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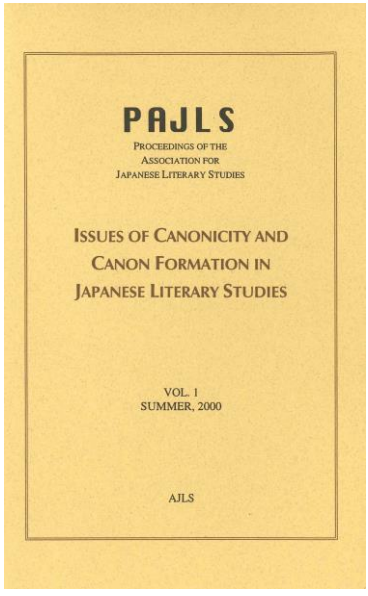

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SHIMAZAKI TŌSON'S *HAKAI*: (RE)WRITING AND (RE)READING THE CANON

Sayuri Oyama

> As a *shōsetsu*, [*Hakai*] didn't impress me very much. Even more than its style, there are many points of its structure that aren't completely convincing. For example, the struggles between "new commoners" and ordinary "commoners" seem too severe. I have not researched the *eta* in the Shinshū region, but based on the other areas I observed, the struggles were not as extreme . . . for example, I don't believe there were real cases like that in the story when O-Hinata is chased out from his lodgings with everyone saying, "I told you so!"
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> Yanagita Kunio, "Reviewing *Hakai*" (1906)[1]

> I read *Hakai* once again, and found that actually I had much to learn from it. For example, although it is a *shōsetsu*, *buraku* discrimination was depicted in an exceedingly real way. Of course, needless to say, there are obvious discriminatory expressions based on Shimazaki Tōson's prejudices . . . [reading the scene of O-Hinata's eviction], the fact that there was a custom of throwing salt and lighting flintstones at us *burakumin* for purification is vividly conveyed.
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> Hijikata Tetsu, "Rereading *Hakai*" (1987)[2]

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[1] In *Waseda Bungaku* 5 (May 1906): 112-13. (All translations mine unless otherwise indicated.)

[2] In Hijikata Tetsu, *Kaihō bungaku no dojō: buraku sabetsu to hyōgen* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1987), 81-82.

Shimazaki Tōson published his first full-length novel, *Hakai,* in 1906 (Meiji, 39) and the work received almost instant literary acclaim.[3] *Hakai*'s protagonist, Segawa Ushimatsu, is a young teacher who struggles over whether or not to break his father's commandment by publicly revealing his identity as a *hisabetsu burakumin.*[4] *Hakai* is seen as one of the founding texts of Japanese naturalism for representing the struggle of the individual in achieving spiritual freedom.[5] However, this reading of the work in terms of its place within the literary canon does not foreclose another kind of reading: how *Hakai* has been critiqued by readers interested in its representations of *burakumin* and the work's relevance to *buraku* liberation. As the above critics' comments illustrate, *Hakai* has been judged not only as a work of "pure literature," but also as a depiction of *buraku* discrimination in the Meiji period. In this paper, I will examine how *Hakai*'s revisions, critical reception, and alternatives offered within the text have exemplified various,

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[3] *Hakai* has been translated into English by Kenneth Strong as *The Broken Commandment* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1974). I refer to *Hakai*'s reprinted version in Shimazaki Tōson, *Tōson zenshū,* vol. 2 (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1966); hereafter abbreviated as TZ.

[4] Hereafter, I use "*burakumin*" as an abbreviation for "*hisabetsu burakumin*" (literally, people of discriminated-against districts). Who is defined as "*burakumin*" is a complex issue: the term may designate descendants of people in outcaste status groups (*eta* and *hinin*) in the Tokugawa period, those who reside in *dōwa* areas that were designated for special measures by the government from the 1960s, or those who have experienced discrimination as a result of being identified as *burakumin.* The names "*eta*" (literally, "full of filth") and "*hinin*" ("non-person") refer to official status groups in the Tokugawa period; however, after the status groups and respective names were officially abolished in 1871, the terms became highly pejorative. The modern terms "*shinheimin*" (new commoner) and "*tokushū buraku*" (special district) are other discriminatory names . Likewise, the term "*burakumin*" is not necessarily free of pejorative connotations, and its usage has been grounds for denunciation by the Buraku Liberation League. While I oppose the usage of these terms as discriminatory names, I use them in reference to their usage in *Hakai* and its related discourse.

[5] See Hirano Ken's discussion of *Hakai* and Tayama Katai's *Futon* as the two foundations of Japanese naturalism (originally published in 1938) in "Hakai-ron," *Shimazaki Tōson: Sengo bungei hyōron* (Tokyo: Tomiyamabō, 1979), 5-31.

sometimes contradictory, opinions regarding the history of and understanding of *buraku* discrimination.

In offering this (re)reading of *Hakai*, I wish to suggest that a reexamination of the canon of Japanese literature is not necessarily limited to arguing for the inclusion of "marginal" writers and their texts, but may also involve expanding the critical discourse on works that already have an established place in the literary canon. As John Guillory writes, "In order to understand the historical circumstances determining the constitution of the literary canon, then, we must see its history as the history of both the production and the reception of texts. We must understand that the history of literature is not only a question of what we read but of who reads and who writes, and in what social circumstances."[6] By examining how Tōson wrote (and revised) *Hakai*, as well as how critics interpreted the novel in relation to *buraku* discrimination, I do not mean to either justify or denounce *Hakai*'s canonical status. Rather, I believe that through examining its history of publication and criticism in relation to *buraku* discrimination, it is possible to contextualize the work in terms of social as well as literary history.

The Original Text (1906, Meiji 39) and Its Revisions

The story of *Hakai* revolves around Segawa Ushimatsu, a young elementary school teacher living in the small town of Iiyama in Shinshū (present day Nagano-ken). Upholding his father's commandment, Ushimatsu has kept his *burakumin* origins a secret from others in order to avoid ostracism and to aim at social advancement. In the opening of the novel, O-Hinata, a tenant in the same lodging house as Ushimatsu, is evicted after rumors circulate that he is a *burakumin*. When Ushimatsu observes O-Hinata's cruel eviction, he feels pity yet also fears that his own background might be discovered. He quickly moves from his lodgings to rent a room in Rengeji Temple, where he lives with the priest, his wife, and their adopted daughter O-Shio. (O-Shio has a secret of her own that parallels Ushimatsu's. The priest has been making sexual advances toward her, yet it is impossible for her to return to her biological father's home.) In the privacy of his room, Ushimatsu finds inspiration in the writings of Inoko Rentarō, a *burakumin* political activist and intellectual who has taken a defiant stance against dis-

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[6] See John Guillory's "Canon," *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990).

crimination. Although Ushimatsu hides his own *burakumin* identity, he deeply admires Inoko's passionate stance against the irrational social prejudices towards *burakumin*. Ushimatsu's father's sudden death after being gored by a bull brings Ushimatsu home to Nezu. Here he learns that his father's last words were that Ushimatsu must never reveal the secret of his background. Shortly after the funeral, Ushimatsu meets Inoko Rentarō and is moved by a desire to reveal to him that he, too, is a *burakumin*, although hesitates upon recalling his father's commandment. Through Inoko, Ushimatsu discovers that political candidate Takayagani Risaburō married the daughter of a wealthy *burakumin* from Nezu to finance his campaign. After Takayagani recognizes Ushimatsu in Nezu, he threatens to reveal his identity if Ushimatsu tells anyone about his wife's background. When Ushimatsu finally resolves to reveal his identity to Inoko, it is too late; Inoko has been murdered by political rivals after revealing Takayagani's secret. Yet Inoko's death serves as the catalyst for Ushimatsu's decision to make his confession not privately to Inoko, but in front of his students in the public space of his classroom. Here the story takes a somewhat unexpected twist: Ushimatsu departs from Iiyama, yet with the promise of marriage from his love-interest O-Shio and the plan to accompany O-Hinata to begin a new life in Texas.

From April 1899, for six years Tōson worked as a teacher in the town of Komoro in Shinshū. He completed *Hakai* shortly after he moved back to Tokyo with his family, and the work received significant critical attention after its publication.[7] In an essay published shortly after *Hakai*'s debut, Tōson discusses his observations of "shinheimin" in Shinshū while conducting research for his novel.[8] Specifically, he describes learning about a "*shinheimin*" teacher who became the inspiration for the novel (as Ushimatsu's character).[9] Refuting Yanagita's claim that the novel exaggerated

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[7] In the same year *Hakai* was published, over thirty reviews appeared, including those by literary figures such as Natsume Sōseki and Tayama Katai (see *Shōsetsu Hakai: kenkyū bunken shūsei*, ed. Tsuda Kiyoshi [Nagano: Iwanami Book Service Center, 1997.]) However, Tōson's financial strain in completing the novel took its toll on three of his young daughters who died from malnutrition before its publication.

[8] "'Hakai' no chosha' ga mitaru yamaguni no shinheimin," *Bunko* 31.6 (June 1906): 493-98.

[9] Tōson does not give the teacher's name in the essay; however, researchers have identified Ōe Isokichi (1868-1902) as the model for Ushimatsu to whom Tōson

discrimination, Tōson plainly states that the scene of O-Hinata's eviction was based on a "real" case he had heard from a knowledgeable source, and it was "not fiction, but it actually occurred."[10] His justification of the text's faithfulness to reality, however, appears to be based on Tōson's belief in the authenticity of his (*burakumin*) sources. In the most striking case, he provides an account of the origins of "*shinheimin*" that was based on his conversations with Yaemon, the leader of a *buraku* district in Komoro. This historical interpretation of native and non-native lineages of *burakumin* is reproduced nearly verbatim within *Hakai* as Ushimatsu's father's explanation of the family genealogy.[11]

Although the text that is most commonly circulated today as *Hakai* is identical to that published by Tōson in 1906 (Meiji 39), there were several revisions from the early 1920s through the late 1930s, and the original version was republished in 1953.[12] Although the basic plot given above was not altered drastically in the revisions, the terms used to refer to *burakumin*, the explanation of the origins of *burakumin*, and the scene of Ushimatsu's

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refers. Ōe was a teacher in Shinshū dismissed from several posts after his *burakumin* origins were discovered. He eventually became a principal at a junior high school but died of illness at the age of 35. Two recent studies on Ōe's life and connection to *Hakai* are Araki Ken's *Hakai no moderu: Ōe Isokichi no shōgai* (Osaka: Kaihō shuppansha, 1996) and Higashi Eizō's *Tōson no Hakai no moderu: Ōe Isokichi to sono jidai* (Nagano: Shinnō mainichi shinbunsha, 2000).

[10] "'Hakai' no chosha": 494.

[11] Hereafter I refer to this particular passage and its revision.

[12] The first version of *Hakai* was published in *Ryokuin sōsho dai-ichihen* (緑蔭叢第壱篇) by Tōson in 1906. In 1922, it was republished with minor changes in *Tōson zenshū* (藤村全集) by the Tōson Zenshū Kankōkai. The 1929 version published by Shinchōsha in *Gendai chōhen shōsetsu zenshū* (現代長編小説全集) added further changes. Soon after this version appeared, the text went out of publication until the 1939 version was published by Shinchōsha in *Teihonban Tōson bunko* (定本版藤村文庫) with the most substantial revisions. Finally, the original text was republished in 1953 by Chikuma shobō in Tōson's volume within *Gendai nihon bungaku zenshū* (現代日本文学全集). See Kawabata Toshifusa, *Hakai to sono shūhen: buraku mondai shōsetsu kenkyū* (Kyoto: Bunrikaku, 1984): 210-30; Umezawa Toshihiko, Yamagishi Takashi, Hirano Eikyū, *Bungaku no naka no hisabetsu buraku zō: senzen hen* (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 1980): 1-20. For a list of the specific revisions made, see TZ, 551-74.

confession were rewritten in each successive version. What are specific examples of the revisions, and for what reasons were they made? The shifts in versions can be seen as Tōson's responses to charges of the work's discriminatory qualities and thus involve the changes in how discrimination was understood by both Tōson and *buraku* social movements in different historical periods.

The first revision of *Hakai* was published in 1922 (Taishō 11) with approximately 150 changes in vocabulary and style. For example, "*kiite ita no de aru*" was changed to "*kiite ita*," and other expressions of emotion, such as laughter ("ha ha ha ha ha"), were abbreviated or eliminated.[13] However, in addition to these minor changes, in Ushimatsu's confession scene there is a noticeable difference in terms of his actions. In the original version, Ushimatsu explicitly takes an obsequious position both in terms of language as well as physical posture:

> 『…私は穢多です、調里です、不浄な人間です。』と斯う添加して言つた。丑松はまだ詫び足りないと思つたか、二歩三歩退即して、「許して下さい」を言い乍ら板敷の上へ跪いた。

> "... I am an *eta*, a *chōri*,[14] an unclean being!" he added. Possibly feeling that his apology was still insufficient, Ushimatsu stepped back a few steps, and knelt on the wooden floor saying "forgive me!" (TZ, 274)

However, in the 1922 revision, Ushimatsu's physical and verbal prostration has been erased:

> 『…私は穢多です、調里です、不浄な人間です。』と斯う添加して言つた。丑松はまだ詫び足りないと思つた。

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[13] See TZ, 567 and 562.

[14] The term "chōri" strictly speaking denotes an occupational role but developed a pejorative meaning over time. "Chōri" originally signified a leader who governed temple affairs or a local official, but came to be applied to *burakumin* leaders and later *burakumin* more generally. Through this process, kanji characters indicating pejorative meanings were attached to the name. (see Saitō Yōichi and Ōishi Shinzaburō, *Mibun sabetsu shakai no shinjitsu* [Tokyo: Kodansha, 1995]: 53.)

> ". . . I am an *eta*, a *chōri*, an unclean being!" he added. Ushimatsu felt his apology was still insufficient. (TZ,572)

In an afterword appended to the 1922 version, Tōson claims that the detailed revisions were still fairly close to his original intentions in writing *Hakai*. However, instead of defending his portrayal of discrimination for its realism as he had in 1906, Tōson describes the context in which he wrote *Hakai* without specifically mentioning *burakumin*. He discusses his preoccupation with the Russo-Japanese War, which broke out when he was living in Komoro. He adds, some may say that

> there is no connection between these memories and the literary work. Yet the period I was engaged in writing was an eventful time for me. Because of my anxieties in trying to change from my small life to a new life in which I had absolutely no experience, I was unsettled. This was also when I lost my three daughters after bringing them from the mountains of Shinshū to the suburbs of Nishi-Okubo. (TZ, 531)

Thus in 1922, Tōson encourages reading *Hakai* in the context of the national crisis of the Russo-Japanese War as well as his own personal tragedy of his daughters' deaths. Just as Ushimatsu's position was altered, Tōson appears to withdraw from his previous claim that the story relates some "truth" of discrimination against *burakumin*.

Less than a month after Tōson's revised *Hakai* appeared, the Suiheisha, the first national organization dedicated to the total liberation of *burakumin*, had its inaugural conference in Kyoto.[15] In the Declaration adopted at its opening conference, a strong stance was taken that repudiated the notion that discrimination was a problem of the discriminated-against rather than the discriminators:

> The time has come for the victims of discrimination to hurl back labels of derision. The time has come when the martyr's crown

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[15] See Ian Neary, *Political Protest and Social Control in Pre-War Japan: The Origins of Buraku Liberation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), for a history of the development of the Suiheisha.

> of thorns will be blessed. The time has come when we can be proud of being *Eta*. We must never again insult our ancestors and profane our humanity by slavish words and cowardly acts.[16]

Although the Suiheisha's declaration may echo Ushimatsu's confession through using the term "*eta*" self-referentially, in the Suiheisha's case this reclaiming of the name is clearly a strategy towards self-pride. Tōson may have been attempting to modify Ushimatsu's servile posture in order to deflect possible objections from the "real" subjects (now mobilized as a social movement, the Suiheisha) he appears to deliberately avoid speaking of or for in the same way he did in 1906.[17]

In 1929 (Shōwa 4), the second revised text was published. In this version, any uses of the term "*eta*" were replaced by the term "*burakumin*." This version appeared with an added preface in which Tōson reflected once again on the significance of his work:

> Maybe the time has come for my work *Hakai* to disappear from the reading world. Just as it would be better for a noun like "*burakumin*" to be taken out of our dictionaries, I think it may be the time for a work about *burakumin* like *Hakai* to disappear. However, it is already a tale of the past. I wrote this during the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. It was in the distant past of Meiji 37 [1904]. Just as the Russo-Japanese War itself is now a tale of the past, the background within the work is no longer the same as contemporary society. At one time these kinds of people lived, and there was once a time like this. Art should be able to

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[16] For the complete declaration, see *Bungaku no naka no hisabetsu buraku zō: Senzen hen*, 316 for the original Japanese language declaration; English translation from Neary, *Political Protest*, appendix (English translation of the declaration), 226.

[17] In 1926 (Taishō 15), at the Suiheisha's fifth annual conference, a representative proposed to denounce Tōson as the author of the discriminatory work *Hakai*. However, after debate within the conference managing committee, this proposal was not selected for larger discussion and thus neither *Hakai* nor Tōson was formally denounced by the Suiheisha. See Kitahara Daisaku, Buraku mondai kenkyūjō, ed., *Kitahara Daisaku buraku mondai chosaku shū*, vol. 2 (Kyoto: Buraku mondai kenkyūjō shuppanbu, 1982), 231.

> communicate this. Reconsidering it in this way, I would like today's readers to read this tale of *burakumin* once again. . . . On one hand, while I think it may be time for a work like *Hakai* to disappear, I don't want to hide the kind of past that this story relates from readers. I am a contradictory person in this regard. (TZ, 533)

Tōson's description of *Hakai* as a "tale of the past" elides whether he sees discrimination evident in his contemporary society of 1929. At the same time, in spite of his justification of the novel's continued reading, Tōson withdrew the work from publication in that year.

Kawabata Toshifusa argues that it was within the context of the Suiheisha's escalation of denunciation campaigns against what the organization saw as discriminatory works of art or literature that Tōson and his publisher Shinchōsha felt pressure to stop publication of *Hakai*.[18] Yet in the decade in which *Hakai* disappeared from the reading world, the Suiheisha changed its definition of what constituted a discriminatory work. In 1931 (Shōwa 6), at its 5th Conference, the Suiheisha declared a new policy towards the use of discriminatory words: whereas previously the use of names "*eta*," "*shinheimin*," and "*tokushū burakumin*" previously had been cause for denunciation, now if there was no evident *intent* to discriminate, use of names alone would not be considered as a discriminatory act. In a similar vein, in 1937 (Shōwa 12), the Suiheisha declared that artistic works such as *Hakai* that portray *burakumin* with overt expressions might achieve progressive enlightenment, whereas seemingly harmless expressions might reproduce discriminatory ideas and thus should be denounced.[19]

In 1939 (Shōwa 14), the third revision of *Hakai* was published after a ten-year period during which it had been out of publication. This time, the revisions were the most drastic in eliminating direct references to *burakumin* (e.g., changing "*burakumin*" to "*buraku no min*," "*eta no ko*" to "*sonna umare no mono*," and "*eta da kara*" to "*umare ga umare da kara*").

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[18] Kawabata Toshifusa, *Hakai to sono shūhen*, 212-16. See also Michael Bourdaghs, "The Disease of Nationalism, the Empire of Hygiene" *positions* 6.3 (1998): 637-73. Bourdaghs argues that publishing history of *Hakai* in the 1920s and 1930s can be understood as strategies of "quarantine" and "vaccination" to assimilate *burakumin* into the national community that supported Japanese colonialism.

[19] See *Kitahara Daisaku buraku mondai chosaku shū*, 232.

Ushimatsu's confession scene was further altered as follows:

> 『…私は皆さんを 欺いてゐたのです。』 と斯う添加して
> 丑松はまだ詫び足りないといふ風であつた。
>
> ". . . I have been deceiving everyone." It was as if he felt his apology was lacking. (TZ, 572)

Here Ushimatsu neither prostrates himself nor makes his self-declaration as "*eta*" or "*burakumin*" that were so striking in the earlier versions. The discriminatory language has been stripped, as well as any hint of a servile posture towards his students (i.e., the public to whom he confesses).

Furthermore, Ushimatsu's father's explanation concerning his family's ancestral line in the original version was altered significantly. In the original version, there are two lines of descent, native and foreign:

> 其時だ__一族の祖先のことも言ひ聞かせたのは。東海道の沿岸に住む多くの穢多の種族のやうに、朝鮮人、支那人、露西亞人、または名も知らない島々から漂着したり歸化したりした異那人の末とは違ひ、その血統は古の武士の落人から傳つたもの、貧苦こそすれ、罪惡の為に穢れたやうな家族ではないと言ひ聞かせた。
>
> (TZ, 9)
> It was then that he had told him about their ancestors: how they were not descended, like the many groups of *eta* who lived along the Eastern Highway, from foreign immigrations or castaways from China, Korea, Russia, and the nameless islands of the Pacific, but from runaway samurai of many generations back; that however poor they might be, their family had committed no crime, done nothing dishonorable. (Strong's translation)

In the 1939 version, the explanation of foreign racial descent was eliminated along with the reference to samurai lineage:

其時だ—遠い過去のことも言ひ聞かせたのは。一族の祖先といふ人は、どういふ數奇な生涯を送り、どういふ道を辿つてこんな深い山間に隠れたものであるか、その過去の消息は想像も及ばない。しかし、その血統は古の落人から傳つたものと言ひ傳へられてゐる。

It was then that he had told him about the distant past—what kind of unfortunate lives their ancestors had led and what kind of path they had taken to hide in these deep mountains. This news of the past was beyond imagination. But their bloodline was of runaways of many generations back. (TZ, 552)

These revisions show the erasure of differences—of race, nationality, hereditary status.[20] At the same time, there were revisions eliminating terms suggestive of class differences or political ideology.[21] In some sense, although Tōson republished *Hakai*, the work was altered in such a way that the original version had effectively disappeared from the reading world.

While preparing the 1939 version, Tōson met the then-Chief Secretary of the Suiheisha, Imoto Rinshi, to discuss his revisions, and the text ultimately was republished with the Suiheisha's approval. Thus, for the Suiheisha, within a decade the interpretation of *Hakai* had drastically shifted from reading the work as a potential target of denunciation to praising it for its progressiveness. Tōson, as the spokesperson/author of the text, had gone from claiming its truth-telling function in describing discrimination in Shinshū to arguing for its historical worth as a "tale of the past" to eventually eliminating explicit traces of discrimination within the text itself. Throughout this process, Tōson gradually withdraws his authority to speak for *burakumin* as subjects (either in his text or his models in Shinshū), and the names he chooses to depict his subjects have been scrutinized by "real life" sub-

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[20] The theory of different racial origin of *burakumin* has been thoroughly repudiated in the postwar period by the Buraku Liberation League and the government's 1965 Dōwa Policy Council Report. The question of whether *burakumin* are of foreign origin, however, assumes that *burakumin* status is defined hereditarily, which also has been subject to debate.

[21] See Bourdaghs, 664-65.

jects-as-readers. As Bourdaghs argues, this shift in critical reception of *Hakai* from the standpoint of the prewar liberation movement may suggest the Suiheisha's complicity with the nationalistic movement that supported imperialism. Nevertheless, Tōson's statements and his revisions show a clear awareness that the story is no longer simply "about" *burakumin*, but is also read by *burakumin* who are keenly aware of its powers of representation.

In 1953 (Shōwa 28), the original version of *Hakai* was republished with the National Committee for Buraku Liberation's approval. The following year, the National Committee for Buraku Liberation (the postwar successor of the Suiheisha) made a declaration regarding the restoration of the first version.[22] In this declaration, the organization denounced the 1939 revised version on the basis that its substitution of discriminatory words would not result in eliminating actual discrimination. The statement argued that, on the contrary, making discrimination more ambiguous led to greater misunderstanding and weakened the representations of social prejudice. Thus, the report continued, it was a grave error for the Suiheisha to make such a compromise with Tōson in publishing the 1939 revision. While the Committee agreed to the republication of the original version, it was with the explicit hope that contemporary readers would be aware of Tōson's "weak humanism," "discriminatory consciousness," and "incomplete understanding of *buraku* problems." They also expressed criticism about the lack of understanding on the part of literary historians and critics to the real-life sufferings of *burakumin* and argued that a national literature should be one which challenges the feudalism of Japanese society. Moreover, they criticized Tōson's claim that the work was a "tale of the past," since this comment showed contempt towards the suffering of *burakumin* in contemporary society. In short, the postwar successors of the *buraku* liberation movement restored the original version yet advocated a critical reading of the work as a "discriminatory novel."

The publication history of *Hakai* reveals that it was only through revisions and restoration that the work read by contemporary readers is equivalent to the original version. Although the "original" and the version most commonly available today are formally the same, the process by which the text has been transmitted has been influenced by other factors than a pure faithfulness to the original. Indeed, the revisions of the text were in response

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[22] Reprinted in TZ, 535-40. Also reprinted and discussed in Higashi Eizō's *Zoku-Hakai no hyōka to buraku mondai* (Tokyo: Meiji tosho shuppan, 1981), 123-39.

to the concerns of those who read the text not only as about *buraku* discrimination, but felt it to be discriminatory itself. How *buraku* liberation activists defined what constituted discrimination shifted over time, targeting first discriminatory language, then discriminatory intent, and ultimately advocating a critical reading of the work. In the next section, I will examine some of the main divides in critical reception of the work (in particular, regarding Ushimatsu's confession and the novel's ending) in terms of meanings for *buraku* liberation.

Critical Reception of *Hakai*: The "Inner Life" Critics versus the "Social Protest" Critics

Since *Hakai* was first published, its critics have been divided generally into two groups: those who interpret *Hakai* as a novel of the "inner life" and those who read it as a social protest novel. As a novel of the inner life, critics such as Janet Walker have argued that "Tōson was merely using the situation of [*burakumin*] as a means of exploring a problem that was much nearer to his heart: the problem of self-definition."[23] In this sense, Tōson's personal life becomes the key to interpreting the work, while its subject of *burakumin* discrimination is seen as secondary (or irrelevant). For example, Tōson's close friendship with poet Kitamura Tōkoku has been interpreted as the inspiration for Ushimatsu's friendship with Inoko Rentarō. On the other hand, the "social novel" critics focus on Tōson's portrayal of *buraku* discrimination in terms of its social significance. Some argue that *Hakai* exposes the irrationality of Japan's feudal system and heralds the values of equality and modern society, while others (such as Noma Hiroshi) do not see the work as praiseworthy for its politics since it shows Tōson's lack of understanding regarding *buraku* discrimination and history.[24] Tōson's life has been canonized in a particular way by literary critics who focus on his engagement with Christianity, domestic difficulties, or his socio-historical context of the Russo-Japanese War while he was writing *Hakai*. On the

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[23] Janet Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979), 175.

[24] It is interesting that the criticism that Tōson's "discriminatory consciousness" infects *Hakai* and thus makes it a "discriminatory novel" echoes the judgment within the novel that Inoko Rentarō's writings are a product of his "illness."

other hand, critics reading the work for what it has to say about *buraku* discrimination have emphasized other aspects of Tōson as author, chiefly his inadequate understanding of *buraku* discrimination or his lack of experience in socialist or democratic political movements.

Whether critics read the novel in terms of Tōson's "inner life" or in terms of the social issue of *buraku* discrimination, in either case the work is read in terms of its connections to some version of "real life." Tōson himself vacillated between connecting the novel to "real life" *burakumin* he observed in Shinshū to connecting it to his own personal situation while writing the work. Likewise, critics include those who criticize Tōson for his discriminatory consciousness, as mentioned above, to those who see the works' flaws in relation to the social prejudices of his society. It is because the work has been read in terms of "real life" that the representations themselves take on a social importance in terms of *buraku* liberation. However, the "real life" liberation movement critics are also split between those who read the novel in terms of its contemporaneous social history (thus recognizing the limits of the liberation movement in the late Meiji period) or in judging the novel against contemporary standards of the liberation movement.

For example, Ushimatsu's confession scene has been interpreted in two different ways from the point of view of *buraku* liberation: either as an acknowledgement of inferiority (thus, problematic) or as a form of resistance, albeit one that is limited by its socio-historical context.[25] Hijikata attempts to reconcile these disparate views by interpreting the former as a natural conclusion based on the story itself (i.e., one expects Ushimatsu to take a more defiant stance, rather than debase himself) and the latter as an attempt to read the scene in terms of the social conditions of the late Meiji period.[26] In some sense, Hijikata attempts to read *Hakai* simultaneously as a "tale of the past" (yet not in order to *avoid* problems, but to face them squarely) and as a work that can make contemporary readers reflect on the meaning of *buraku* liberation in their contemporary society.

Furthermore, Ushimatsu's migration to Texas at the end of the novel has been interpreted in several ways. One dominant view interprets the ending as a failure of Ushimatsu to take up the legacy of Inoko Rentarō to reform society. Kitahara Daisaku argues that Ushimatsu's flight from Japan is simply taking *buraku* discrimination as a problem of the individual, but not

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[25] Kawabata, 20.

[26] See Hijikata, 91-94.

as one that effects the masses of *burakumin* throughout the nation who suffer from discrimination.[27] Similarly, Hirano Ken has argued that Tōson lacked the real understanding that would necessitate a fight with feudalist hierarchy although he selected a *burakumin* protagonist. On the other hand, others such as Kitagawa Tetsuo read Ushimatsu's flight from Japan as not inconsistent with the "real" model of the Tsubamekai (The Swallow Association), formed in 1919, which originally proposed that its members would migrate like swallows to the Celebes islands where they would no longer face discrimination.[28] Kitagawa argues that Ushimatsu settling in a new land by his own means can be interpreted as resistance to discrimination rather than as weakness.[29] Furthermore, in *Bungaku no naka no hisabetsu burakuzō*, the authors oppose simply criticizing Tōson for his "discriminatory consciousness" and suggest investigating other works of popular literature in order to understand the broader social discriminatory consciousness that Tōson individually manifested. Although it is not their intent to justify Tōson's position by placing his work in the context of popular literature, or the restrictions of his society at the time he wrote Hakai, they believe that it is necessary to move beyond simply "convicting" Tōson for (certain) discriminatory beliefs that appear reflected in the work.

Thus, in spite of the restoration of the original version, the reading strategies do not necessarily conform to one mode of interpretation. The issue of Tōson's "inner life" has significance not only for literary critics but for liberation activists who critique Tōson's "discriminatory consciousness" which they see reflected in *Hakai*. The issue of whether to blame (or praise) Tōson as a writer, as an individual, or as someone who was representing *burakumin* remains the choice of the reader(s). Whether Tōson's "problem" merely represents a broader social (mis)understanding of *burakumin*, or a problem of his own consciousness, the debate over interpreting *Hakai* shows the work's significance beyond the boundaries of literary history.

Hakai's canonization has affected the way the work has been taken up in literary education as well as *dōwa* education (anti-discrimination educa-

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[27] Kitahara, 230-31.

[28] They later abandoned this plan to become the charter members in founding the Suiheisha.

[29] For Kitagawa's discussion of *Hakai*, see Kitagawa Tetsuo, *Buraku mondai o toriageta hyaku no shōsetsu* (Kyoto: Buraku mondai kenkyūjō shuppanbu, 1985), 155-76.

tion). In his study on the evaluation of *Hakai* in terms of *buraku* problems, Higashi Eizō argues that the problem is not with the work itself or with Tōson, but with the instruction methods in using *Hakai* within the study of Japanese literature or dōwa education.[30] In other words, he advocates shifting the responsibility from Tōson as the author or the work itself to teachers and their instruction methods of *Hakai*. Several reports of the critical reception of *Hakai* from junior high school, senior high school, and college students indicate a divide in reader reception that mirrors the *buraku* liberation critics' different opinions, particularly in regard to Ushimatsu's confession and his final departure for Texas.[31] Some educators believe that the purpose of continued reading—whether in the context of literary education or *dōwa* education—should be to allow for the possibilities of different readings, to give students the opportunity to confront the issues for themselves while they are also taught the history of criticism.

(Re)reading *Hakai*

Finally, the text itself does not yield an easy (or unitary) profile of what "liberation" means. Rather, it provides the three different examples of possible strategies for *burakumin* to take in relation to discrimination: assimilate (Ushimatsu's father), reform (Inoko), or escape (Ushimatsu). Both Ushimatsu's father's and Ushimatsu's strategies are ultimately forms of individualism (個人主義 or 利己主義) that essentially conform to societal values. Yet to limit one's vision of protest to the figure of Inoko Rentarō ignores the more complex moments of resistance that are not as explicitly marked. For example, appealing to the principal on his friend Keinoshin's behalf or his teaming up with *burakumin* student Senta in a tennis match show how he uses his position to challenge social or bureaucratic systems. In each case, however, Ushimatsu fails, and this failure foreshadows his own inadequacy in changing systems through individual petition. Nevertheless, through his own confession, Ushimatsu—as an individual teacher, not as a political activist—attempts to challenge the system by using his status within the

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[30] Higashi, *Hakai no hyōka to buraku mondai*, 61.

[31] See Kusaka Masayoshi, *Hakai to dōwa kyōiku: Sakubun shidō o tōshite* (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 1982); Kawabata Toshifusa, "Hakai wa dō yomarete iru ka," *Hakai no yomikata* (Kyoto: Bunrikaku: 1993), 199-210; Higashi Eizō, *Hakai no hyōka to buraku mondai* (Tokyo: Meiji toshoshuppan, 1983), 125-88.

institution of the school to effect change in his students' attitudes. It is as an individual that he attempts to alter the dominant value system, although it is unclear whether he is ultimately successful or not.

It is the figure of Inoko who often is seen to represent real change in the system by making discrimination *visible*, in his writings and his "outing" of Takayanagi. In this way, Ushimatsu partly inherits Inoko's legacy by making the decision to make himself "visible" as a *burakumin*, yet rather than urge others to do the same he chooses to withdraw from the society altogether. While critics often focus on Ushimatsu's departure to Texas as the only viable alternative offered in the end, it appears to be the only one in which actual survival is possible. Yet in many ways, all three characters (Ushimatsu's father, Inoko Rentarō, and Ushimatsu himself) face different kinds of deaths. The father dies in spite of attempts to hide his origins; Inoko is murdered for his attempts to speak out against *buraku* discrimination; and Ushimatsu's escape to Texas means he effectively ends his life in Japan (and he begins a new one in Texas). In Texas, there is no need to hide his identity, and neither is there the need to reform society for preexisting social prejudices.

Like Ushimatsu's reading of Inoko's *Confessions*, some critics and educators argue that the goal should not be to make the text disappear (or confine its reading to particular interpretations) but to read it with broader frames of reference in relation to its subject of *buraku* discrimination. The positions whether to promote readings of *Hakai* mirror the various strategies reflected in the novel itself: Should the work be left unread, like Ushimatsu's father? Should it be read as a "discriminatory novel" to challenge existing society, like Inoko Rentarō? Or is there a way to acknowledge its status but move beyond the prejudices that have confined it to particular readings, like Ushimatsu's migration to a "new world"? What does Tōson's "tale of the past" have to tell readers today about *buraku* discrimination? In coming to terms with the past, like the explanation of Ushimatsu's ancestors in the novel, the history represented within *Hakai* as well as the history of the (re)production of the text itself is inextricably linked with the present understanding of *buraku* discrimination and different views regarding the meaning of "liberation." In thinking about literary canonization, it seems worthwhile to examine not only the processes by which certain texts or authors are included for their connections to so-called real world politics, but also the ways in which literature itself creates its own versions of reality.