

Discussion and Translation

Essays within a Novel:
 “Promenades”
 in Hotta Yoshie’s *Uminari no Soko kara*
 Part 3

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One of the most important writers in Japan after World War II, Hotta Yoshie (1918-1998) wrote *Uminari no Soko kara* (From the Depths of the Rumbling Sea, 1960-1961), a monumental novel dealing with the Shimabara uprising of 1637-38, a historical incident which combined aspects of religious war and peasants’ revolt. In this novel, Hotta inserted seven essays, which he called “promenades.” I discussed more fully the novel and the “promenades” in my article, “Essays within a Novel: ‘Promenades’ in Hotta Yoshie’s *Uminari no Soko kara*,” published in January 2000 in the *Journal of the College of Humanities*, Chubu University, No. 3. This article included my translation of the first two promenades. A sequel to this first article appeared in “Essays within a Novel: ‘Promenades’ in Hotta Yoshie’s *Uminari no Soko kara*” Part 2, published in July 2000 in the *Journal*

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of the College of Humanities, No. 4. What follows is a third and final part.

Promenade 5

Attitudes toward Arms

The arms which the peasants from Shimabara and Amakusa carried, the ones who participated in the peasants' revolt called the Shimabara Uprising, were swords, spears, guns, spades, hoes, rakes, hatchets, broadaxes, axes, and "hand hooks." The only item that might be called "a novelty"—if not "a new invention," an expression which is awkward to use—would be *bôbiya*, stick-shaped rockets or fire arrows. As displayed in the museum in Shimabara, what is commonly called *bôbiya* is a thick stick covered with rags which is discharged by gunpowder from a barrel-shaped launcher. One might say it was like flying rags on fire. The type the peasants' army at Hara Castle used is described as follows:

The trunk of a paulownia tree is cut into a barrel-shaped piece, 6 feet long. A bamboo ring is placed around it. Inside the ring, some 30 sticks are inserted. The tip of each stick is sharpened. It is made of hard wood, so that it can pierce any object it strikes. The tip of each stick is positioned at the mouth of the barrel-shaped launcher, where the gunpowder is poured in. When the sticks are launched like rockets, they fly out of the launcher in all directions. The flying sticks catch fire and burn. They are as terrifying as burning arrows.

The above is a quotation from a hand-written copy of the anonymous *Kan'ei Shimabara oyobi Amakusa Jihenki*. This copy was graciously loaned to me by Mr. Mishima Hideo of the Asahi Newspaper. Not that I believe everything written in this document. However, this book is unique among the documents of the period in the following respect: the writer is sympathetic toward the peasants who rose in revolt. Although I don't trust everything in the book, I note the following passage, narrating the rebels' attack on Tomioka Castle of Amakusa, the attempt which eventually failed:

All these peasants were *without armor*. [The original word is "*suhada*," literally "bare-skin" or "naked," and metaphorically, "without armor" or "unarmed." Translator's note.] How could they not have feared the cannon shot from within the castle?

I was impressed by these words, which rendered this particular passage highly realistic and persuasive.

Now, about "*suhada*" or being "unarmed," I believe that a unique aspect of our nation's history is reflected in the fact that the masses had, for nearly 400 years, always been "unarmed" against the powers that be. In contrast to other peoples, we differ considerably in this respect — a fact that, in my view, must have affected our people's mentality in a most profound way. Several years ago, I believe, Mr. Nakano Shigeharu referred to the same point in his work entitled *Kûhaku* (Vacuum or Void). But, except for him, no other person that I know of has ever discussed the unique nature of our people, of our masses, from the point of view of arms, or of "being unarmed." Throughout

the early modern period, or for 400 years to the present time, no other peoples have been known to remain unarmed, so far as I know.

The disarming of the Japanese people began with Toyotomi Hideyoshi's "*katanagari*" ("Sword Hunt") in 1588, the 16th year of Tenshō. According to Mr. Nagahara Keiji's study, Hideyoshi seized the real power after Nobunaga's death. He conducted a survey of the land, starting with the province called Yamashiro. As an important part of his unification policy ["unification" in the sense of consolidating his power over the whole land], he executed the "Sword Hunt." This sword confiscation measure consisted of three articles. First, peasants in all provinces were prohibited from possessing swords, short swords, spears, guns, and other arms, because possessing such arms could lead peasants to withhold tax payments or revolt. All arms must be surrendered to the *kokushu*, *kyūnin*, or *daikan*. Second, the surrendered arms would be made into nails and clamps to be used for building statues of Buddha, which would ensure the repose of the peasants' souls after death. A terribly convenient pretext for the ruler. Third, peasants, in short, needed only to work the fields. Then the safety of the realm and people's happiness would follow. Such was the "Sword Hunt."

In short, Hideyoshi's intention was plainly discernible: to prevent peasants from resisting and to turn them into obedient tools to generate taxes. In the Middle Ages, there was no law or rule that prohibited peasants from possessing arms. When necessary, the village chiefs and peasants would arm themselves and fight, a process which made them more militant. Nobunaga and Hideyoshi were terribly vexed by that. The process of their unification effort was, as it were, the process of disarming peasants. In this process also the class system — the samurai class and the peasant class — was being fixed, and

feudal society was established. The separation of the military from the farming class resulted. From this, one could foresee, conversely, that the revolution which was to destroy feudal society would take the form of uniting the military and the farming class. The Soviet Revolution and the Chinese Revolution are the two most conspicuous examples.

And one would find essentially the same sort of thing in the way Japan's military came into being in the early period of the Meiji era. In any event, to my knowledge, no comprehensive study has been made public on the effect of the "Sword Hunt" by Hideyoshi. However, in the month after Hideyoshi issued this statute, in the county of Enuma in the *han* of Kaga, 1073 swords, 1540 short swords, and 160 spears were confiscated. It is safe to say that substantial amounts of arms had been in the hands of masses at that time. In one county of Enuma, in one short month, 2773 pieces of arms were collected. I don't know what the population of Enuma county was then, but the above figure accords us an inkling of the arms possessed by peasants. For nearly 400 years since, the authentic arms belonged exclusively to the ruling class, and, among the people at large, the arms were found only in the hands of *yakuza* or gangs, who meant nothing but trouble to ordinary people. In this respect, I believe, Japan differs quite radically from other countries. This is what Nakano Shigeharu called "*kûhaku*" ("Void").

I wish someone would write a history with a focus on the Japanese people's view of arms, or on their attitudes toward arms rather than on the science of war. I should imagine that such a study would reveal a Japanese mind-set radically different from that of other peoples.

This is not a peaceful topic; in fact, rather dangerous. On my part, my affinity for arms is nil. In April 1961 in Algeria the French de-

tachment started a riot and threatened to invade Paris. The workers who belonged to the "FO" [sic] [*La Force Ouvrière*, the Labor Force] assembled in front of a government building — the Ministry of the Interior, perhaps. Then, the French government issued a statement offering them arms, "You will be armed in thirty minutes!" As I read this in the newspaper, I felt the spirit of the French Revolution still alive. Perhaps I wasn't the only one to feel that way. As a novelist, I try to imagine the feelings of the French workers when they held their arms. And, in doing so, I find something lacking in my sense, in my historical sense if you will. When I said "the spirit of the French Revolution," I was reminded of the passage, "*Aux armes, citoyens*," in the French national anthem and the revolutionary song, "*La Marseillaise*." I meant nothing else.

Last year, among the high-income class of Japan, the so-called "gun craze" apparently occurred. However, even that was no more than a hobby for the affluent. It certainly could not be designated as a matter of arms or weaponry. Speaking of France, I recall two films in relation to arms, or attitudes toward arms. One is a French-Italian film entitled "*Le Petit Monde de Don Camillo*," directed by Julien Duvivier, which premiered in Japan a few years ago. In this film, the famous comic actor with the long face, Fernandel, played the part of a Catholic priest. The priest was on bad terms with the Communist Mayor and his faction. Their dispute escalated until it reached a deadlock. The priest then took out a machine gun from underneath the altar of his church. He stroked the gun most tenderly. As I watched that scene, something hit home. The priest played by Fernandel had fought the war of resistance against Germany with that very machine gun, although the film did not show the war. If the priest himself had not fought that war, his villagers or his parishioners had, and after

the war, this weapon was placed — or hidden — underneath the altar of the church. When he saw the powers that be defy God or violate people's freedom, the priest would pick up that very weapon. . . . He was not a fighting monk of medieval Japan. The other is a French gang film called "*Touchez pas au Grisbi*." As they were preparing to attack the armored truck, the gang members took out an automatic rifle which was hidden in the back of the basement below a cabaret. "During the Resistance, we used this stuff, didn't we?" So saying, they left for their evil deed, carrying the automatic rifle.

Having a poor memory, I don't remember the director or the actors of this French film, "*Touchez pas au Grisbi*," but I clearly remember this scene and the dialogue in it. I also remember the actors' subtle facial expressions as they spoke to each other. The automatic rifle is, of course, a material, not a living thing. However, depending on whether it is used in the war of resistance against Germany, or whether it is used in an attack on an armored vehicle, the way the men carrying the automatic rifle might feel toward the same weapon should differ greatly. *That* was shown in the actors' facial expressions.

To put it another way, the priest's machine gun and the gang's automatic rifle are simple "objects," but they clearly contain history, and therefore, they are alive. To put it still another way, in order to defend what ought to be defended in an emergency, the people who kept their arms in the basement or underneath the altar, would act on a principle fundamentally different from that of people without such arms. Let me emphasize that I am not dealing with this point as the question of good and evil.

When I watch Japanese gang movies or a gunslinger such and such type of film, I feel something hollow. I believe this hollowness comes

from the fact that there is no historical authenticity to support the so-called “strong-man” or “tough-guy” actors’ position, or the arms these men carry. There is no inter-relationship between the men and their arms. All are makeshift—in other words, they aren’t even “fiction” but transparent lies. To exaggerate a bit, we may say that this hollowness can be attributed to our history of 400 years, during which our people have been kept disarmed. This difference in the attitude toward arms should help us when we encounter European novels and films.

In Japan today, in the world of *yakuza* and gangsters, pistols appear to be plentiful—pistols that came mainly from the U.S. military bases in Japan. Even so, among the civilized nations of the world, Japan may be the country whose civilian population possesses the fewest arms. In comparison to the U.S. and European countries, Japan’s armed population may be close to non-existent. Before World War II, however, the situation was different in Japan’s upper class. A long time before World War II, Mori Arinori, a representative figure among the European-style intelligentsia of the Meiji Japan, never went to bed without placing a pistol under his pillow, according to his grandson, Mori Arimasa, a scholar of French literature.

One of the reasons why the heroes of samurai (or sword) novels and films are so much idolized in this country is, I believe, the unique fact that our people have been disarmed for 400 years. In addition, in reflecting on our attitudes toward arms, it should be worth noting that the art of Japanese swordsmanship sprang up overnight—before it became a “sport”—to the level of what is called *kendô*, or the “way” of swordsmanship, with a philosophical overtone.

Concerning the samurai or swordsman referred to above, Tsukue Ryûnosuke in *Daibosatsu Tôge*, Hotta Hayato in *Akô Rôshi*, Shinnô Tsuruchiyo in *Samurai Nippon*, and Nemuri Kyôshiro in recent times

are all glorified. The history of this glorification of swordsmen seems abnormal to cool observers. Swordsmanship, by nature, is a skill and a method of killing human beings. Miyamoto Musashi, for example, carried a wooden sword to his fight with Yoshioka Kenpô. And while Yoshioka was preoccupied with the decorum of swordsmanship, Miyamoto simply clubbed him to death. At a fight with Denshichirô, Miyamoto approached his opponent unarmed, grabbed his wooden sword and struck him to death with it. The "way" or "secret ritual" of swordsmanship did not exist at this stage. Practicality was all. The gradual process of rendering swordsmanship formal and mysterious has something in common with the tea ceremony, in that both display the same mentality: attaching enormous importance to methods or procedures, regardless of practicality. I will not pursue this point any further now. But let me consider why those heroes in the novels that I have mentioned earlier have been so much loved by the readers of the Taisho and Showa era.

I cannot help thinking that our lack of familiarity with arms may be at the root of such behavior. If, for the past several hundred years, we Japanese have lacked any familiarity with swords and arms as belonging to the masses, then, would you not agree that we no longer have any sense of the practicality of arms such as shown by Miyamoto Musashi, and that, where there is no practicality—hence no reality, glorification begins immediately? Under such conditions, the swordsmen-heroes engage in whole-sale slaughter, cutting, stabbing and slashing right and left. Added to this glorification of swordsmanship is another element—the tradition or legend of a wandering hero of noble birth, exiled from his homeland, who overcomes obstacles with the help of animals or women. These two elements together make up the popular novels of swordsmanship. One more thing may be consid-

ered — taking pride in perfecting the craft of sword making as a fine art. But I believe the most fundamental point is that we do not have a familiarity with arms.

Moreover, the disarming of our people was most rigorously enforced during our nation's "revolutionary" periods, so to speak — at the Meiji Restoration, for example. The more revolutionary the period, the more completely the powers that be controlled arms; none remained in the hands of our civilian population. After the Meiji Restoration, the (former) samurai class no longer possessed arms. Except for the upper-class members of political and financial circles, such as Mori Arinori mentioned above, and *yakuza* members and gangsters, arms were limited to the army, navy, and police force. And these military and police forces were to become "the Imperial Household's nails and fangs," in the plain-spoken words of Iwakura Tomomi. "The Imperial Household's nails and fangs" — How terrifying these words are! And indeed the army, the navy, and the police force acted as the Imperial Household's nails and fangs.

"With the army, navy, and police forces that the Emperor trusts and relies on positioned on his right and left at his disposal, he should deal with his subordinates in a commanding manner and terrify ordinary people who have not an inch of steel on their person," so declares Iwakura Tomomi, who is called the elder statesman of the Meiji Restoration. This attitude toward arms to "terrify ordinary people" was not a thing of the remote past. It had controlled our nation until only 16 years ago. Except for Nemuri Kyôshiro, those Japanese swordsmen-heroes mentioned above came alive in the dreams of the masses of the recent past.

Let me again return to the passage I quoted near the beginning of this chapter:

All these peasants were without armor. How could they not have feared the cannon shot from within the castle?

There is an uninterrupted link between this passage and Iwakura Tomomi's "ordinary people who have not an inch of steel on their person" some 230 years later. Granted that we have had many instances of revolts ("*ikki*" in Japanese), pseudo-revolts, demonstrations, and attacks with fire through our history. That's true. However, the tradition of peasants being "*suhada*" or "without armor" has not changed at all. As a powerful argument for Japan's re-armament, the military preparations of Switzerland, a permanently neutral state without a seat in the United Nations, have often been mentioned. Switzerland has the militia system. Its soldiers take the rifles, automatic rifles, or machine guns to their homes. They are responsible for keeping these arms safe and in good repair. Their system is unthinkable either without the administration's trust of its citizens or without the citizens' support for their government. I have never heard this fact spoken by those who advocate Japan's re-armament, citing Swiss armaments as an example to support their argument. The Swiss system of entrusting citizens with arms, as it were, and its policy of permanent neutrality are linked at their root, I guess.

Having written thus far on the subject, do I need to tell you that I am by no means advocating armaments. Personally I would have nothing to do with arms. During World War II, while I was in Shanghai, an acquaintance of mine who worked for military intelligence said to me, "Stick this in your hip pocket and walk around the block. You'll find your state of mind altered."

Being curious and a bit frivolous, I borrowed from this acquaintance

the heavy, cold object that looked like a Colt pistol, wandered about awhile, and went into a coffee shop. Although I will not write about how I felt at that moment, I can categorically state that into the very core of the heart, or being, of the person bearing a weapon has penetrated some completely foreign substance (which is precisely the weapon), which is not found in unarmed people, and that the armed person has become a totally different human being. One cannot emphasize too much that the armed person differs completely from "unarmed" ("*suhada*") human beings.

Even today in our country only those in the periphery of power, the *yakuza*, and the gangsters possess arms. This tradition has not changed. Here again I may have to declare that I am *not* advocating bearing arms. And yet I believe these matters are worth pointing out as a part of understanding reality with the help of history. No other reason. In our country, even when the military rose in revolt, laborers never took up arms, nor were they made to do so.

After World War II, my attitudes toward arms were tried once, and that single experience made me realize how completely I had been settled in peaceful retirement. That was when, by a curious turn of fate, I visited one of the American Air Force bases in Japan, with a group consisting of financiers in the arms industry, old men who were generals and admirals in Japan's former Army and Navy, and former Communists converted to veritable watchdogs for the business world. This happened a few years ago. We were shown various airplanes and their takeoffs and landings. Among the aircraft shown there was one painted in ghastly black, a twin-engine jet called B57B, which closely resembled that U-2 plane. I started to feel sick as if from drinking too much. But those old former generals and admirals smiled with satisfaction, caressed the black aircraft, almost licking it, and said, "The

nose of this plane is coming down, slanting in this way. As if plunging forward, this sliding slope is exquisite."

I forgot to ask the price of this plane. But, when I learned that another plane, B52, cost 3,744,995,400 yen apiece, I felt sick again. Moreover, to those ex-military and financiers such a figure did not seem much. I could not help thinking that these men were of another race.

From a knife to the hydrogen bomb, modern arms are terribly diverse. Under Japan's "Peace Constitution," our ordinary citizens' attitude toward arms has become such that it may no longer be called an attitude toward arms. Let me repeat that I am not questioning whether that is good or bad. But I believe that it is a subject worth keeping in mind.

I have made a stupendous leap from the Shimabara Uprising. Let me quote from Alain, a French philosopher:

Real freedom needs a premise that a system exists which constantly directs its spearhead against the powers that be. It is a clear evidence of the law of human society. The labor union, which is *the* only hope for citizens, is merely a first step. (Alain: "Mars")

These words will not remain simply *words*. Whether "real freedom" is threatened by the invasion of the German forces or by military rebellion, this organization of unarmed ["*suhada*"] laborers, I believe, must have behind it one thing solid, heavy, and cold: "You will be armed in thirty minutes." I wish we possessed a keen insight into such matters, especially when we are dealing with European culture and institutions. Needless to say, the Shimabara Uprising took place

after that “Sword Hunt” of Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s that I mentioned earlier.

End

Promenade 6

The Author’s Conviction

[About the title of this promenade. The Japanese word for “Conviction” is “*shinshô*.” It is a term in Japanese legal system. In Japan it is the judge who determines the sentence of the defendant, as we have no jury system. The “*shinshiô*” refers to what the judge “thinks” about the case: his impression, understanding, state of mind, and/or conviction (in the sense of firm belief). Apparently there is no standard English translation for “*shinshiô*.” Additionally, this Japanese word is used rather widely, outside the legal world. Translator’s note.]

Toward the end of May last year, I—“I” refers to the author—was staying at a Japanese-style inn near Hanzômon in Tokyo. I was working on a broadcasting project. The nature of the project required me to run all over Tokyo to see things. For instance, one morning I crossed the Sumida River and visited toy factories in the areas called Terashima and Tamanô. Then I turned around to go visit the residential sections in Mitaka and Den’enchôfu in the early afternoon. It was really weird.

And at dusk, under the blazing red sky of the sunset, I had returned to Hanzômon, when I heard some indescribable “voice” or “song.” I

doubt that I will ever forget that "voice" or "song" which resembled the sound of a distant ocean. The voice, which was only an unintelligible sound, echoed and re-echoed incessantly, "*wo-ahn, wo-ahn*." I first doubted my own ears. What could this voice be? Soon I discovered what it was.

It was the human voice, the shouting voice of 50 or 60 thousand people. The location was around Hanzômon near Miyakezaka — many of the readers would recognize what it was. It was the voice opposing the proposed U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, the voice of protest by the 50 or 60 thousand people surrounding the Diet [Japanese Parliament] Building. Hanzômon is some distance from the Diet Building. The distance must be at least 1,000 meters. In between lies the low land. There are homes and other buildings, too. Near Hanzômon, those cars which had been diverted from the vicinity of the Diet Building were jamming the streets. Nonetheless, the "voice" resounded strangely shrill against the sky aglow with the setting sun, the incessant singing "*wo-ahn, wo-ahn*" over my head. I stood still and looked up at the singing voice under the blazing red sky. For a long time I looked up at the voice.

Hanzômon is the location of the Kôjimachi Police Station. I was standing right by it. The white-canopied trucks of the riot police formed a line. [The shape of the trucks was reminiscent of the "covered wagons" used by the pioneers in North America. Translator's note.] While watching this horde of trucks with half an eye, I was looking up at the sky. As I was looking toward the sky and the singing voice above me, I was thinking many things. Needless to say, the Security Treaty itself and the protest against it directly occupied my mind, but in addition, I thought that "I was being given" something by the singing voice in the air.

What “was given”? I was given the “voice,” the “singing,” uttered by the 50 or 60 thousand unarmed people who had converged at a specific place, all with a certain idea, thought, belief, conviction. Because the voice, the singing, came from a considerable distance, and because I could not see the people demonstrating in protest, I was moved by the voice even more profoundly.

In this work, *Uminari no Soko kara* (*From the Depths of the Rumbling Sea*), I had planned to write about the Uprising in Amakusa and Shimabara in 1637-38. About the circumstances leading to the actual writing, I have already written in Promenade 3, under the chapter heading “*Nakajikiri*” (Partition), and so I will not repeat everything here. I was a college student when I first became interested in this revolt. My interest was awakened when I read the book, *Kirishitan Shûmon-sen no Kenkyû* (*A Study of the Christian War*), written by the late Oike Yoshio, my college friend’s father.

Afterward, I visited the Shimabara peninsula several times. Also, I went to the site of the ruined Hara Castle 4 or 5 times. I visited Amakusa several times, too. And what gave me the decisive image about the wretchedness of the fall of Hara Castle was, needless to say, the war [World War II], which was indeed wretched.

Hara Castle is the so-called floating fortress, surrounded by sea on nearly three sides. It juts out into the Ariake sea. The sides facing the water are cliffs. In particular, the cliff on which the “*honmaru*” was located is perpendicular and 30 meters tall. [The “*honmaru*” is the main section of the castle compound, where the “main tower” would stand. The “castle” spoken of here is vastly different from any in England, Scotland, or other parts of Europe.] On July 7th, 1944, Saipan Island, which was Japan’s largest military base in the central

Pacific, fell to the U.S. On that occasion, when I heard the announcement by the Imperial headquarters, I felt as if my heart had been crushed. Why? A year before, I had been called to active duty, and then I became ill. As a result I was discharged from military service. Later I heard a rumor from somewhere or other that the unit I belonged to had since been sent to Saipan Island, but that, en route, most of the transport ships carrying the troops had been attacked and sunk. That was one reason. Nothing gave me more grief and bitterness than the fighting-to-the-death on Attu Island in the Aleutians, the all-out assault and annihilation on Saipan Island, and the battles in Okinawa toward the end of the war. These were indeed "without parallel," inappropriate though such an expression may be. In any event, nothing left a more graphic impression on me than the article describing the annihilation on Saipan Island. Be they soldiers or civilians, whoever survived the battles killed themselves — with hand grenades, by stabbing one another to death, or by jumping off the cliff into the sea to drown themselves. All but very few exceptions.

I had collected as many articles and records on World War II as possible, but I lost all of them in a fire a few years back. Let me, therefore, quote from *Daitōa Sensō Zenshi* (The Complete History of the Great East Asia War) by Hattori Takushirō — Volume 3, Part 6 entitled "*Zettai Kokubōken no Sakusen*" (The Strategy of the Absolute National Defense Zone), Chapter 7, section 3.

The odds were against us in the decisive naval and aerial battles. The strategic points in the Marianas had virtually fallen to the enemy already. But the ground forces on Saipan Island continued to fight gallantly. On June 17, the coastal assault by the 43rd division ended in failure. Next day, the

18th, the 31st Military Headquarters decided that the ground forces, as the main strength, should capture the south-west line extending from the southern edge of Garapan, the southern foot of Mount Tapocho, to the central part of the Bay of Laulau and drive back the enemy.

After June 23rd, the enemy's assault intensified tremendously. The enemy's infantry regiment and their tanks, backed up by artillery attacks, penetrated our positions one by one. Mount Tapocho was held by our guard units who fought courageously. But after the 24th, our positions on either side of the mountain were being encroached upon by the enemy one after another.

On the 26th, the enemy's fierce attack was definitely concentrated on Mount Tapocho. Our officers and men used every available means to defend our positions, but by the evening dusk, the mountain top was finally captured by the enemy. After that, until the end of the month, the enemy's fierce attack continued. All of our units kept up their desperate struggle to hold the vital line on the north side of Mt. Tapocho. After the 29th, provisions were depleted, but our troops fought on, eating weeds and the bark of trees.

However, the damage to our side steadily increased, until about July 2nd, when our fighting strength was all but exhausted. It was no longer possible to hold the line between Garapan and the north side of Mt. Tapocho. The enemy's onslaught was swift. On July 4th, the enemy penetrated our position from the west side of hill #221. The military situation had rapidly reached its final stage. The naval unit which had held ground till the very end in the Garapan area was

annihilated on the same day, as was later ascertained. At this point, the leadership of the Army, Navy and Air Force stationed on Saipan Island sent a farewell cable on July 5th: "We die for honor, thereby to serve as the bulwark on the Pacific." Vice Admirals Nagumo and Saitô committed suicide at 10AM on the 6th, their farewell gesture and signal for the final all-out attack to begin. Some three thousand troops who remained on Saipan Island at the time carried out their all-out attack against their enemy after 3:30 AM on the 7th. Thus ended the ground warfare on Saipan Island.

I admit the quotation was very long. But, upon reading the quotation, you may note, first of all, that the whole thing was, in short, most cruel. The writer, a Hattori Takushirô, was a career officer specializing in military strategy. After the war, he helped to edit the U.S. forces' history of warfare—so I understand. Although the quotation makes no mention of them, it was not as if the military were the only Japanese living on Saipan Island. Of course, Saipan's civilian population could not have been as large as that of Okinawa. After the war, in a collection of photographs taken by the U.S. Forces, I saw *it*.

What is *it*? It was the picture of a woman, her long hair shaken loose and her threadbare *kimono* in tatters, who stood on the edge of the cliff over-looking the sea far below, clasping her hands in prayer. I cannot believe that this woman was saved by the American troops. She must have jumped into the sea and died. . . . How many people died that way? How wretched. I am lost for words.

Saipan was an island, whereas Hara Castle was surrounded by the sea on three sides. On the narrow space on the hilltop, 37,000 people barricaded themselves in the castle, surrounded by over 120,000 [gov-

ernment] troops toward the end of the revolt. And most of the 37,000 were massacred over a few days after the 27th and 28th of the second month of the 15th year of Kan'ei (April 12 and 13, 1638). Comparing the size of the area and the number of the dead, Kuwabara Takeo estimates that the sacrifice of life at Hara Castle was greater than that caused by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Even today I clearly remember those names: Commanding Officer Yamazaki of Attu Island; Commandant Obata of Guam; Administrator Tsunoda of Tinian; Army Corps Chief Kuribayashi of Iwojima; and Commandant Ushijima of Okinawa. The troops on these islands were not the only ones who were annihilated. So were those on Guadalcanal, in the Philippines, and at many other places. When I think about them, my heart still aches. This pain will never cease as long as I live.

Regarding the impact of the defeat in the battles in the Marianas—Saipan, Tinian, Guam, etc.—upon the Japanese, Hattori Takushirô writes as follows:

Among Japanese citizens there are signs, though not on the surface, of apprehension about the outcome of the war. Among the senior statesmen and those close to the Imperial Court with Lord Konoe as leader, an anti-war, pro-peace movement is gaining force, and the voice critical of war is getting louder among those without responsibility. (ellipsis) Pursuit of peace is proper so long as it is contemplated by the authorities responsible for directing the war effort. However, if peace is pursued by those who do not occupy the important positions of direct responsibility, even if their motivation is well-intentioned, it easily leads to the undesirable result of

stirring a defeatist or anti-war sentiment in the nation.

The above quotation may typify the sentiment of a career officer, whose language includes such an expression as the "*absolute*(!) national defense zone." In this passage, as in the earlier one about the annihilation of Saipan, "ordinary people" do not exist even as *words*. One may go even so far as to say that "ordinary people" are absolutely nothing. They are, in short, merely "those without responsibility," not worthy of any consideration. Even "the senior statesmen and those close to the Imperial Court with Lord Konoe as leader" are "without responsibility," their position being merely "to have an appearance of power over the government, as it were," as shown clearly in a later passage not quoted here. Thus, it seems only natural that the fate of ordinary people could never enter the thought of the likes of Hattori. It is a case of downright irresponsibility.

This *Daitōa Sensō Zenshi* was published in 1953. To those who share, eight years after the end of World War II, the ideology expressed in this work, how would the "voice" or the "song" which I mentioned earlier sound? One need hardly say anything.

Ostentatious though it may sound, democracy means that citizens think for themselves about those matters affecting their fate and make their own decisions, and articulate their ideas and decisions, and that politicians exist as servants to execute people's ideas and decisions. However, I have not forgotten the proverb, "Citizens keep the form of government which resembles their own shape at the given moment."

At this point, I wish to write about my experience with one of those people "without responsibility," to use Mr. Hattori's words.

In the fall of 1941, before the war broke out, I came to know Itō Ritsu by a sheer coincidence. As you may know, Itō Ritsu greatly

contributed to the Communist Party of post-war Japan in its reconstruction and operations. If I seem to be keeping Itô at arm's length, it is because I have not seen him since the war ended, or rather, since he was imprisoned in the late summer of 1944. Afterwards while he went underground as a result of the purge of Communist Party officials ordered by the U. S. military, he was expelled from the Party, on a charge of being a traitor and a spy for the U. S. military. He has never been heard of since. I don't know whether he is alive or dead.

Here, however, Itô Ritsu himself is not really my concern. My experience with Mrs. Itô is. I understand she used to be a traffic worker. I visited Mr. and Mrs. Itô Ritsu at their home. I was still a college student then. It is more accurate to say that I accompanied a woman friend of mine who was going to visit the couple, than to say that I visited them. I talked with Itô Ritsu on many subjects. It was not after Japan's defeat in the Marianas, but early spring of 1942, immediately after the fall of Singapore. Itô was then translating a book on Australian agriculture. He told me about Japan's war strategy for Australia.

When Itô got up to go to the bathroom, his wife, who had been doing her washing at the well, ran up to me and whispered to me unexpectedly.

"In time people will rise up and stop this war. There is no doubt, I assure you!" I was stunned.

As soon as she had spoken, she ran out of the room to return to the well. It was in the evening. I imagine that, because she most likely had a job somewhere during the daytime, she was doing her wash in the evening.

I had never been so surprised. I was really startled. Did Mrs. Itô tend to act on impulse?

Around the time of the fall of Singapore, the war was going in the most favorable way for Japan. The Imperial Army was gathering momentum and actually achieving brilliant war results.

But even today I wonder why Mrs. Itô said what she did to me — a mere college student devoted to French and Russian literature, with only a superficial knowledge of Marxism, whom she could not have known enough to confide in. Be that as it may, she unmistakably spoke these words. At that time I knew several people converted from communism, but they never said anything like that. They would say the opposite. I shall never forget Mrs. Itô's words as long as I live.

However, even though I heard her words so clearly spoken, I did not believe them. I was not even half in doubt. I simply did not believe them. I firmly believed — regrettably — that what she predicted could not happen. Unless the American forces invaded Japan, bringing the wretched warfare onto Japan's soil, what she predicted could never happen — I was absolutely convinced of that.

Today nothing is more plain than this: it is citizens' right and duty to desire peace. . . . These two "fault lines" have not been resolved in me yet.

One may say that in our nation, Hattori Takushirô who was a career officer and Mrs. Itô represented two extremes.

After the war, as Itô Ritsu's name often appeared in the newspapers, and later as it disappeared completely, I recalled from time to time Mrs. Itô's stunning words.

When the war ended, I was in Shanghai, China. Confined to the Japanese quarter [where all Japanese were ordered to stay], I had nothing left to do. At that time, though I feel sorry for the Japanese who were either in Japan or elsewhere, I must say that Shanghai essentially escaped the ravages of war, with no shortage of goods.

Oddly enough, for those of us who lived like vagrants, the forced concentration made it even easier to live as beggars, so to speak. The ladder to Japan had been removed, and most of us were bored to death. Ones in love were the busiest. At that time, at a used-book store run by an old Hungarian woman whom I knew, I found a really rare book and was immersed in it. The book was M. Steichen's *Les Daimyo Chretiens, ou un siecle de l'histoire religieuse et politique du Japon 1549-1650* (Hong Kong, 1904). In a city such as Shanghai, where confusion made up the whole city as it were, one never knew what treasure was hidden among the heap of confusion and rubbish. (This famous book was translated into Japanese by Yoshida Kogorô and published in 1930 by Ookayama Shoten. This Japanese version also became a rare book, as did Origuchi Nobuo's *Kodai Kenkyû* by the same publisher. After the war, Yoshida's version was published by Kangensha.) Having nothing better to do, I was engrossed in the book.

As I kept on reading, near the end of the book was a chapter describing the Amakusa-Shimabara Uprising. Even with my limited knowledge of the subject at that time, I found inaccuracies in the description. When I came upon the following passage, I read no further. I quote from Yoshida Kogorô's translation published by Kangensha.

For the Japanese peasants who had been accustomed to thinking of themselves as "possessions" of their *Daimyo*, the rebels of Hara [Castle] showed daring and courage rarely found in Japanese history. Some day their countrymen will probably regard them with respect, as the first defenders of people's rights.

Such words give me pause. I believe there is still room for doubt today as to whether Father Steichen's assertion is historically valid. Also he was the only person who derived such an interpretation from the Amakusa-Shimabara Uprising. No such interpretation is presented in Leon Pages' *Histoire de la Religion Chretienne au Japon*; in Jean Crasse's *Nihon Seikyôshi*; or in the recent masterpiece by C. R. Boxer of University of California, entitled *The Christian Century in Japan, 1549-1650*. Among the works by Japanese writers, only Mr. Oike, in the book mentioned earlier, writes on the problem of unemployed samurai, or *ronin*, as follows: "In whichever period they lived, I would not want the *ronin* to be controlled by the powers that be. The *ronin*'s true characteristic lies in his empty stomach. I say to the *ronin* there: Do not forget your empty stomach." Needless to say, no such thought exists in any of the documents on this uprising produced during the Tokugawa period.

The only thing to be noted is the following passage in the book written during the Tenmei Era (1781-1789) entitled *Yumegatari*:

Among the samurai today, some obey unreasonable orders because they succumb to them, or because they are obsequious, but peasants do not easily succumb.

Father Steichen's "Preface" to his book is worthy of note, too:

Today, as Japan has reached a certain stage of Western civilization, and wishes to be aligned with foreigners, it is useful to look back upon the similar situation this country faced at the beginning of the 17th century. At first it was full of hope. But suddenly all relations were severed, and a

deep chasm was created between Japan and the rest of the world. (Japanese translation by Yoshida Kogorô)

This book which I read just as Japan was crawling out of the “deep chasm” between itself and the rest of the world because of Japan’s defeat in the war, left a profound impression on me.

However, at that extraordinary time of Japan’s defeat, in a strange foreign land, I ran into the passage quoted earlier about the Amakusa-Shimabara Uprising, and again I was reminded of Mrs. Itô’s words. Her prediction did not come true.

The annihilation on Attu Island and Saipan Island, the words of a communist during the war, the corresponding words, not of a communist but of a devout Catholic priest, and further, the “singing” voice of those fighting against the Security Treaty were all part of what had gradually formed my “conviction,” to use a Japanese legal term, with which to work on the present book.

August 15th is here again. [The anniversary of Japan’s unconditional surrender to the Allied Forces in 1945.]

End

Promenade 7

Postscript

Since I have written directly about the origin of this work in the earlier “promenades,” I have little left to say as its author. Setting aside the question of the success or failure of inserting essays under

the heading of "promenade" between narrative chapters, I was concerned lest these insertions turn out to be intrusive. I have never tried this kind of thing before.

I did this because I found it hard to enter into history without such a mechanism. That is to say, I could not suppress my desire to have a place where I might pay due respect to a great number of people, famous or obscure, who had kept records of the events since the Tokugawa period, and to the historians and researchers in the present time or the recent past. Also, I did not like to use, or rather, misappropriate their records and studies. Therefore, to be proper, I should make public some 100 documents and scholarly works which I have always kept by my writing desk. But I hesitate to go that far.

For a specific part of the history of a nation or an individual to be evoked as holding special significance to someone or to some other period, there should be a definite reason.

Having finished writing this book, I have an indescribable sense of gratitude to that part of history to which I have been indebted. Kobayashi Hideo's view of history may be summarized as follows: history comes alive as something like a mother's sense of sorrow for a lost child. In my case, history came alive in my sense of gratitude. This was a new discovery for me. At the same time, strange though it may sound, I have had a marvelous experience. Let me explain. The time—or history—from my boyhood till last year, which includes the war with its memory still very strong and vivid, that is to say, my own experience or my own history over these years, enabled me to communicate at a deeper level with the historical events of some 320 years earlier. People often talk about "history and literature." Even though I have no faith in God, Buddha, or anything of the kind, I have come to feel that history is not literary but rather deeply religious.

Perhaps it is only natural to feel that way.

I came to view human history, which contains all kinds of religion and religious incidents, as something more deeply religious, as it were, than any specific religion.

Those 37,000 farmers who occupied Hara Castle were massacred and annihilated. Documentary evidence indicates that no more than two dozen had escaped. It is truly amazing. The united forces of various *han* (fiefs), totaling 125,000 men, which surrounded the castle and took it in the end, suffered casualties of over 7,700 dead and wounded. In that small space of Hara Castle, such a large scale massacre occurred. Considering the small space, this massacre could exceed, in its ghastliness, the sacrifice of lives in Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the atom bombs. This was the view of Mr. Kuwabara Takeo, as I have written earlier. Be that as it may, such huge sacrifices found in history, including the atomic bombing, and their outcries—where do they reach? And where are they stored? Some may find in them simply a despair about humankind; others may see a struggle for people's liberation; or, some may recognize there the persecution of a foreign religion and a heroic but desperate determination of people resisting the persecution. However, I am neither a historian nor a researcher in history. As one pursuing the literary profession, I cannot be content with any specific conclusion. After all, interpretations are hollow. It was here that history and religion, two heavy matters, came in.

Let us return to the Kan'ei period (1624-1644), and look at the time following the Shimabara Uprising. Incidentally, new studies have been made recently on the participants in this uprising. According to the study by Sukeno Kentarô, the total number of people who joined

the revolt from the southern part of the Shimabara Peninsula was 23,888. If you subtract this figure from the total number of people occupying the castle, over 37,000, you have about 13,900 participants from Amakusa. Also, according to *Amakusaki*, of the rebels holding the castle, "soldiers were about 23,000." It follows then that about 14,000 were old people, women, and children.

From the villages of Futsu, Dôsaiki, Arie, Arima, Kuchinotsu, Katsusa and Kushiya, everyone joined. Thus, after the uprising, these villages became extinct as a matter of course. In other words, in the southern part of the Shimabara Peninsula, the life which people had built up and preserved generation after generation over a long period of time came to a rupture and became extinct. Such an example is seldom found in Japanese history.

Matsukura Shigetsugu, the ruler at the time of the uprising, was later sentenced to death in 1638 (15th year of Kan'ei). In his place came Kôriki Tadafusa from Hamamatsu, who was said to be a descendant of Kumagai Jirô Naozane. But, without people, there could be no government or administration. Thus began what was called "*rumin shôchi*," ("summoning displaced persons"). The Tokugawa [central] government ordered the *daimyo* in Kyushu to send immigrants from each *han* at the rate of one family per 10,000 *koku* of the *han* stipend. But that was not sufficient. Therefore, the central government ordered the Shogunal demesne (*Tenryô*) (which was under the central government's direct control) to send immigrants. The immigrants from Shôdo Island of Sanuki are particularly worthy of note. Even today, the descendants of the immigrants from Shôdo Island are considered of good lineage. These families have carefully preserved their old teakettles as evidence of their good ancestry. In the village of Arie, the *sômen* (fine noodles) is its special product. It is said that

their *sômen* has the same taste as that of Shôdo Island. Even today, each village in this area seems to have its own distinct language. The descendants of the immigrants from Shôdo Island seem to retain an accent which resembles that in the Kansai dialect.

The new administrator Kôriki Tadafusa issued a decree, with the central government's permission, called "*tsukuritori*," which granted an exemption from taxation. As a result, peasants from the northern part of the peninsula and from neighboring *han* (fiefs) (despite the ban on crossing *han* boundaries) came into this *han*. Also, among the *ronin* who could not secure employment as samurai retainers after the uprising, some stayed on in the *han*. The number of *ronin* who joined the government forces that surrounded the castle was very large. This uprising was the largest war since the battle of Sekigahara (1600) and the battle of Osaka. Thus, the government forces deployed to surround the castle experienced a kind of reunion of the samurai who had fought during the period of civil wars (which ended in 1603, when the Tokugawa government came into being, headed by Tokugawa Ieyasu, the victor at the battle of Sekigahara). For the peasants who had been living wretched lives, this decree of "*tsukuritori*" was immensely attractive. Consequently, too many peasants had run away from the territory of the Ômura family into this region, so that the Ômuras had to make a protest to the Kôrikis, demanding the return of the peasants.

By the way, this man, Kôriki Tadafusa, was an awful fellow. According to the *Buke Seisuiiki* quoted in Kawakita Onzan's masterpiece entitled *Harajô Kiji*, even while he was still in Hamamatsu, "Tadafusa was tyrannical. Samurai and ordinary people alike suffered pain and grief. He was called Settsu no Kami the Devil." What a shame!

After he came to Shimabara, "Tadafusa ruled. He loved cruelty. He searched for Christians, making no allowance for anyone. The feudal lords in the neighboring fiefs, on their part, would arrest anyone who looked like a Christian and send the suspect to Shimabara. Ten, fifteen of them, in one day. He did not examine them. He killed them at a Buddhist temple in Imamura. Sometimes 100 of them in a day. Ah! Didn't those killed have wives and children? He simply hated them. He killed many Christians. He said what he did was no sin, but it could not be anything but abominable cruelty."

Indeed, Tadafusa was a fiendish fellow. Let me give another illustration. His partner in pederasty was a youth named Ogawa Heizô. Now, Tadafusa's vassal named Okayama Ichibei sent a love letter to the boy. When this was found out, Tadafusa was furious. He imprisoned Ichibei, handed him a dagger, and pressed him to commit suicide. Ichibei defied Tadafusa and ran away. He was discovered hiding in a coffin at his father's house. How did Tadafusa kill Ichibei? First, each day he broke one finger of Ichibei's hand for ten days; next, he broke one toe a day for ten days; then, he cut Ichibei's nose and ears over three days; and finally he cut the head off. On top of that, Tadafusa killed Ichibei's father, mother, and all his brothers. How atrocious! And, this fellow's son, Takanaga, was even worse. He loved money and extravagance better than anything else. He was impossible. After the uprising, in this devastated land, people were destitute again. Finally in 1668 (the 8th year of Kanbun), the central government ordered the Kôriki family stripped of the power and privileges of the samurai. [The penalty imposed was called *kaieki*. Under this penalty, the family was forced to relinquish the stipend, all retainers, and the right to continue the family line. In addition, the head of the family and his heir were banished from the fief.

Translator's note.]

For the inhabitants this was adding insult to injury. And yet, the very government labeled Shimabara "the most difficult area to be pacified" (Shogun Ietsuna), or "the land hard to rule." What a pity!

The lord of Amakusa, Terasawa Katataka, had his Amakusa stipend of 40,000 *koku* erased. As a result, he committed suicide in desperation.

Let me add in passing that the Arima family, who had been the lords of Shimabara before the revolt, before the Matsukuras' arrival, had been transferred to Hyûga Nobeoka by the time of the uprising. The third generation of the Arima family after the removal was transferred again, this time, to Itoigawa in Hokuriku, quite an unexpected area. Under the Tokugawa regime, the fate of the feudal lords, particularly small-to-medium-sized ones, was pathetic.

So much for Shimabara and Amakusa. The political impact of this uprising was tremendous — internationally. Namely, Japan closed the country. Domestically, the Tokugawa government made two decisions. First, Christianity was strictly prohibited. Second, in case of an emergency in one *han*, other *han* were permitted to send their troops to assist the *han* in trouble, without waiting for the central government's order.

Now, finally, about the fate of the artist Yamada Emosaku. It is known that he went to Edo, accompanied by Matsudaira Nobutsuna. After that, however, there are many theories. Some say that, in Edo, while practicing painting, Emosaku was made a detective in search of Christians. That he was paid a salary and provided with servants. And that he returned to Christianity later and so was imprisoned. Others say that he went down to Nagasaki in his last years and be-

came ill and died there. As for the fact that he alone had survived the uprising, having betrayed the rebels, Nio Tamaki speculates that he was allowed to live as a witness for the future of Christianity; that is, his survival was a result of the rebels' shrewd planning. In *Nihon Shoki Yôga no Kenkyû*, which is the most detailed study of Yamada Emosaku, written by Nishimura Tei, there is an article entitled "Shimabara Ran no Kirishitan Jinchûki to Yamada Emosaku." This article goes further than Nio's speculation and argues as follows: When Emosaku returned to Christianity again, "He finally cast off his mask (of the detective in search of Christians) — this was not, contrary to some speculation, an act of penitence for having betrayed over 30,000 people who held the castle. Rather, it was simply that, scorched by the fire of faith that had been burning in him, he threw himself, courageously and without reserve, before the cross. He placed himself in such an environment as no ordinary person could tolerate, and successfully overcame it, while all the time keeping Christian faith. He was indeed a man of rock-solid determination. That's the way to look at him." I agree with Okada Akio, as I could hardly accept such an overzealous view. However, I have no basis to deny it, either.

Be that as it may, as time passed after the uprising, a legend came into being about Masuda Shirô as "the good man" — an angel, or Jesus Christ. At the same time, as the shadow follows the form, a legend about Yamada Emosaku as a kind of Judas seemed to be emerging. I ought to mention that this notion struck me as something indescribably deep. I have an idea about Judas in the Bible, but since this is not a place to elaborate on it, I will skip it. However, let me say what I believe: given the human nature as it is, true faith always requires or demands a Judas, or something like Judas. I believe that

Judas was inevitable for Christianity to be established. And if I were to write about Emosaku, bringing him closer to the Judas legend, I shall choose for his last moment an unnatural death, not a death sentence, martyrdom, nor a peaceful death.

As for Christianity itself, I doubt if the medieval Catholicism—that was introduced to Japan with Buddhism serving as an intermediary—would have spread all over Japan, even if the government had not prohibited it. The problem of the spiritual tradition of Japan and Christianity, or the problem of “Japanese style” Christianity, is discussed in a study by Uoki Tadaichi entitled *Nihon Kirisutokyô no Seishinteki Dentô*. But, on the question of whether or not this religion which was so medieval, in fact too medieval, at that time, could not only have been fully accepted but also have flourished in the pre-modern Tokugawa period, which was very worldly and in which the culture of townspeople grew, I tend to agree with Dr. Tsuda Sôkichi, who expressed a negative view on the subject. Here, too, I believe, is something essentially Japanese. Nonetheless, this does not prevent us from imagining what kind of cultural fruit may result from a shocking event.

Finally, let me add the following. When I visited Hirado, I met an elderly man who was a “*kakure kirishitan*” (crypto Christian [a Christian who keeps his or her faith hidden]). I asked him, “Have you thought of converting to the present Catholic faith?” “I would sooner become Buddhist than convert to something like that,” he answered. I was surprised but at the same time I understood.

End

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