ordinary world. This is why in Kenji's thought, science is ultimately
religion, daily labour becomes art, Iwate absorbs the culture of Tokyo to be sublimated into Ihatove, the dreamland Iwate, this world is the other world, and life is death—as symbolized in Kenji’s “ritualistic” death after the annual Shintō festival of the good harvest. It is quite natural, therefore, that Kenji’s life (practice) paralleled his ideas (theory) so closely. Herein lies, we could say, the sincerity and innocence in Kenji’s life.

Kenji’s sincerity and innocence are similar to the sincerity and innocence of “children” and “primitive” people, who do not have a strict sense of the demarcation between this world and the other world, and thus tend to see the surrounding world as embodying spirits and lives similar to their own. To these people this world is perhaps no other than an emanation of the other, mystical realm, which Kenji would call ikukan. As we have seen, in Kenji the boundary between this world (the conscious) and the other world (the unconscious) ultimately becomes transparent so that communication between the two realms is freely carried out.

Given his view of the other world, it is not surprising that Kenji found it rather difficult to function in the world of rationality, adults, and experience. In this sense, he was not unlike the innocent inhabitants of ikukan which he described in his tales: the animals, monsters, children, and good-natured men like Yamaotoko, Kojūrō and Kenjū. The points of view in many of Kenji’s tales, as examined in Chapter 2, are often set in the other space, from which this world of human adults is observed.

Though this viewpoint exists, it is not rigidly fixed. The paradoxical relationship between Seisaku and his child, mentioned in Chapter 2, is one example of the flexible interpenetration of innocence and experience. “The Fourth Day of the Month of Daffodils,” analysed in Chapter 3, is another instance. In the latter case, the alteration and mixing of point of view
between the Snow Boy and the human child and various images of ambiguity culminate in the cosmic black-white vortex of the blizzard, indicating a possible merger and pivotal reversal of positions between this world (the center) and the other world (the periphery).

This pivotal reversal, we might say, is also the outstanding characteristic of Kenji's symbolism, which he used to express his ideas of ikūkan, the abode of innocence. More exactly, however, as we have observed above, ikūkan alone, as cut off from and opposed to this world, is not the realm of innocence, but rather in Kenji innocence arises on the border between ikūkan and this world. The abode of innocence is at the margin or the ultima thule of this world, and this margin is also the center or the pivotal point of the entire universe because the "entirety" of the universe, whether the universe is psychic or physical, is secured only by putting this world and the other world together.

Another point we should reiterate here is that the borderland between this world and the other world is like the boundary between the "two sides" of the Möbius strip. Just as we feel giddy thinking about the "absurd" twist built into the Möbius strip, we feel slightly dizzy reading such tales as "The Fourth Day" and "The Night of the Milky Way Railroad." The symbolism of the latter, examined in Chapter 4, is a particularly good example of a literary expression of the paradoxical relationship between this world and the other world--between "this" side and the "other" side of the Möbius strip. In this work, images of spatio-temporal borders such as gates, slopes, trees, hills, rivers, bridges, day-night, clocks and the hero's separation from his parents and friends are combined and merged, in a Möbius-strip-like way, with images of the center such as the galactic model, the Pillar of the Weather
Wheel, the hill, the Polar Star, the cross, the apple and the hero's reunion with his parents.

At the close of the work, Giovanni, the hero, is even "reunited" with Campanella by realizing that everyone, including himself, is Campanella. Indeed, in this tale the boundary and center are the locus of unity as well as of separation—at once spatial and temporal. When the locus is viewed as a boundary, a sense of separation and alienation results, whereas when it is considered as the center, the sense of unity and eternity is realized. Through his galactic journey Giovanni is initiated, both on the conscious and unconscious levels, into the secret paradox of the universe—the paradox of the center and the periphery. Innocence is perhaps the attitude of one who accepts this paradox and lives accordingly—as Giovanni is determined to do at the end of the tale.

Kenji's literary style is an inevitable outcome of this attitude and world view. Compared with the styles of his contemporaries in Japan, who chiefly wrote and deviated within the confines of the traditional stylistic framework, Kenji's style is unorthodox in many ways—in its use of the Iwate dialect, of songs (often nonsensical) and onomatopoeia and of scientific, and especially, mineral terms and images. These elements, subsumed in the style of the children's story, generate the bubbling joys and sorrows of the world on a cosmic scale. To use somewhat exaggerated words, in Kenji's tales it is as if the entire universe were laughing and crying in primordial joy and sorrow at its creation. This kind of cosmic sensitivity is what is missing in other modern Japanese writers, and it is presumably this kind of centrifugal-centripetal cosmic rhythm that makes Kenji's style unique and "peripheral" in the stream of modern Japanese literature.
In conjunction with the peripheral nature of Kenji's style, we should note that although Kenji wrote in the style of the children's story, many of his tales are not easily appreciated by children. The themes, motifs and imagery of these tales are deceptively simple, yet often unintelligible to children; inasmuch as they are close to a non-self-reflective state, children are, so to speak, in a state of what might be called primary innocence, just as the sky, the mountains, the rivers, the animals in nature are in innocence, and thus they are not aware of their own innocence. Many of Kenji's tales are innocence itself, and it requires the sophisticated sensitivities of adults, who have lost their "innocence," to appreciate their significance and beauty.

The style of Kenji's tales, therefore, can be said to be doubly peripheral, firstly, in its use of the above-mentioned elements such as the Iwate dialect, songs and mineral imagery that, put together, constitute his "children's story" style, and secondly, in its "unintelligibility" to children to whom Kenji's tales are seemingly addressed. Ironically Kenji's literature, specifically his tales, tends to be "peripheralized" both in relation to adults' and to children's worlds, with the result that it alienates both children and adults.

This "peripheral" quality provides us with another perspective from which to consider the issues of innocence and center-periphery in Kenji's work--this is the perspective of autophagy. The self-devouring nature of the world (or life living on life) was one of the central themes in Kenji's literature, and this may be one reason that it was somewhat unintelligible to both child and adult readers in Kenji's day. Children are generally unconscious of this kind of self-reflective, self-referential issue, while
"unmarked" adults are oblivious to it, or rather, as Alan Watts suggests, they try to evade and peripheralize it to the extent that it becomes non-existent in their civilized, anthropocentric world.

At the same time, the very fact that this autophagic state is "peripheralized" by both children and "unmarked" adults indicates a close relationship between the issue of autophagy and that of innocence. Children are unaware of the autophagic state because they are themselves in such a state, or very close to it. The mother-child relationship (nurture-nurtured) can be interpreted as a relationship based on autophagy, yet it can also be a symbol of a felicitous union and innocence. This autophagic relationship continues, in the form of an autophagic relationship between man and nature, even after children grow up into adults and allegedly become independent of their mothers. However, "unmarked" adults in daily, civilized society are blind or oblivious to this relationship--for Kenji, a sign, or rather perhaps the fundamental cause, of the state of experience or alienation.

Many of Kenji's tales explore this paradoxical problem of the relationship between innocence and "autophagy" and express it through literary images. Thus we encounter many mandala-like images in Kenji's tales; for instance, in the last scenes of "The Bears of Mt. Nametoko," of "The Fourth Day of the Month of Daffodils" and of "The Night of the Milky Way

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1 See footnote 15 to Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

2 The Indian myths of Kali and Durga, the dark goddesses that devour human beings, their own creation, can be seen in light of the autophagic relationship between mother and child. See also Erich Neumann, The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype, trans. Ralph Manheim (1963; rpt. Princeton: Princeton University, 1974).
Railroad." The sense of intense joy and sorrow evoked in these scenes perhaps arises from the fundamental paradox of autophagy and innocence which Kenji presumably intuits as an inherent characteristic of the universe. Indeed, for him the cosmic autophagy or the self-negation of the universe may be the fundamental source of all the separations and alienations in the world, which, in turn, may be said to be the cause of all human sorrow. On the other hand, it may be this same state of autophagy that generates the sense of joyful communion and "atonement" in the interpenetration between not only man and man but also between man and the universe. To use the analogy of the Möbius strip once more, this paradoxical relationship between sorrow and innocence is like the "two sides" of the strip, with sorrow constantly turning into joyful innocence. Or, as in Kenji's metaphor, the interaction between innocence and sorrow is represented by the karmic AC lamp of the self. Following Makoto Ueda's interpretation of Kenji's AC lamp in his proem to *Spring and Asura*, we could say that a vacuum, or "emptiness" in the Buddhist sense, underlies this interaction. Also we could interpret this emptiness in terms of the boundary of the cosmic Möbius strip, the boundary being the locus or the

3 See also the following passage from Kenji's poem, "Suzuya Plain" (Suzuya heigen, 鈴谷高原):

The green spikes of timothy are merrily swaying.

Even so, "merrily swaying,"

just like Solemn Mass or the circle of cloud,

is not in opposition to griefs and sorrows. (Z 2:178)

4 Ueda, pp. 186-187.
source of innocence and sorrow, and in this sense, being replete with existential possibilities.

Thus, it may be that we adults are constantly stepping off (i.e., "sinning" or "missing") the mark or boundary between the "two sides" of the autophagic Möbius strip of the universe to fall into the state of experience, while at the same time constantly retaining the potentiality of being "redeemed" to the state of innocence. In other words, we constantly step off the boundary onto the very same boundary of the cosmic Möbius strip (i.e., we step off and do not step off at the same time), without, however, realizing it most of the time.

Jesus' words quoted at the beginning of this conclusion may be interpreted from this paradoxical vantage point of "sin" and "redemption." To become like children in Jesus' sense may be to realize that we adults are constantly stepping off the boundary of "primary or primordial" innocence into another state of innocence or restored innocence. It is also from such a perspective that we can understand the idea of *felix culpa* (happy fall) and N. O. Brown's words: "Eating is the form of the fall... Eating is the form of redemption.... We must eat again of the tree of knowledge, in order to fall into innocence." 5

This kind of interpretation of "sin" (experience) and "redemption" (innocence) can shed light on still another example, this time an old Japanese folk song:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Asobi o sen to ya} & \quad \text{For sport and play} \\
\text{umareken} & \quad \text{I think that we are born;} \\
\text{tawamure sen to ya} & \quad \text{For jesting and laughter}
\end{align*}
\]

5 Brown, p.167.
umareken  I doubt not we are born.
esobu kodomo no  For when I hear
koe kike ba  The voice of children at their play,
waga mi sae koso  My limbs, even my
yurugarure  Stiff limbs, are stirred.

Presumably, it was towards this kind of state—the state of innocence—based on the "innocent" play of cosmic autophagy that Kenji strove both in his literature and in his life. The charm of his literature, specifically his tales, may be said to lie in the successful expression of this vision. He may not have seen his ideal realized in the larger world, but no one can deny the unwavering sincerity with which he strove towards it;

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6 Emperor Goshirakawa 俊白河天皇, ed., Ryojin hishō 理神秘抄 (A collection of Japanese ballads and songs) revised and annotated by Konishi Jin'ichi 小西甚一 (Asahi Shinbunsha, 1962), p. 35. The translation of the poem quoted here is by Arthur Waley. The 7-5 syllable pattern in this poem is typically used in imayō, folk songs popular in the mid- and late Heian period. Interestingly, in his later years, Kenji often used the 7-5 syllable pattern for his poems written in classical Japanese. He actually mentions imayō in the outline for his projected essay on four-couplet poems in classical Japanese. For more on the relationship between imayō and Kenji's poems, see Ueda, pp. 221-224.

7 Mita Munesuke would call this state sonzai no matsuri or the festival of existence, while Umehara Takeshi 梅原猛 would call it sei no shukusai 生の視察 or the festival of life. See Mita, Chapter 3 and Umehara Takeshi, "Shura no sekai o koete" 修羅の世界を超えて (Beyond the world of Asura), Miyazawa Kenji kenkyū, ed. Kusano Shimpei (Chikuma Shobō, 1969), p. 30.
thus we have to conclude that he did indeed live his own life according to this ideal.
APPENDIX II

THE KLEIN BOTTLE
APPENDIX III

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