

## Concerning Lu Hsün's *Professor Fujino* — Natsume Soseki, Lu Hsün, Dazai Osamu —

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One of the short works by Lu Hsün (魯迅) that today provokes the greatest interest and attention in Japan is his *Professor Fujino*. This interest, however, has differed greatly in the periods before and after the Second World War. *Professor Fujino* consists of the memories of Fujino Genkuro who was professor of anatomy at the Sendai Medical school, where he taught Lu Hsün and helped him greatly. Lu Hsün wrote this work in 1926, when he was forty-four years old, twenty-four years after meeting professor Fujino. It is extremely interesting to ponder why, after a twenty-four year interval, Lu Hsün should choose to recollect his former professor so fondly and embody his reminiscences in a short novel.

In Japan, too, experts in the field of Comparative Literature have demonstrated profound interest in this question. Professor Hirakawa Sukehiro of Tokyo University, an outstanding scholar who has devoted much attention to this matter, has written a leading work in connection with it, entitled *Natsume Soseki: The Inner Conflict Caused by the Difficulty of Adapting to the West*. Lu Hsün's younger brother Chou Tso-jen (周作人), in his work *Katoshu* (瓜豆集), states that during his stay as a student in Japan, Lu Hsün paid no attention to Japanese literature, but was nevertheless strongly drawn to the works of Natsume Soseki and was particularly fond of reading *Gubijinso*. He bought *Wagahai wa neko de aru*, *Yokyoshu*, *Uzurakago*, *Eijitsushohin*, *Bungakuron* and others of Soseki's works. It seems that he repeatedly read *Eijitsushohin*. Not only that, he appears to have felt a particular sympathy for *Craig Sensei*, which he translated into Chinese. This work was published in June 1923 by Shomuin Shokan in

Shanghai, as part of a collection of Japanese novels published under the name of Lu Hsün's younger brother, Chou Tso-jen.

According to Chou Tso-jen, *Craig Sensei* translated by Lu Hsün is the finest of all the Japanese novels translated by him. My colleague Kusuhara Tosiyo, a scholar of Lu Hsün's literature investigated this translation and discovered that it is nearly perfect, and Soseki's happy light touch is translated very well. This accurate and careful translation tells us that *Craig Sensei* had an influence on *Professor Fujino*. I take an interest in the fact that Lu Hsün is mostly interested in Soseki's essays. Now, I am of the opinion that Soseki's most attractive novel is *Bochan* and his essays are more interesting than his novels.

It is very understandable that Lu Hsün had paid attention to Soseki's *Eijitsushohin*. In 1908, Lu Hsün removed to Soseki's former house and called it "Gosha" (伍舍) and lived one year with his brother, Chou Tso-jen and his friend Hsün Shou-chang.

And 1909, after putting an end to seven years' study in Japan, Lu Hsün returned to China. I am sure that his experience of living at Soseki's former house would have produced an effect on Lu Hsün's spirit.

Now, Soseki's *Craig Sensei* and Lu Hsün's *Professor Fujino* are both impressions of foreign teachers in foreign countries. It cannot be called a mere coincidence that these works are favorable recollections although Soseki criticizes Englishmen and Lu Hsün does the same for the Japanese.

Comparing *Professor Fujino* with *Craig Sensei*, it is known that Fujino has something in common with Craig, especially in regard to face and figure. And from the point of dialect, Fujino speaks Japanese with a Fukui accent, on the other hand, Craig has an Irish English pronunciation.

Soseki, in writing *Craig Sensei* refers ten times to Craig's passive handshake and undemonstrative hands, meanwhile Lu Hsün describes three times Fujino's intoned Fukui accent as his principal characteristic. These two writers, in such a manner, produce the effect of repetition, and this same method of writing will be the point I wish to make.

These two works surely have points of resemblance that we cannot deal with fully in a limited paper. All things considered, nobody can overlook the fact that *Craig Sensei* and *Professor Fujino* have the common theme of recollections of teachers while studying abroad, some common points in regard to writing technique a similar plot development and leave the same lingering impressions upon readers.

Though it is a just matter of form, the manuscript of *Craig Sensei* consists of fourteen pages (a manuscript page containing 400 Japanese characters or Kana symbols) and that of *Professor Fujino* translated into Japanese by Lu Hsün, about fourteen pages. If you say that it is a coincidence, that will be the end of it, but this matter is very interesting. William James Craig, who taught English literature to Natsume Soseki, and Fujino Genkuro were actually living and not characters in a story. Fujino was from Fukui Prefecture and I also come from the same prefecture. Fujino's son, Tsuneya, was my classmate at Fukui Middle School. Therefore I understand Fujino Genkuro's Fukui accent very well and his temperament, although I did not know him personally.

In *Professor Fujino*, Lu Hsün comments, on Fujino's dialect in the following phrase, "He speaks slowly with a peculiar accent." Fukui dialect is the most peculiar of Japanese dialects. Lu Hsün, too, writes in the following phrase about how Fujino began a series of lectures at Sendai Medical School, "As soon as Professor Fujino put his books on the table, he introduces himself with a slow, peculiar accent, 'I am called Fujino Genkuro. . . .'" Then some of the students at the back of the classroom laughed at him." They were repeating students who had failed the course, and the cause of their laughing was Fujino's ridiculous accent, and his repeating the same speech every year. A person from Fukui Prefecture doesn't become aware of his ridiculous accent, until he goes out to another prefecture.

It may be doubtful if Lu Hsün was able to take in the extraordinary, ridiculous accent of Fujino's speech in any degree.

Perhaps he could not understand it. For that reason, I believe that to Lu Hsün, Fujino's speech had a slow, peculiar accent.

Moreover, in *Professor Fujino*, "Watashi wa Fujino Genkuro to yu mono deshite . . .", that is, "I am called Fujino Genkuro . . .", this phrase is standard Japanese, but it isn't Fukui dialect. The peculiarity of a dialect is mainly picked out from its sound, but it is not expressed in writing. Lu Hsün understands quickly that Fujino's Japanese is not standard Japanese. He, grasping this distinction clearly and writing about it at the beginning, intends to express Fujino's character perfectly.

We should take note that we have an inclination to omit the value of sound in dealing with a literary work. It is supposed that Professor Fujino was regarded with politeness but a bit of antipathy by the students for the

reason of his harsh dialect and such carelessness about his personal appearance that he was mistaken for a pickpocket on a train by the conductor. That was the time of the Russo-Japanese War in China. Neither Russia nor Japan stained their soil with blood; moreover the two countries trampled upon China at their own convenience. After the Sino-Japanese War, I think that the Japanese acted haughtily toward the Chinese. Then, perhaps Lu Hsün was living a lonely life with spiritual disorders beyond our imagination at Sendai, the greatest city of the Tohoku district. It is easy to suppose that Lu Hsün would be deeply impressed with the kindness given by Fujino who had been regarded by others as having some spiritual disorder on account of the professor's peculiar accent and carelessness about his personal appearance. Lu Hsün had to be moved by sympathy for Professor Fujino, who would be lonely at Sendai like Lu Hsün. Consequently, after coming back to China, Lu Hsün put a photograph of Professor Fujino in his room and he never forgot the peculiar professor. In Japan which should not have been very comfortable for Lu Hsün, Fujino's kindness sank deeply into Lu Hsün's mind, but Lu Hsün never forgot to criticize severely the Japanese culture consciousness. Some of his classmates did unpleasant things to him, because they thought incorrectly that Professor Fujino revealed the anatomy examination questions to Lu Hsün and he passed by this means.

Concerning such trouble, Lu Hsün writes in *Professor Fujino*, "China is a weak country and so the Chinese are stupid. Lu Hsün, a Chinese, should not be able to get grades higher than sixty. That some of my Japanese classmates think so is a matter of course."

Although this way of putting it appears to be not severe, I believe that Lu Hsün grasps the Japanese culture view perfectly. He seems to be not enraged at his disagreeable experience, but in proportion as he appears to be indifferent toward such experience, I feel his irony to be very severe.

Undoubtedly, Japan, after the Meiji Restoration, took the first step toward modernization and the Japanese modernization was the first among the Asian countries.

In Japan, it was believed that the development toward modernization depended upon technology completely and the highest technology was connected with military capacity. While people were not aware of it, the Japanese began to consider that a country's culture had to be judged by the quantity of its cannons.

And also they set about disregarding the culture of defeated nations.

About ten years previously, Japan had defeated China, whose culture had been respected by Japan nearly a thousand years. After the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese did not feel their own inferiority complex toward the Chinese, but a superiority complex. It appears to me that the above-mentioned phrase by Lu Hsün is a critical analysis of the Japanese culture view.

At any time, such a developing country as Japan just after the Sino-Japanese War's end may be thirsty for a great power's culture, although there may be a difference of degree.

Meanwhile, Natsume Soseki stayed in England during the period in which Japan was beginning to become intimate with England. When Soseki was thirty-four years old, he took private lessons in English literature under Craig during the year 1900 to 1901. At that time, Englishmen turned never a look of keen reproach on the Japanese, they rather looked upon Japan with an impartial, friendly and curious eye, as an oriental developing country. At London, Soseki was lonely. Craig, an Irishman, who was fifty-six years old, appeared to be lonely also. Perhaps Soseki felt strong affinities with Craig for the reason of his loneliness. It appears to me that Soseki wrote *Craig Sensei* with sympathy and intimacy, but also irony toward Craig's attitude toward money. Craig did not give Soseki any change when he paid for lectures, and in addition to that, he reminded Soseki to pay in advance. Soseki could not go along with this idea about money, because he was a born Edo man disinterested in money. I think that *Craig Sensei* contains some expressions of mixed feelings for Craig. But it is true that Soseki felt intimacy and sympathy for Craig who taught English literature with great care. He heard of Craig's death about two years after coming back to Japan. In *Craig Sensei*, one will understand without knowing Soseki's lamentation toward Craig Sensei, who had died in loneliness without completing his life work, a *Dictionary of Shakespearians*. Soseki's *Craig Sensei*, mixing irony, a light touch and recollection impressed Lu Hsün's heart deeply. Lu Hsün, while translating into Chinese *Craig Sensei*, understood the appeal of Soseki's essay and he wished to write some recollections of his former professor Fujino, but containing a critique of Japan.

Some lantern slides at which Lu Hsün looked in the classroom struck his heart deeply. A Chinese spy for Russia whom the Japanese soldiers executed by shooting was on the lantern slide screen, and also the crowd of Chinese who looked at the spy. In the classroom there was also a Chinese. That Chinese was Lu Hsün himself. This scene was shocking to him. He

writes as follows: "The classmates cried 'Banzai!' and they soon broke out into a stream of applause."

According to Lu Hsün's former classmates, when a Chinese spy was on the screen, the students did not cry *Banzai!*, but they would cry *Banzai!* and clap their hands in applause for the screening of a Japanese army victory.

The Japanese were at war with the Russians in Lu Hsün's homeland. From his point of view, both of them were invaders of China. For Lu Hsün there was nothing to choose between the two countries.

Perhaps Lu Hsün was indignant at the Japanese insensibility of showing him such a scene, and also he would feel indignation against the Chinese who were enjoying themselves on the execution ground. These lines of *Professor Fujino* concerned with such a scene are full of fury.

Lu Hsün writes: "At that time, at that place. I had changed my way of thinking." This expression is his furious confession, and not irony as the above-mentioned critique of the Japanese.

Though there are some differences in basic points between these two literary works, an underlying unity is discovered in these two works, because they express the possibility of human communication beyond customs and nationality.

We can not deny that Soseki's *Craig Sensei* had a sympathetic influence on Lu Hsün.

Lu Hsün was an ardent admirer of Professor Fujino, though Professor Fujino was only a professor of anatomy at Sendai Medical School and never a scholar of the highest standing.

He writes about Fujino Genkuro as follows, "Although his name is unknown to the general public, to me his great character lives in my heart."

This phrase expresses his feelings extremely well. Professor Fujino helped Lu Hsün, a Chinese, greatly, because his teacher of the Chinese classics had taught him that the Chinese sages had to be respected and the Chinese ought to be treated kindly, as Fujino himself said to others later. This matter may be believed.

But the following matter must be considered: the people of Fukui Prefecture in which the Jodoshinshu sect has been flourishing, have the custom of treating kindly the people coming from far away whether they are Japanese or not. Therefore, it ought to be thought that Fujino's kindness for Lu Hsün was influenced by the local customs of Fukui Prefecture rather than because of Fujino's teacher of the Chinese classics.

Professor Fujino was rather an ordinary person. Such an ordinary professor's kindness impressed Lu Hsün deeply beyond country or politics. Sometimes we human beings have intense hatreds within the confines of a country, resulting from the blood relations of race, against the foreigners, and on other occasions tears stand in our eyes because of the human feelings of a foreigner. *Professor Fujino*, though a short piece, is an excellent work mixing the cool critique of Japan and China, the preciousness of the human communication. This work lacks the light touch of Soseki's *Craig Sensei*, but I think that *Professor Fujino* has a sharper critical quality and more irony than *Craig Sensei*.

That *Professor Fujino* was contained in *The Selected Masterpieces of Lu Hsün's Literature* translated by Sato Haruo and Masuda Wataru of the 1935 Iwanami edition was by Lu Hsün's request. At that time, I was a fourth year pupil at Fukui Middle School, and Fujino's son, Tsuneya was my classmate. But none of my classmates knew about Lu Hsün's *Professor Fujino*. Our teacher of the Chinese classics, Kan Yoshiharu was the only one who knew of this literary work, and he notified Tsuneya regarding Lu Hsün's *Professor Fujino* of the Iwanami edition; moreover, Kan said to Tsuneya that Tsuneya should notify his father of Kan's desire of knowing more about Lu Hsün. But these facts I have known only after the second World War. Because Fujino was very sickly and also a pupil of passive character though his grades were excellent, he did not say to any classmate that Lu Hsün's *Professor Fujino* was a book about Tsuneya's father. Therefore, my classmates who had read this literary work were few and far between.

But after the Second World War, the Japanese commenced to pay attention to Lu Hsün's *Professor Fujino*, probably as a reflection on their having made war on China and so they have written about this work.

In the spring of 1973, the Sendai Association for Lu Hsün Research was organized in Sendai, and *The Records of Lu Hsün in Sendai* was published in 1977. This book (four hundred and thirty-three pages) contains all the records of Lu Hsün while he was attending the Sendai Medical School, and it is an excellent work.

A monument to the memory of the late Lu Hsün was erected at Sannomaru at the Aoba Castle in Sendai City in 1960, and also in 1964 at Asuwayama Park in Fukui City, a memorial to Fujino Genkuro was established.

In Fukui City, my native town, few know about the existence of this

memorial and the significance of the memorial is still less known. Both monuments were erected by Japanese intellectuals, but they have little influence on the masses. On that account, it appears to me that these monuments do not signify more than a self indulgence by Japanese intellectuals reflecting concern about the Japanese army's outrages in the Chinese-Japanese War.

Here, in conclusion, I have to tell about Dazai Osamu's *Sekibetsu*, that is, *Unwilling Farewell*, which was written on the pattern of Lu Hsün's *Professor Fujino*.

Dazai would wish to emphasize the ties of friendship between China and Japan, and through describing the lonely life of Lu Hsün in Sendai, he intended to tell the Chinese young intellectuals with zeal that in Japan there was a person who fully understood China like Fujino Genkuro. In spite of his efforts, some critics criticized Dazai's *Sekibetsu* saying that it was quite unlike Dazai to write such a literary work, but Dazai's *Sekibetsu* grasps the elemental problems of the relationship between Japan and China.

Finally, I must add one more thing: *Sekibetsu* (惜別) is the Chinese inscription written by Professor Fujino on the reverse side of his photograph which he gave to Lu Hsün when Lu Hsün left Sendai for China discontinuing his study of medicine.