“Ethnic Identities and Various Approaches Towards the Japanese Language: an Analysis of Ri Kaisei, Kin Kakuei, and Tachihara Masaaki”

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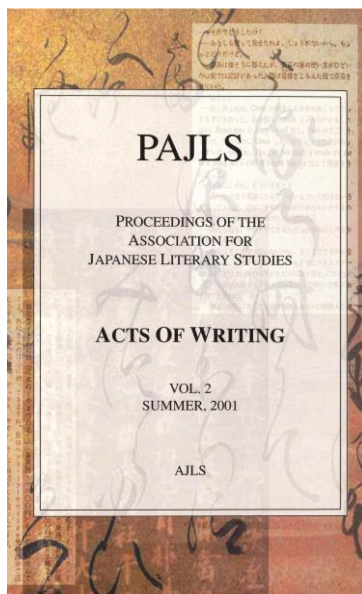


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# ETHNIC IDENTITIES AND VARIOUS APPROACHES TOWARDS THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE: AN ANALYSIS OF RI KAISEI, KIN KAKUEI, AND TACHIHARA MASAAKI

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There is a tendency to integrate a people, their language, and their culture into one unity. This tendency can also be seen in Japan. Sakai Naoki warns that the unification of these three entities—the Japanese people, language, and culture—denies the possibility that a person may embrace different languages and cultures simultaneously in herself or himself.[1] That possibility being denied, Resident Koreans have faced a binarism between assimilation and alienation, and at the same time they have questioned unification. Resident Korean writers take various attitudes towards ethnicity which influence their attitudes toward the Japanese language, and they challenge the fixed concept of Japanese literature as written by Japanese people in the Japanese language.

Kawamura Minato divides the history of Resident Korean literature in terms of the writer's dilemma between the mother language, Korean, and the indigenous language, Japanese. He posits the following categories: pre-Resident Korean literary generation, first generation, second, and third.[2] Ri Kaisei, a second-generation Korean immigrant writer, attempts to pursue his Korean identity through writing. Kin Kakuei, a precursor of the third generation, speaks only Japanese and endures drifting between two ethnic poles, one Japanese and the other Korean. Tachihara Masaaki, born of Korean parents, fabricates a life as the son of a Korean nobleman and a Japanese woman. He has changed his name either by choice or compulsion five times during his life. For the last time, two months before his death, he changed his last name to Tachihara from Yonemoto, his wife's maiden name, which he had used legally since his marriage. In this paper, I will analyze mainly Ri

[1] Sakai, 141.

[2] Kawamura, 198-211.

Kaisei's *Kinuta o utsu onna* (The Woman who Fulled Clothes, 1971), Kin Kakuei's *Kogoeru kuchi* (The Benumbed Mouth, 1966), and Tachihara Masaaki's *Tsurugigasaki* (Cliff's Edge, 1965). The first two works belong to the literary genre called the I-novel; Tachihara's story is narrated in the third person.

Ri Kaisei was born in Karafuto (Sakhalin) in 1935 and grew up as a second-generation child of Korean immigrants. His *Kinuta o utsu onna* was awarded the Akutagawa literary prize in 1971. The story is a recollection of his mother narrated by the protagonist. At the beginning of the story, Ri shows four possible ways to represent his nickname "Jojo" (what his mother calls him) in Hangul: 조조, 저저, 조저, and 저조. In the story, the protagonist says that he does not know the meaning of his nickname even though he has asked people from his mother's hometown. Melissa Wender evaluates the impact that Ri's attempt to write the protagonist's nickname in Hangul has on the Japanese language:

> The introduction of Korean words throughout the story is never more bluntly performed than at this moment. It is as if to impart shock, as if to say, I am taking your language and twisting it into shapes which you will not be able to recover. I am polluting it, permanently, so that you will not be able to use it thoughtlessly again.[3]

As Wender points out, Ri never again uses Hangul for writing in the story, and he uses Korean words, which are written in kanji and hiragana, especially in the statements of the protagonist's grandmother. Here, the grandmother chants *sinse t'aryong*, a lamentation for her daughter.

> 親の私がほれぼれしたんだじゃ、どうして邑（むら）の総角（チョンガ）が黙っているものか。どいつもこいつも……アイゴ、総角どもは野良仕事に手がつかぬ仕末じゃった。畔道で出会おうものなら、みんなはおずおずして何も言えなんだ。黄牛（ファンソ）を止めて、ぼんや

[3] Wender, 45.

> りと見送り、あとはもう溜息ばかり。そうとも。はるばるソウルからも両班（ヤンパン）（貴族）があれをくれと言ってきたものじゃ。[4]

> "I, her mother, was enchanted; why should the young men of the village not be? Every one of them, *aigo*, every one dropped his work in the fields to watch her. When they met her on a path between the paddies, they were all timid and couldn't say anything. They could only stop their oxen and gaze at her vacantly, with nothing but deep sighs. Yes, indeed. Rich nobles even came all the way from Seoul to ask for her.[5]

This is a scene in which the grandmother discusses memories of her stepdaughter. Ri puts katakana beside the Korean words that are written in Chinese characters. Katakana represents Japanized pronunciation, and Chinese characters function as a translation of Korean words. Moreover, Ri puts a translation in parentheses when the Chinese characters for a Korean word do not function as a translation. In other words, he assists when the Japanese reader cannot guess the meaning of a Korean word even with the help of the Chinese characters. For example, Ri puts 貴族 in parentheses after 両班. Most readers would not know the meaning of 両班, and some readers might construct an incorrect meaning unless they were provided the gloss, 貴族. Because Ri takes the reader's incompetence in the Korean language into consideration, he is different from audacious writers who provide the reader with no gloss. For example, Cynthia Ozick, a Jewish American writer, uses italicized Yiddish words without appending notes for the reader in "Envy; or Yiddish in America." Patricia Grace, a Maori writer, does not even italicize Maori words in *Potiki*. Maori is inlaid into the text and erodes the English. Ashcroft *et al* evaluate the function of glossing as implying a gap between an original word and a translated word; nonetheless, they point out a problem with glossing by comparing untranslated words and glossing as follows:

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[4] Ri, 28.

[5] Ri, trans. Nelson, 356.

> Ultimately, the choice of leaving words untranslated in postcolonial texts is a political act, because while translation is not inadmissible in itself, glossing gives the translated word, and thus the "receptor" culture, the higher status.[6]

When considering the difficulties in inlaying Hangul, a phonogramic language, into the Japanese writing system consisting of Chinese characters (ideogram) and hiragana (phonogram), it can be concluded that Ri's strategy—using Hangul to represent the protagonist's nickname, which has only sound without meaning, and using Chinese characters as the translation of the other Korean words—seems the best way to inject "Koreanness" into his text. Ri is a pioneer of Resident Korean writers, because, unlike other postcolonial writers who have many precursors, he has only a few.

As mentioned before, Ri interweaves Korean words in the *sinse t'aryong* chanted by the protagonist's grandmother. First, the grandmother blames Japan for plundering not only her land but also her daughter, and then while waiting for her daughter to visit her at home, she says that her son-in-law tricked her daughter into living in Japan, in Sakhalin, the northernmost land. When her daughter visits her after a ten-year absence in 1939, the daughter wears Japanese clothes and carries a parasol. Although the grandmother and her husband are disgusted at the fact that their daughter appears to have been assimilated into the Japanese culture, they are persuaded to live in their daughter's neighborhood in Sakhalin, where they become a cause of arguments between their daughter and son-in-law.

The son-in-law has to follow the Japanese national policy in wartime and is afraid of being arrested by the Japanese military police. He is annoyed by his father-in-law wearing Korean trousers and his mother-in-law never taking off her Korean skirt. He blames his wife, who sides with her parents, and uses violence towards her. Despite this violence, the wife insists that her husband should stop wandering and settle down:

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[6] Ashcroft, *et al.*, 66.

> どこまで流されていくの。下関でたくさんよ。それを本州から北海道、さらに樺太へと－－－－－。当身（タンシン）（あなた）の生き方もそれにつれて流されているのよ。何で協和会の役員なんか引き受けるの。当身は人が善いからそうして利用ばかりされて。みんなが会員にされたからって何も旗まで振ることはないでしょう。(48)
>
> I wonder where we'll go from here? When we had enough of Shimonoseki, we went from Honshû to Hokkaidô, and then to Karafuto. Your life, too, is drifting along aimlessly. Why did you let them make you an official of the Concordia Society? You're too unsuspecting and so you are taken advantage of. But just because you were appointed to be an official, you don't have to go around flag-waving. (368-69)

One day, a fight between the protagonist's parents becomes violent and ends with two stitches in his mother's injured lip. After his mother stuffs her belongings into a suitcase, she suddenly pulls out a Japanese kimono and tears it into shreds and replaces it with her old Korean skirt and jacket. She despairs of her husband's violence and the austere life in Karafuto. Her behavior seemingly reflects Ri's destructive desire toward the Japanese language, his indigenous language. Ri, who learned Korean after growing up, uses the Japanese language to create his works; at the same time, he attempts to dissolve it and, moreover, his "Japaneseness." As an actual method of dissolution of the Japanese language, Ri shows a discrepancy between Japanese and Korean by weaving Korean words in the text, especially in the grandmother's statements.

The protagonist's mother dies ten months after the final fight with her violent husband. Ri depicts the protagonist's father as a raging husband while she is alive, but as a man condemning himself for his violent behavior towards his wife after her death, and presents the protagonist as a boy who has a deep understanding of his father's predicament. Resident Korean literature often portrays the relationship between a protagonist and a violent father. Comparing Ri's and Kin's

protagonists, Hayashi Kôji favors Ri's protagonist, "a blunt, healthy boy,"[7] who tries to have an amicable relationship with his fierce father, over Kin's protagonist, "an emotionally fragile elite,"[8] who is appalled at his ferocious father. Moreover, Hayashi emphasizes that Ri locates his ethnicity in a political context and makes a constructive attempt to unify the two Korean nations.[9] In contrast to Hayashi, Takeda Seiji finds certain critical values in Kin's reserved attitude towards politics or ethnicity and regards Kin as a forerunner of third generation Resident Korean writers.[10]

Kin Kakuei was born in Japan in 1938 and grew up as a second-generation child of Korean immigrants. Unlike his precursors—many of them can speak both Korean and Japanese—Kin cannot speak, read, or write Korean. Japanese is the only language available to him. He cannot employ the strategy of using his mother language to represent his resistance against discrimination as other Resident Korean writers do. Kin writes his Korean name in Chinese characters, yet he reads it in a Japanese manner—Kin Kakuei—not in a Korean manner—Kim Hack-young. The one-to-one relationship between the signifier and the signified cannot be established in Kin's name. He believes that this confusion symbolizes well his drifting interiority, which constantly swings between two poles, one Korean and the other Japanese. In *Kogoeru kuchi*, the protagonist, Choi, on a commuter train, studies Korean history and politics through books that Japanese writers have written for Japanese readers in the Japanese language. During this short period on the train, he remembers being Korean, but he returns to being Japanese as soon as he gets off the train and goes into the crowd on the platform. Choi has internalized the Japanese language and culture and realizes that it is difficult to separate himself from what has become part of him.

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[7] Hayashi, 193.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] *Ibid.*, 180-208.

[10] Takeda, 153-172.

Unlike other Resident Korean writers, by placing an emphasis on the individual agony of being a stutterer, Kin rejects choosing between alternatives such as Japan or Korea, North Korea or South Korea, and communism or capitalism. He intentionally focuses on his individual problem and decenters the binary search for an ethnic/national identity. It is his stuttering that enables him to take an individual attitude towards ethnicity. Even before suffering discrimination as a Resident Korean, Kin suffers from stuttering and depicts the protagonist of *Kogoeru kuchi* as a stutterer. The only language available to the protagonist oppresses him as if it were a foreign language. He is surely a foreigner in the sense that he cannot speak Japanese as well as a non-stutterer. Besides his ethnicity, his incompetence in handling any spoken language makes him a foreigner.

Julia Kristeva introduces the notion of foreigners, which was established in the classical age, by discussing the word "barbarian."[11] In the light of their speech disabilities, there is no doubt that both Kin and Choi, the protagonist of *Kogoeru kuchi,* are "barbarians." Just as the classical barbarian is outside all Greek philosophy founded on the Logos, Kin may not be bound by the universe in which speech is intensified; that is, he may not be controlled by the type of Logos that controls other writers. As a result, Kin embodies his stuttering in the text. According to Wender, Kin simply repeats various chemical terms written in katakana in *Kogoeru kuchi* and creates the stuttering situation in front of the reader.[12] Given the following example, many readers realize that katakana words are tongue twisters, and the reader cannot help but experience a sort of stuttering.

> ３、３—ジメチロールオキセタンとテレフタル酸ジクロリドの重縮合について、先回にモノマーの合成のところまで報告しましたが、それについて簡単にもう一度述べ

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[11] Julia Kristeva defines "barbarian" as follows: "As late as the fifth century, the term is applied to both Greeks and non-Greeks having a slow, thick, or improper speech: the barbarians are all those whose pronunciation is clumsy and coarse." Kristeva, 51.

[12] Wender, 73.

ることにします。まず、3、3—ジメチロールオキセタンの合成ですが、これは、ペンタエリスリトールとジエチル炭酸とを、ピルジン溶媒下、一一五度の沸点で五時間反応させ、生成した2、6—ジオキサー、4、4—ジメチロールシクロヘキサンを、真空中、外温約二〇〇度で熱分解させて合成します。[13] (42)

I made a report about condensation of 3.3-dimethylol oxoethane and dichlorideterephthalate and ended the report at monomer synthesis last time. I will talk about it briefly again. First, as for 3.3-dimethylol oxoethane synthesis, this is made in the process of thermal decomposition by synthesizing 2.6-dioxane and 4.4-dimethylolcyclohexane—they are formed through reacting pentaerythritol and diethyl carbonate at the boiling point of 115 degrees centigrade for five hours in pyridine solvent—in the vacuum at an outside air temperature of 200 degrees centigrade.

In addition to Wender's observation, Kin repeats Japanese words such as "*kyôfu* (fear)" often in order to create a stuttering effect in the text, as the following examples show. Here he describes the protagonist's fear of his oral presentation.

<u>恐怖</u>とは言葉に対する<u>恐怖</u>であり、その<u>恐怖</u>に対する気構えを整え、<u>恐怖</u>を組み伏せるとは、だから、研究会において皆を前にしていうべき言葉を征服することだった。(18, underlines added)

The fear is a fear with respect to words; therefore, to prepare for the fear, to pin down the fear to the ground, is to conquer the words, which I will say in front of my classmates during the presentation.

The word, "*kyôfu*," is marked repeatedly in his mind as if it were a stuttered word. This clarifies that Choi is obsessed by the fear of

[13] Kin, "Kogoeru kuchi," 42.

stuttering. Stuttering is an ingrained negative element which torments Choi. On the other hand, his Korean ethnicity is also congenital and is disadvantageous to him in Japanese society. Because of these similarities, stuttering can be compared to his Korean ethnicity. This leads to the conclusion that Kin uses stuttering as a metaphor of his Korean ethnicity, and it implies that Choi is also trapped by his ethnicity as well as by stuttering. When Choi mentions that he wishes he were not a stutterer, he means that he wishes he were not a Korean. That is, he seeks the "true" self, which is what he is not.

> 吃音者は、自分が吃音者として理解されるのを拒む。吃音者としての自分は、いわば仮りの自分、嘘の自分であって、本当の自分は吃りではない、自分から吃音を除いた部分、その部分の自分こそ本当の自分であるとあると思うゆえに、吃音者は、ぼくは、自分が吃音者として理解され、吃音者として遇せられるのを、拒否する。むしろ、吃音者として遇せられることを、屈辱と感じ、嫌悪する。 (44, underlines added)

> The stutterer rejects being understood as a stutterer. I think that the self as a stutterer is an assumed self or a false self, not the true self, and the true self is the self from which the stuttering is excluded; therefore, I, a stutterer, reject being treated as a stutterer. Rather, if I am treated as a stutterer, I feel humiliated and abhor it.[14]

Kin employs a strategic writing style in order to let the protagonist pursue his self; that is, he uses a first-person narrator. After World War II, third-person narration became more mainstream than the I-novel in Japanese literature; however, Kin follows the tradition of the I-novel and uses a first-person narrator in *Kogoeru kuchi*. Kin credits the discovery of Shiga as his literary awakening at the age of twenty-one, and he followed not only one of Shiga's themes—a protagonist's ambivalent feelings toward his father—but also his writing style—using the first-

[14] The subject can be omitted in Japanese; therefore, the English version includes "I" or "my" more frequently than the original.

person narrator. In the above-mentioned example, Kin obsessively uses the first person narrator "*boku* (I)" or "*jibun* (self)" as if he were seeking himself in the text. In the opening scene of the novella, Kin also repeats "*boku* (I)" or "*jibun* (self)"in the dream that Choi is having.

> ぼくの表情は微笑で柔らいだ。ぼくは、自分の顔が真赤な光を満面に照り返しているのを感じた。ながいあいだ探し求めていたものにやっとめぐり逢えたと思った。自分の希求していた場所にやっとたどりついた、自分の憧れていた世界にようやく入ることができた、その歓びにぼくは泣いていた。 (10, underlines added)
>
> My facial expression is softened by smiling. I feel all of my face being lit up by the red light. I thought that I had finally met what I had been seeking for a long time. I had finally reached the place for which I had been longing. I could finally enter the world for which I had been yearning, and I cried for joy.

Choi is drawn to the red sun and finally finds what he has been seeking for a long time. Kin does not clarify what the protagonist has been looking for; instead, Kin repeats "*boku* (I)" and "*jibun* (self)" many times and implies the protagonist's desire for a self-identity in the dream. In the dream, Choi cries for joy because he has found his self and place. This never happens in his daily life, however, because Choi regards his stuttering and his "Koreanness" as negative elements and continues seeking the true self, which is what he is not. In the story, Kin continually expresses the protagonist's agony towards stuttering rather than avoiding it. He confesses that his stuttering, which he has experienced for over thirty years, disappeared after writing about it in *Kogoeru kuchi*. This self-contradiction in Kin's literature attracts the reader.

In his works, Kin often portrays conflict between a protagonist and a father, who represents "Koreanness" and always inflicts violence on his family. In *Kogoeru kuchi*, Kin does not represent the conflict between the protagonist, Choi, and the father, but he pictures the father of Choi's Japanese classmate, Isogai, as a husband who uses extreme violence towards his wife. In a suicide note to Choi, Isogai recollects

how cruelly his father hurt his mother. Kin spends a page and a half depicting one violent scene:

> 歯を何本か折り、口の中は血で真っ黒だった。そのうえ鼻血がとめどなく溢れて、着物の胸から膝のあたりまで、赤い鮮血がしみ込んでいた。俺と道子はかたく手をつなぎ合い、泣いているおふくろのそのむごたらしい姿を目前に見ながら、一緒に泣いた。俺と道子はおふくろの悲しみを泣き、そしてそのおふくろの悲しみは俺と道子の中に深く喰い込み、永遠に癒され難い傷痕を心に植えつけた。(69)
>
> Several teeth were broken, and the inside of her mouth was black with blood. Moreover, her nose bled and soaked into her kimono from breast to knees. Michiko and I held hands firmly and cried together, seeing our mother in this miserable state before our eyes. Michiko and I cried for our mother's sadness, her sadness came into us deeply, and it made a scar in our hearts, which has never been mended.

Among the Resident Korean writers who portray a violent father in their works, Kin most frequently portrays an abominable father through visual language. He uses violence as a metaphor for a father associated with "Koreanness," which he hates and from which he wants to escape. Kin also describes the conflict between the protagonist and his violent father in another work, *Yûrisô*. In this novella, the protagonist, Munakata, observes that the conflict between his father and his older brother is due to not only a generation gap or a difference in educational background but also to an ethnic discrepancy between the father, who has been oppressed in Japanese society, and the son, who has been assimilated into it. The protagonist thinks that there lies between his brother and father a rupture—a discrepancy between being Japanese and being Korean—which cannot be crossed. Through the conflict, both the father and the son realize that the son does not maintain a Korean identity as firmly as the father does, and that the father has not been assimilated into Japanese society as easily as the son. The father cannot accept his son's assimilation. Tachihara also deals with assimilation and the pursuit of

"Koreanness" in the novella, *Tsurugigasaki*. He describes a son who is assimilated into Japanese society, and a father who seeks a Korean identity. Unlike the son and the father in Kin's stories, Tachihara's son and father never conflict with each other in *Tsurugigasaki*; in other words, they never invade each other's domain, a Japanese identity and a Korean identity. Next, I will analyze Tachihara's unique attitude toward ethnicity.

Tachihara Masaaki was born in 1926 in South Korea and immigrated to Japan at the age of eleven. As for his language, when Takeda Katsuhiko, in an interview, asked Tachihara if he was bilingual, Tachihara answered that he was just like any second generation Resident Korean. Takeda concludes that Tachihara spoke Korean as his mother language but Japanese at school during his childhood in Korea.[15] Tachihara inserts in *Tsurugigasaki* an episode in which Jirô, the protagonist, cannot understand the Korean language spoken between his father and a subordinate even though Jirô spoke Korean when he was a boy in Korea. If Jirô is regarded as Tachihara's alter ego, this episode implies that Tachihara's mother tongue, Korean, has become a foreign language to him, and that his indigenous language, Japanese, has become the language most available to him.

Tachihara had been known as a half-Japanese, half-Korean popular writer until Takai Uichi published the book, *Tachihara Seishû*, in 1990. Takai revealed that Tachihara was a full Korean. Future study will attempt to clarify why Tachihara fabricated the story that his father was a Korean nobleman and his mother Japanese. At this stage, I surmise that one reason was to sell himself as a quasi-Japanese to the Japanese literary world, which was conservative enough in the 1960's and 1970's to exclude foreign writers, and in order to attract readers who were prejudiced against literary works written by Resident Korean writers. Besides the situation of the literary world, his inner state also inclined him to suppress his true birth; in other words, he may have felt as if he were a half-breed. Most of his stories are so-called *taishû shôsetsu* (popular literature), in which he develops a love story and seeks Japanese beauty, yet inserts a few episodes about unfortunate Resident

[15] Takeda, 216.

Koreans. On the other hand, he wrote several stories that were called *junbungaku* (belles-lettres), in which his stance towards ethnicity is inscribed clearly. In the novella *Tsurugigasaki,* Tachihara models the protagonist, Jirô, on himself and illustrates various attitudes towards ethnicity. I will analyze how Tachihara describes Tarô's and Jirô's responses to both Resident Koreans and Japanese.

In this novella, Tachihara shows two kinds of contrasts: one between Jirô's father, Kyong-hyo Yi, and his uncle, Kyong-myong Yi, and the other between Tarô and Jirô. Both Jirô's father and uncle are the progeny of a Korean nobleman and a Japanese woman, the daughter of a politically-influential businessman. The father chooses to dedicate himself to the Korean Army, and the uncle belongs to the Japanese Army and kills himself as a Japanese soldier after World War II. The father describes two reasons for his leaving Japan and enlisting in the Korean Army. He lives in a limited world as a Japanese but in an unlimited world as a Korean, and he chooses to side with the oppressed. Since they have a father who is half Japanese and half Korean, and a Japanese mother, both Tarô and Jirô have three-fourths Japanese blood and one-fourth Korean blood. Tarô describes himself as a dangling man who can become neither Korean nor Japanese, but his younger brother, Jirô, pursues integration with the Japanese society and teaches Japanese medieval literature at a private university. Tarô sees his hybridity as negative and cannot internalize the parallelism:

> 混血児の内面の動きは、平行運動に似ている。平面上の二つの直線が、または直線と平面とが、あるいは二つの平面が、いくら延長しても交わらない、混血の内部はそんな世界だ。[16]
>
> The inner movements of a person with mixed blood are like the movement of parallels. If you have two parallel lines, they will never cross no matter how far you extend them. The world is composed of that kind of hybrid, always side by side, but never meeting.[17] (27)

[16] Tachihara, 341.

In the meantime, Jirô does not see his hybridity as negative but as inevitable. When his father asks Jirô if he has become a perfect Japanese, Jirô answers that he is nine-tenths Japanese but keeps one tenth Korean for Japanese people who do not accept him as a member of Japanese society. Jirô criticizes Japanese insularity; however, he accepts the fact that his children, being influenced by this insularity, discriminate against Korean people without knowing that they have Korean blood. After he sees his father off, Jirô regards his situation as blissful because his colleagues are good-natured and he is never rejected in the workplace because of his Korean blood.

Although Tachihara models Jirô on himself, he describes the positions of the other characters as understandable and reasonable, such as Jirô's father, uncle, brother, and even fanatic cousin. At the end of the story, the cousin, Kenkichi, kills Tarô with a bamboo spear because he hates the fact that his sister conceived Tarô's child and that Korean blood will be brought into his family. Tarô's death may remind the reader of Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom*, in which Henry, a white, murders his half-brother, Charles Bon, who is partly of black blood and engaged to Henry's sister, Judith. Jirô interprets the hatred which his relatives had towards Korean blood as hopeless when he tells his father about Tarô's death:

> からだのなかに、百分の一だけ異民族の血が流れている、それだけでその人間は社会ではのけものにされるのに充分でした。殊に朝鮮人の場合はひどかったのです。倫理以前の呪いのようなものでした。(359-360)

> People would have considered us social outcasts even if we only had one percent foreign blood in our veins. They were especially hard on Koreans. We seemed to be under a curse quite unrelated to moral considerations. (61)

[17] Tachihara, trans. Kohl, 27

Understanding the vanity of hybridity and showing empathy to each character, Tachihara himself seems to be equipped with all the elements of the Resident Koreans in the novella. Though Korean by birth, he is a half-breed by imaginary choice who keeps some Korean blood spiritually, while at the same time he is Japanese legally in his family register. Thus, he has a multi-layered and complex attitude towards ethnicity and lets the protagonist accept different aspects of Resident Korean or Japanese status. This flexibility is mirrored by his writing style. Tachihara criticizes the I-novel as mere description of an author's impressions, and he hates to expose his past hardships to the reader.[18] Therefore, he uses a third-person narrator in *Tsurugigasaki* and develops the story from the viewpoint of Jirô.

There is one outstanding characteristic of Tachihara's writing which reveals his intentions: he ends many sentences in the ta-form. According to Maruya Saiichi, Japanese writers are required to vary sentence endings because most sentences tend to end in the same sound, "*ta*." The *ta*-form marks the perfect aspect of an action or an event and does not simply indicate the past tense. Therefore the *ta*-form can be replaced by the non-perfect form in some cases. Maruya points out that in order to avoid the repetition of the *ta* sound, writers mix the non-perfect form of verbs, end a sentence with a noun, or use colloquial styles.[19] Tachihara ignores the ordinary writers' tendency to avoid the repetition of *ta*. Here is an example from the opening scene of *Tsurugigasaki*.

> 康正は、手紙を読み終ると次郎の前に戻し、しばらく外を見ていたが、やがて抹茶を入れる支度をした。次郎は、茶筅を持っている祖父の手もとを見ながら、お祖父さんにもこの手紙は以外というほか言いようがないのだろう、と思った。次郎は外を見た。午前の山は蝉時雨に包まれ、能楽堂をとりまいている建仁寺垣にも蝉がとまって鳴いていた。亡くなった人、去った人の顔が、ある日

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[18] Takeda, 225.

[19] Maruya, 280-308.

のある一刻のその人達の顔が、さまざまな季節の色に染まって次郎の裡を<u>去来した</u>。 (329, underline added)

When Yasumasa had finished reading the letter, he returned it to Jirô and stared out the window. Then he began the formal ritual of preparing tea. Jirô watched his grandfather manipulate the tea whisk and thought, "This letter must have surprised even grandfather." Jirô looked outside. It was a summer morning and the mountain was alive with the incessant cries of cicadas. Cicadas were even humming on the bamboo fence of the Kenninji Temple that surrounded the Nô pavilion where they sat. Faces of people who had died or departed, faces of people as they had been at a certain moment on a certain day, flashed in Jirô's mind. These faces were dyed with the color of the various seasons he associated with each person. (3)

Tachihara could change a few of the underlined words into the non-perfect forms in order to avoid monotony; however, he sticks to "*ta*." Shirakawa Masayoshi analyzes this opening scene and appreciates Tachihara's speedy tempo of changing gazes: first, the narrator's gaze focuses on Yasumasa, changes to Jirô, then goes to scenery outside, and finally returns to an interior view of Jirô. Shirakawa indicates that the tempo is not too fast, but rather comfortable and that Tachihara never alters the tempo by repeating the *ta*-form.[20] In addition to Shirakawa's indication of Tachihara's intention to create tension in his writing, there seems to be another reason for the repetitive use of the *ta*-form. Karatani Kôjin has analyzed the persistent usage of the *ta*-form in Futabatei Shimei's works in comparison with the classical form, *keri*. According to Karatani, the use of *keri* implies the existence of a narrator, while the *ta*-form indicates the neutral existence of a narrator on the meta-level of the text.[21] Moreover, Karatani compares the *ta* form to the use of the preterite in French and concludes that "[t]hird-person narration could not

[20] Shirakawa, 49-58.

[21] Karatani, 73.

emerge until the narrator had been neutralized by the use of *ta*."[22] By repeating the *ta*-form, Tachihara emphasizes its connotation of neutrality and maintains a distance between the narrator, his alter ego, and the events in the story. As a result, he is able to keep his uninvolved position. Thus does Tachihara exhibit a multi-layered attitude toward ethnicity in his writing style.

On the surface, Tachihara seems to maintain his objective attitude towards events; however, he constructs several contradictions in the text. In the following selection, Tachihara uses "*ore* (I)" when he should use "*kare* (he)" to represent the subject Jirô.

> 昭和十二年の秋から二十一年の春まで、彼は剣ヶ崎とと
> もに生き、ともに暮らしてきた。ある意味では自分の伴
> 侶の一部であった剣ヶ崎を、彼はいままで一度も訪ねて
> こなかった。訪ねてこなかった事実にはなにか意味があ
> ったのか。父に捨てられ、母に去られ、兄に死なれた哀
> しみが俺のなかを領していたからか。しかしそれは表面
> 上の理由だ。剣ヶ崎は、彼の意識の暗部にある混沌とし
> た血の流れを、彼が意識して視つめていたことと繋がっ
> ていた。 (332, underline added)

> From the autumn of 1937 through the spring of 1946 he had lived here on the tip of the sword, so to speak. This was the first time he had come back to visit Tsurugigasaki, which had, in a sense, been his companion during those years. Was there really any significance in the fact that he had not come back to visit the place? He had been abandoned by his father, left behind by his mother, his brother had died. Was it because the sadness of all this had some hold over his heart? But that was only the superficial reason. His feelings about Tsurugigasaki were related to the fact that he had consciously examined the chaotic mixture of blood in the dark recesses of his mind. (10)

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[22] *Ibid.*

In the first and second sentences, Tachihara uses "*kare* (he)," while in the third sentence he uses "*ore* (I)." The underlined "*ore*" can be changed into "*kare* (he)." In the dialogue, Tachihara uses '*ore* (I)," which sounds manly but blunt, for Tarô and "*boku* (I)," which gives an impression of mildness, for Jirô. Compared with Tarô, Jirô is mild mannered and gives the reader the impression that he would rather assimilate quietly into Japanese society. Contrarily, Tachihara expresses Jirô's feeling toward assimilation by including a scene in which Jirô's anger is exposed toward those who discriminate against him. While practice shooting at the university during World War II, he shoots and almost kills his instructor intentionally because the instructor has insulted his "Koreanness." This episode shows Jirô's double character, "mildness" represented by "*boku*" and "wildness" by "*ore*," and the latter probably reflects the narrator's subjective emotion. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, Tachihara uses "*ore*" in his text and shows the narrator's emotional upsurges, which some readers overlook, some do not understand, and others appreciate unknowingly. Noguchi points out that even in the third person narratives there must be a connection between the fiction and the author's real life.[23]. The stern realities of Tachihara's life seem to make him break his neutral writing and fuse "*ore*" into the third person narrative.

These three writers take different attitudes toward ethnicity and use different writing styles. Ri puts Korean words in the text to impress the reader with the gap between Japanese and Korean. Unlike Ri, who had a chance to learn Korean after he grew up, Kin understood the Korean language poorly. He puts an emphasis on the negativity of his stuttering and "Koreanness," so that he rarely uses Korean words in his texts and avoids pursuing his ethnic identity. Paradoxically, he is always conscious of stuttering and "Koreanness" and embodies his stuttering in the text by repeating katakana words and words related to "I" or "self" and to his interiority, for example, "fear." As a result, his writing deviates from the Japanese standard, which tends to omit the subject, "I," and avoids repetition of the same word. By connecting his stuttering and "Koreanness," Kin creates his own writing style and challenges the preferred Japanese writing style, which is founded on a writer's stable

[23] Noguchi, 79-80.

belief in sufficient speaking ability and ethnic identity. Kin's attempt at "making language stammer" is an example of "language's unexploited possibilities," as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari describe by pointing out Hjelmslev's remark.[24] Tachihara adopts a third-person narrator and depicts various types of Resident Koreans in *Tsurugigasaki* and shows his understanding of and sympathy towards each character. In the story, the narrator's uncontrollable emotion toward ethnic injustice is represented by the occasional abandonment of the third person narrative.

According to my analysis, these three writers illustrate Deleuze and Guattari's concept that "[a] minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which minority constructs within a major langauge."[25] These writers use the oppressor's language, Japanese; however, they are not submerged completely by the oppressor's world. I have shown that the three writers challenge the fixed conception of Japanese literature written by Japanese in the Japanese language and problematize the unification of the Japanese people, language, and culture. Especially, I believe that Tachihara's attitudes toward ethnicity and his writing style, which is occasionally regarded as straightforward, are unique and have potential for future study. Tachihara, a full-blooded Korean, destroys the myth that only the Japanese understand the Japanese language and culture. Some readers who believe that Tachihara understands Japanese culture because he has Japanese blood will have to change their belief in the unity between Japanese blood and "Japaneseness." Other readers who are unconsciously invited by Tachihara to a world where two cultures exist simultaneously will sense something different from their conception of Japanese culture and will be bewildered. All of these readers may wonder what makes Tachihara's literary works different from Japanese writers' works founded on the belief in a cohesive self.

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[24] Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 98-99.
[25] Deleuze and Guattari 1990, 59.

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