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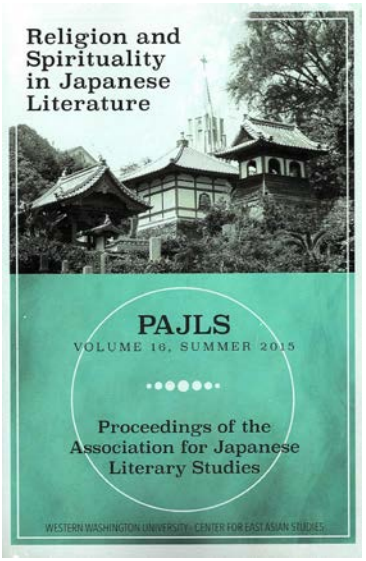

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Unaccomplished Desire for Japanese Aesthetics in Tachihara Masaaki's Novels

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Tachihara Masaaki (立原正秋, 1926－1980) is considered a novelist with a fascinating complexity. A popular writer, he strove to embody Japanese medieval aesthetics in his works. His novels initially appeared as popular love stories, but in them can be recognized an appreciation for Japanese arts, and an undercurrent of Zen. Admiring traditional Japanese aesthetics, his protagonists are driven by the desire for a selfless state of mind—the ultimate state of Zen—but they can neither complete the negation of their egos nor attain the ultimate aesthetic sense. Instead, they keep aimlessly wandering in the physical world. Tachihara, on the one hand, follows his precursors—Zeami (世阿弥), Sesshū (雪舟), Sōeki (宗易), and Bashō (芭蕉)—who succeeded in sublimating solitude to their own aesthetics. On the other hand, he sympathizes with Musō Soseki (夢窓疎石), a Zen Buddhist, who lived during the medieval period and was unable to reach an ideal state because of his own involvement in the world. Tachihara, a Korean-Japanese writer, seems intentionally or unintentionally to have hesitated to merge himself with the supposed essence of Japanese culture. Thus, his protagonists reveal their fascination with Japanese aesthetics but simultaneously show a distance from it.

Beginning with an introduction to Tachihara's ethnic background, I will then examine his protagonists' intricate attitude toward Japanese aesthetics and Zen's transcendental self, as rendered in *Tsurugigasaki* (剣ヶ崎, Cape Tsurugigasaki, 1965), *Tsumugi no sato* (紬の里, Village of Pongee, 1971) and *Yume wa kareno o* (夢は枯野を, Dreams Wandering a Parched Field, 1974). In *Tsurugigasaki*, Tachihara straightforwardly deals with ethnic issues, creating the ethnically hybrid character Tarō, who believes salvation lies only in aesthetics. Tachihara then carries this on in the later novels, weaving aesthetic topics and elements of Zen Buddhism into *Tsumugi no sato* and *Yume wa kareno o*. In this paper, I draw on previous studies[1] to examine *Tsurugigasaki* and *Tsumugi no*

[1] My dissertation and articles in PAJLS vols. 2, 5.

sato, and then draw on Tachihara's essay, "Nihon no niwa" (日本の庭, Japanese Gardens, 1977), to analyze *Tsumugi no sato* and *Yume wa kareno o*.

Tachihara Masaaki was born in 1926 in Andong of the present-day South Korea, which was then under Japanese occupation. He immigrated to Japan accompanied by his uncle in 1937. Before Takai Uichi published the biography *Tachihara Seishū* (立原正秋) in 1991, Tachihara's parents were believed to be half Japanese and half Korean. Many readers attributed Tachihara's profound understanding of Japanese tradition to his Japanese heritage. After Takai's publication, however, readers learned that Tachihara was fully Korean with the original Korean name, Kim Yun'-gyu (金胤奎), and he changed his name several times before ultimately settling on Tachihara Masaaki.

Tachihara's literary works are divided into two categories: several written under his original Korean name, Kim Yun'-gyu, and the rest of the works written under his Japanese name, Tachihara Masaaki. Under his Korean name, Kim Yun'-gyu, our author wrote *Aru fushi* (ある父子, A Certain Father and His Son) in 1948, depicting (in Japanese) the adversities suffered by Koreans under Japanese occupation. The work was found in the Gordon W. Prange Magazine Collection at Maryland University, where had been stored printed publications issued in Japan and collected by the American General Headquarters (GHQ) in the years immediately after the war.[2] He also wrote approximately one hundred forty works under his Japanese name Tachihara Masaaki, including a great number of popular novels, as well as a few works straightforwardly dealing with ethnic issues, such as the aforementioned *Tsurugigasaki*.

In *Tsurugigasaki*, Tachihara describes the emotional problems of the hybrid character Tarō who is dangling between the two identities of Korean and Japanese. In the book are other figures of mixed origin, who choose a position as either Japanese or Korean. Tarō, however, remains hybrid, a complex combination of the two. For this he is eventually killed by a cousin, Jirō, who believes in being purely Japanese. Before this, however, in the midst of this identity struggle, Tarō pursues aesthetics as his salvation. Tarō's statement that "beauty is the only thing one can believe in (27)"[3] reminds Jirō of the novella *Tonio Kröger*, in which Thomas Mann described the mixed blood protagonist Tonio in a series of predicaments between life and art. The scholar Kawamura Minato poses a question as to whether Tachihara's literature represents Japanese

[2] Kawasaki Kenko announced her findings in the Asahi Newspaper dated November 1, 2008.

[3] Quotes from *Tsurugigasaki* are taken from Stephen W. Kohl's translation, *Cliff's Edge*.

literature *per se*, or *zainichi* literature, the literature of those who have Korean heritage. [4] Clarifying Tachihara's complicated attitude toward Japanese aesthetics through analysis of *Tsurugigasaki*, Kawamura argues that Tachihara regarded beauty as a universal that transcends ethnicity, and then found such beauty in the particular context of Japanese culture. In the novel, although Tarō noticed the potential that existed in art to relieve his angst, he in the end succumbed to desire to end the struggle that existed within himself and allowed his cousin to kill him. Jirō tells his father about Taro's death as follows:

> I tried to think it was that beauty he believed in that caused him to destroy himself. He went into scientific research saying it would be disgusting to be sent off to war and die in a ditch somewhere, and yet, on the day after the war ended, on the very day he no longer had to worry about being hit by a bullet, he chose the path of his own destruction. (70)
> 兄さんが信じていた美とは、自分自身を滅亡させることではなかったのか、そんな風にも考えてみました。戦争に駆り出されて野たれ死にするのはいやだと言って理科に進んだ兄さんが、戦いが終ったあくる日に、もう砲弾で死ぬ恐れもなくなった日に、自ら滅びの道を選んだのです。(133)[5]

Tachihara seemingly placed his own complex background onto the self-destructive struggles with ethnicity of the character Tarō in the 1965 novel *Tsurugigasaki*. In the 1970's, however, he put such issues aside to continue his already established skill at writing so-called *taishū shōsetsu* (popular novels). Embracing Japanese tradition, these were popular, attracting not only readers but also critics. Of the latter, some focused on Tachihara's appreciation for Noh dramas and Zeami's aesthetics, while others noted the influence of Zen Buddhism on Tachihara's works. In the next section, I will examine how Tachihara's protagonists strive to accomplish the desire for Japanese aesthetics and Zen's transcendental self by analyzing *Tsumugi no sato* and *Yume wa kareno o*.

The first chapter of *Tsumugi no sato* appeared in *Shōsetsu seven* in May of 1970; the rest of the chapters appeared in *Shōsetsu shinchō* in 1971. Published in so-called popular magazines, the novel seems to have been read by most as a love story. Since its characters and setting are remarkably similar to Kawabata Yasunari's *Yukiguni* (雪国, Snow Country, 1937), *Tsumugi no sato* was criticized as a parody of *Yukiguni* in a Kanagawa newspaper article dated January 12, 1972.

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[4] Kawamura Minato, *Sengobunbaku o tou* (Tōkyō: Iwanamishinsho, 1994), 211-213.
[5] Tachihara Masaaki, "Tsurugigasaki," in *Tachihara Masaaki Zenshū* vol. 2 (Tōkyō: Kadokawa shoten, 1982), 85-145.

Against this criticism, I argue that the protagonists of the two novels differ significantly. In *Yukiguni*, the male protagonist Shimamura is a dilettante, who amuses himself in his pursuit of pleasure by integrating the beauty of two quite different women: the sexually mature Komako, and the virgin Yoko. Yet he does not get deeply involved with either and presumably will leave for Tokyo when he is done amusing himself with them. On the contrary, Tachihara's protagonist, Takashina, finds it laborious to escape from the relationship with the two female characters. As a result, Takashina reconciles himself to indecisively vacillating between the two women. For understanding Tachihara's incompleteness of mimicry, one needs to return to the writer's ethnic background, employing Homi Bhabha's concept of mimicry. Bhabha indicates the ambivalence of colonial discourse, which can be seen in the colonizer's abhorrence toward the colonized who mimic the colonizer. When the positions of colonizer and colonized are changed, Tachihara—the colonized in youth and the post-colonized after 1945—seemingly hesitates to be identical to the colonizer. Thus, delineating the protagonist wandering in the physical world, Tachihara shows opposing directions, attempting to mimic *Yukiguni* and embody Japanese tradition and deviating from mainstream literature. The contradictory nature of his movements are seen in the enigmatic conclusion of *Tsumugi no sato*. Mentioning neither the reasons the three characters have to negate each of their egos nor clues about what "negating the ego" (*jiko hitei* 自己否定) or "a certain value" (*aru kachi* ある価値) mean, the author merely presents Takashina's monologue, and puzzles the readers:

> It would be alright if the three of us would be stalled respectively. We will not be in trouble even if we are stalled. Takashina thought, "There will be no reason that we will suffer from being stalled if we negate each ego for a certain value."
> 三人三様に行きくれたとしたら、それはそれでいいではないか。行きくれて困るということはなかった。ある価値のために自己否定した、というのであれば、行きくれてそれほど困るわけではないだろう、と高階は考えたのである。[6]

Considering Tachihara's profound knowledge of Zen Buddhism and the medieval Japanese traditions, "negating the ego" could be interpreted as an indispensable step toward Zen transcendence and "a certain value" as aesthetic culmination. Yet his readers, unable to absorb the meaning of Takashina's

[6] Tachihara Masaaki, "Tsumugi no sato," in *Tachihara Masaaki Zenshū* vol. 13 (Tōkyō: Kadokawa shoten, 1982), 5-177 (quote from p. 168).

enigmatic monologue, only know that the three characters aim to achieve the ultimate stage of a certain state, but they continue wandering in the physical world.

The essay "Nihon no niwa" (Japanese Gardens) has a hint to understand Tachihara's relation to Zen Buddhism. In the essay, Tachihara shows his appreciation of Japanese medieval tradition and respect for Japanese precursors such as Zeami, Sesshū, Sōeki, and Bashō; they succeeded in sublimating their solitude to their own aesthetics. Itō Sachiko, analyzing Tachihara's works in light of the influence of Zen Buddhism, connects those four artists and Dōgen's Zen Buddhism, indicating that those four artists negated themselves to attain a transcendental self and sublimated themselves into the aesthetic stage.[7] The "self" in Zen is interpreted differently in various Buddhist narratives, the Ten Oxherding Pictures or exegeses on Zen Buddhism. What is in common among those interpretations are concepts such as "true self of absolute nothingness," "negations of self," and "self-realization." For instance, Steve Odin shows his understanding of the true self in a reference concerning the Kyōto school:

> Generally speaking, Nishida and his followers in the Kyōto school develop a Zen Buddhist vision of the true self as an act of complete self-negation in absolute Nothingness, articulated both in terms of the Buddhist notion of śūnyatā (J. kū) or emptiness of self and the Christian idea of kenōsis self-emptying.[8]

Tachihara, influenced by Zen Buddhism, projects his own desire to develop to the stage of Zen's self-realization on his protagonist, Takashina. However, Takashina lost his way home and wandered aimlessly in the physical world. Itō mentions Musō Soseki (1275-1351), a Rinzai Zen Buddhist monk who was an important influence on Tachihara's literary works. As Itō indicates, Tachihara saves one chapter for Musō Soseki in "Nihon no niwa." According to Tachihara's understanding, Musō Soseki kept wandering to various places and created gardens at each place where he temporarily stayed. Being located in the time of Emperor Godaigo and Ashikaga Takauji, which saw collapse of the Kamakura bakufu and eventually establishment of the Ashikaga line of shoguns, he could not be freed from politics and had to vacillate between the ideal and the

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[7] Itō Sachiko, "Tachihara Masaaki no sakuhin ni okeru biishiki no mondai – Sutego no kyōgai," *Kitazato daigaku kyōyōbu kiyō* vol. 21 no. 3 (March 1987): 160-192.

[8] Steve Odin, *The Social Self in Zen and American Pragmatism* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 6.

real throughout his life. Tachihara sympathized with Soseki and valued the monk's achievement of making the culture of the Five Mountain Zen system (*gozanbunka*) thrive by building and maintaining ties with politicians, even if such worldly ties prevented him from attaining full enlightenment. Itō summarizes her article as follows:

> Tachihara, however, has a favorable view on such garden makers—especially on Musō Soseki—, since the failure to attain the transcendental self is also a phenomenon typical of human existence, and in most of his novels he sympathetically deals with such imperfect life and those poor souls who suffer from the lack of fulfillment of desire.[9]

Following Itō's line of thought here, the character Takashina seems to have been modeled after Musō Soseki. And appreciating garden as a place to establish one's aesthetic experience, Tachihara wrote the novel *Yume wa kareno o.* The title reminds readers of Bashō's haiku: "Sick on a journey—/over parched fields/ dreams wander on"[10] ("Tabi ni yande/yume wa kareno o/kakemeguru," 旅に病んで夢は枯野をかけ廻る). Written while Bashō was lying ill, the poem implies a dismal ending. In the novel, Tachihara dealt with a theme pertaining to Japanese aesthetics and transcendence in Zen and provided the reader with a perplexed ending, as he did in *Tsumugi no sato. Yume wa kareno o* mainly includes two themes: one is the relationship among Kase Yūsaku, a designer of traditional Japanese gardens, and two women, Mizue and Tamiko; and the other is the aesthetic value of the gardens Kase designs and, more generally, of Japanese traditional gardens assumed to be influenced by Zen Buddhism.

Kase is hired as a designer to build a garden by Mizue's husband, an executive manager of a food company. Kase had met Mizue at her parents' home for the first time when he was in his mid- twenties, while Mizue was a college student. Fourteen years after their first encounter, they reunite at Mizue's home. After the garden is built, Mizue's husband enjoys looking at the garden. In contrast to her husband, she feels uneasy because that she feels that the garden is watching her. Tachihara describes her uneasiness:

> Ordinarily a dry landscape garden is observed, but this garden looked back at you. The stone Mizue had discovered that morning at dawn from the bathroom window was one indication of this. (27)[11]

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[9] Itō, 160.

[10] Lucien Stryk, *On Love and Barley, Haiku of Basho* (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 81.

[11] Quotes from *Yume wa Kareno o* are taken from Stephen W. Kohl's translation, *Wind and Stone.*

> 枯山水は見ることを要求する庭だったが、この庭は、見る人を反対に見ていた。水江が、早暁、手水に立ったとき発見した石がそれだった。(219)[12]

Kase believes that "the process of aging in a thing of beauty is a far more important consideration in garden building than in some other arts" (29). His belief is proven by the fact that the longer the time process, the more intense Mizue's uneasiness becomes. Finally, she tells Kase that she has the feeling that "she is being watched by the garden everyday" (61). Her confession satisfies Kase, who had wonderd if the stones could arouse Mizue's emotion. While waiting for the garden to influence Mizue's feeling, Kase has been speculating about the connections between Zen kōan and *karesansui* (Japanese rock gardens), but he cannot clarify it even after his research. Moreover, he admits that he does not understand Zen so that he is unable to create its gardens.

Plausibly Japanese elements of culture such as the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and calligraphy are influenced by Zen. Suzuki Daisetsu, in *Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Culture,* states that "Zen finds its inevitable association with art but not with morality (21),"[13] and studies its influences on Japanese people's love toward nature, Noh drama, and tea ceremony. Suzuki does not examine its influence on Japanese gardens in detail, but in the chapter "Rikyū and Other Tea-Men," he refers to Musō Soseki as a Zen Buddhist who engaged in garden building and Rikyū as a tea-man who instructed *sabi* (peace or serenity) in the *roji* (tea house garden). The modern scholar Masuno Shunmyō suggests Zen Buddhists formed gardens based on what they had learned through the practice of Zen meditation and insists that the viewers should grasp the spirituality of Zen by contemplating the *karesansui* garden, one of the Zen arts.[14] He also considers Zen Buddhism, especially the Rinzai sect, indispensable for Japanese art and, moreover, appreciates Musō Soseki for completing the Japanese individual Zen Buddhist garden.[15]

In chapter 5 of "Nihon no niwa," Tachihara accepts that there are some

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[12] Tachihara Masaaki, "Yume wa kareno o," in *Tachihara Masaaki Zenshū* vol.17 (Tōkyō: Kadokawa shoten, 1982), 197-356.

[13] Suzuki Daisetsu, *Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Culture* (Kyōto: Eastern Buddhism Society, Otani Buddhist College, 1938).

[14] Masuno Shunmyō, *Zensō to meguru kyō no meitei* (Tōkyō: Asukīshinsho, 2008), 47-50.

[15] Masuno Shunmyō, *Musō Soseki: nihon teien o kiwameta zensō* (Tōkyō: NHK bukkusu, 2005), 95-96.

connections between Zen Buddhism and *karesansui*[16] and recollects his attitude in his youth toward the *karesansui* garden at the Ryōanji temple in Kyoto by quoting an article in *Kindai*, a magazine published in 1957. In the quoted article, he states that he always hates to assimilate himself to the object and persists in watching it from an objective, practical perspective. The object is assumed to be a garden from the context of the essay. After introducing his own article, Tachihara quotes Shiga Naoya's article on the garden of the Ryōanji temple and severely criticizes Shiga's intuitive attitude toward the garden.

> Shiga's article "Ryōanji's garden" is expressed by Shiga's pleasure which shows no interest. The garden is seen by a person who holds no agony. In other words, it is strange that the other's degeneration can be seen so easily. What Shiga saw was himself.[17]
>
> 志賀の＜龍安寺の庭＞は、関心のない快感性によって表出された内容である。なんの苦悩もない人間が通りすがりにみた庭である。言いかえると、他人の荒びがそう簡単に見えること自体がおかしいのである。志賀に見えたのは自分だ けであった。[18]

Downplaying Tachihara's dogmatic criticism, his indication of Shiga's disposition to eliminate the other can be persuasive when reviewing previous criticisms. Sekine Eiji, focusing on the narrator of *Kinosaki nite* (城の崎にて, At Cape Kinosaki, 1917), who identifies himself as the dead newt, notes that Shiga's literary world is established by ignoring the encounter with the other.[19] Karatani Kōjin, analyzing the characters in *Wakai* (和解, Reconciliation, 1917), finds that they obey the "mood" that dictates the air among them and defines Shiga's literary world as lacking not only the other but also the self.[20] As Karatani indicates, the protagonist of *Wakai*, Junkichi, and his father, being

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[16] Tachihara indicates two reasons that he cannot believe in a complete connection between Zen and *karesansui*: first, *karesansui* was not built by Zen Buddhists but artisans, in Tachihara's words, *sansuikawaramono*. Second, *karesansui* changed their forms as time progressed, so the original Zen influence on the garden has been changing over time and cannot be traced.

[17] The quote from *Nihon no niwa* is translated by the present writer.

[18] Tachihara Masaaki, "Nihon no niwa," in *Tachihara Masaaki Zenshū* vol. 23 (Tōkyō: Kadokawa shoten, 1982), 7-132 (quote from p. 74).

[19] Sekine Eiji, *Tasha no shōkyo* (他者の消去, Eliminating the "Other") (Tōkyō: Keisō shobō, 1993), 132.

[20] Karatani Kōjin, "Shishōsetsu no ryōgisei" (私小説の両義性, Ambiguity in I-novel) in *Shiga Naoya Wakai sakuhinronshūsei* vol.1. Ed.Ikeuchi Teruo (Tōkyō: Taikūsha, 1998), 377.

controlled by the same mood that oppresses them, finally come to sympathize with each other. Unlike Junkichi, Tachihara abhors assimilating into the object and keeps the protagonist Kase of *Yume wa kareno o* from compromising with the mood surrounding him.

> After Kase receives Mizue's confession, they begin an affair. Finally, Mizue's husband, Shida, becomes aware of his wife's adultery and decides to destroy the garden Kase designed. However, the garden could not be completely destroyed as Shida had intended. Tachihara depicts the damaged garden as follows:The garden was neither alive nor dead, yet it retained the primary features Kase had created. Although Shida had tried to destroy the garden, it had survived. The stones had been dug up and scattered, but they remained Kase's eyes. (118)
>
> ・・・庭は加瀬がこしらえた原形をのこしたまま、死ぬことも生きることも出来ないかたちになっていた。そして、よくみていると、志田が毀していたつもりでも、毀れていないのがこの庭だった。掘り起こした石があちこちにころがっていたが、石はあいかわらず加瀬の目になっていた。(312)

Identifying the garden with Kase, we can interpret the damaged but not completely destroyed garden as Kase's own unyielding self, which would not merge itself into the deformed garden. In the quoted passage above, Tachihara shows Kase's undestroyed self; however, at the end of the novel, he shows Kase's indecisive attitude towards the two women. In the middle of the novel, Tamiko, a second cousin of Kase, enters as a rival of Mizue. Like the protagonist of *Tsumugi no sato*, Takashina, Kase starts vacillating between the two women, Mizue and Tamiko. When Kase has almost completed a garden for a new client, both women appear at his apartment. Tachihara describes a dismal ending to their triangle relation in the description of the making of the garden wall, a clay wall whose color is associated with oil (an *aburabei* wall). While building the wall in the garden, Kase and his students find three snakes hibernating in the soil and Kase decides to bury them in the wall. When one of the students asks him if they will bury all the snakes together, Kase indicates they should bury them separately. Clearly, the three snakes symbolize Kase, Mizue, and Tamiko, who had no way to move forward or backward.

> He mused that what he had buried there was really Mizue, Tamiko, and himself. He could not begin work on the dry landscape garden or the tea garden until the Aburabei wall was finished. He could still envision Tamiko and Mizue seated on clusters of stones set in Moronobu's predatory garden. Even as he compared the two women, he could see no solution. (156)

> もしかしたら俺はあそこに水江と民子と自分を塗りこめてしまったのではなかろうか……。油塀を仕あげないことには枯山水も露地庭にもとりかかれなかった。師宣の庭の石組に、水江と民子を掛けさせて比べる加瀬の思案はまだ続いていたが、答は出ていなかった。(353)

The readers, who expect Tachihara to give them a strong sense of closure at the end of the novel, are bewildered to find both Takashina of *Tsurugigasaki* and Kase of *Yume wa kareno o* vacillating between two women. In the analysis of *Fuyu no katami ni* (冬のかたみに, A Memento in Winter, 1975), a quasi-biography based on Tachihara's boyhood, Itō discusses why Tachihara keeps dealing with characters who run into a situation where they can move neither forward nor backward.[21] In *Fuyu no katami ni*, the protagonist is depicted as a hybrid boy whose father kills himself. In his real life, Tachihara, a full Korean, lost his father to illness. Based on the author's fictional background, Itō surmises that Tachihara was captured by the ethnic and cultural heritage of his father and, as a result, failed to attain the ultimate state. She also delineates what is in common between Tachihara and his father:

> The author attributes his irresolute state of mind to the fact that he could never set himself free from his father who had killed himself when the son was so young. Both father and son were half-breeds of Korean and Japanese blood. This common trait loaded their minds with unbearable burden and caused the son to be bound to his dead father by the strongest sympathy.[22]

Worthy of note is that Tachihara is not a writer who reflects his real life in his literary works. He adheres to the position of a prolific popular writer with a constructive power. Thus, even in the quasi-biography *Fuyu no katami ni,* by keeping distance between fact and fiction, he creates the hybrid characters, Shigeyuki and his father. Even though setting the characters and stages differently from his genuine ethnicity and surroundings, Tachihara manifests his ethnic heritage from his father. In the aforementioned quotation, Itō indicates such heritage causes Tachihara an irresolute state and hinders his characters from their enlightenment. In this study, I show my doubt that Tachihara resigned himself to being captured by his heritage's "unbearable burden."

Tachihara wrote the novel *Aru fushi*, under the name Kim Yun'-gyu, in a political magazine. In *Aru fushi*, the protagonist Korean boy faces hardships in

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[21] Itō Sachiko, "Tachihara Masaaki no sakuhin ni okeru biishiki no mondai— Eien no kadai," *Kitazato daigaku kyōyōbu kiyō* vol. 23, no. 3 (March 1989): 153-174.
[22] Itō, 153.

Korea under Japan's colonialism. While establishing his position as a popular writer, Tachihara is assumed to have occasionally swung back to his original position, where he wrote *Aru fushi* as a writer living in the post-colonial space and time. Not straightforwardly adhering to his original ethnic position but employing the concept of mimicry and hybridity, Tachihara continued to produce characters who fail in fulfilling their desire. Borrowing Itō's words, "Tachihara created literary works like Musō Soseki, who could not go as truly as Dōgen but built gardens at every turning point in his life."[23] Both Takashina and Kase, not hybrid characters, are similar to Tarō in admiring Japanese aesthetics as their salvation and suffering from dichotomy: Tarō faces dichotomy between the two ethnic poles, while Takashina and Kase struggle between the two female characters. What is in common among those characters is locating themselves in-between, and this state of "in-between" deprives them of artistic, spiritual culmination. I propose that Tachihara, hesitating to relinquish the ethnic heritage of his father, projected his self-image of hybridity on his protagonists and directed them to continue wandering in the physical world without accomplishing their desires for Japanese aesthetics and Zen's transcendental self. Tachihara seems to have strategically represented the unstable protagonist with unaccomplished desire in order to challenge readers who believe that salvation lies in negating themselves to attain a transcendental self and sublimating themselves into the artistic realm.

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[23] Itō, 156.

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