

The Conformed/Deviated Self in Diaries of Modern Japan: The Diversity and Contradiction of Self-expression

Organizer and Chair: Yusuke Tanaka, Meiji Gakuin University

The culture of diaries flourished in Modern Japan. It meant not only that the production and consumption of diaries increased in a rapid and constant manner, but also that they developed to be classified into diverse categories according to gender, age, community, education, profession, or even ethnicity. While diaries created private space for self-expression, they also became ideological apparatus for national education conforming users to the relevant social norms. Although some enjoyed to be a role model, others refused to be so and thus deviated from the norm; diaries constructed conflicting discursive space for self-expression with a tension between subjection and emancipation.

This panel examines how self-expression were performed in the dynamics of the social norms of modern Japan from various aspects. Tanaka will investigate the inculcating nature of mandatory diaries with a focus on censorship by teachers and military superiors. Kawachi will reveal how the youth in agricultural communities were imposed to be an ideal farmer when writing about themselves in diaries. Kō will scrutinize the tangled self-expression in colonial occupation by shedding a light on a diary of a secondary school student in Manchuria, who kept his diary both in Chinese and Japanese. Ōno will explore the case of deviation into the diary space by analyzing the works of Hōjo Tamio, who epitomizes so-called leprosy literature of modern Japan. Through the four studies on diverse and contradicted self-expression in diaries, the panel aims to provide new perspectives to the social intellectual history in modern Japan.

1) Yusuke Tanaka, Meiji Gakuin University

Writing Inculcated Genuine Heart: Self-expression and Censorship in Modern Japanese Diaries

Throughout the course of modern Japanese history, diaries were used as means to educate students to be a proper national subject. At elementary schools or even at higher levels, it was very common for students to periodically submit mandatory diaries to their

teachers. The instructor carefully read the diaries as to inspect whether the students were good in behavior, and whether they kept healthy ways of thought as little subjects of the nation. The same practice was continued after their graduation, most notably in the military. There, superiors censored if their subordinates possessed the correct spirit, as Donald Keene recalled with amazement in his *Travelers of a Hundred Ages*. In these cases diaries were no longer sanctuaries for secret confession; under the eye of manifest authority, diary keepers were inculcated to express the appropriate — seemingly genuine thoughts and feelings. The voice of the authority appeared in red ink on pages of diaries, usually in a calm, educating manner. However, once diary keepers write something inappropriate in the sense that they deviated from the norm imposed by the authority, the voice was immediately raised to reproach them with fonts of large size. Based upon the research on over a hundred actual diaries, this presentation analyzes how comment and criticism of authority appeared and what effects it had on the following entries of diaries. Special focus is laid on diaries by students and soldiers of World War Two, when the need for censorship culminated in the ever-worsening situation of Japan's holy war.

2) Satoko Kawachi, Tohoku University

Diary-Keeping in Modern Agricultural Society: Self-Representation of The Youth in Agricultural Areas

In this presentation, the phenomenon in which keeping the diary was deemed exemplary among the youth in various agricultural areas in modern Japan is discussed from the perspective of sociocultural trends and their backgrounds. While young farmers were encouraged to keep a diary primarily because of its pragmatic functions in the agricultural reformation during the Taisho and Showa periods, the youth were also expected to express their own “farmerhood” in terms of self-representation. Such expectation was associated with the social background of the *Seikatsu-Tsuzurikata* movement that advocated manners of diary-keeping to simply describe the author's ways of life and routines as they are. Therefore, those engaged in agriculture were increasingly expected to describe their “peasant lives”, which in many ways contrasted the modernized urban cultures. This suggests that diary-

keeping in agricultural communities during the period played a role in the development of normative and ideal models of young farmers through their routine descriptions and self-representation as farmers. The aims of this presentation are to reveal the manners of their self-representation as farmers by focusing on the act of diary-keeping among the youth in agricultural society of modern Japan, and to discuss the primary function of diary-keeping, which is the self-imposition of norms as ideal farmers.

3) En Kō, Komazawa University

The School Life and City Experience in Colonial Manchuria: An analysis of a Chinese Youth's Diary of 1936

This paper explores the school life and city experience in Manchuria under Japanese occupation by focusing on a diary written by a Chinese student of *Nanman Chugakudo* 南滿中學堂, a Japanese-run secondary school in Mukden city. The school was founded by South Manchuria Railway Company (SMR) in 1917 as the only secondary educational institution of SMR for Chinese students. Most of the faculty members were Japanese, and the language used in school was Japanese. Until the Manchurian Incident of 1931, *Nanman Chugakudo* had been regarded as a symbol of Japanese educational invasion in Manchuria. Following the formation of Manchukuo in 1932, the number of applicants to this school dramatically increased while the popularity of Japanese language skyrocketed. The Chinese student, who is the author of the said diary, entered this school in 1932, the same year Manchukuo was established. In his diary entries during 1936, he comments on various events: the Manchukuo National Sports Festival, the fifth anniversary of the Manchuria Incident, and the school trip to Japan. Moreover, by tracing his footsteps in Mukden that encompassed SMR zone and Chinese residential zone, we can see that his consumption activities mostly took place in the former area, while entertainments, such as cinema and eating out, were enjoyed in the latter. By reading between the lines of the diary written both in Japanese and Chinese, this paper attempts not only to reveal his psychological world, but also to illuminate colonial history from a more personal perspective.

4) Robert Ōno, Japan College of Social Work

Is This What I Wished For?: Hojo Tamio's Diary As an Literary Refuge

Hojo Tamio (1914-1937) is arguably the only Japanese short story writer who has won significant critical acclaim as well as popularity among contemporary readers while being diagnosed with Hansen's disease. Up until today, he has been noted as a powerful chronicler of the lives of the patients, and a stronghold of literary history surrounding the disease. But did he wish for such a role? This paper aims to shed a light on another aspect of Hojo's persona, which to some extent has been overlooked: a troubled, angry young writer who was more than occasionally doubtful about the authenticity of his own fame. By looking at his texts of less-fictitious nature, we can see that he believed his works were widely read not because of their literary finesse per se, but rather because they depicted grim and often gruesome lives of the patients at the sanatorium. In his unfinished essay *Keijitsu Zakki (Notes of Recent Days)*, he concisely states that he does not wish to participate in the development of so-called "leprosy literature". Moreover, we can learn from his diary entries that he was pejorative towards some of the successful writers outside the sanatorium because they were "not bound to rot", and that he was furious towards the censorship enforced at the institute because it thwarted his true self-expression. Hojo was not altogether content with his achievements, and interestingly, his malaise did not find its refuge in works of fiction, but rather in texts such as essays and diary entries.

Discussant: M. William Steele, International Christian University