

Part III

Time in India had been marked by cyclical sameness. While engrossed in the contemplation of life as prescribed by a seer and master of a timeless way of knowledge, Nakamura Saburo had been informed not so much by the passing of days, months, and seasons as by the events of his own interior. Now, as he stepped ashore in Shanghai after a hiatus of five years, he was once again thrust rudely onto the stage of world events.

Nakamura's narrative at this juncture suffers an inconsistency that must be addressed before continuing. The date given by Nakamura for his departure from Marseilles is May 21, 1911; the certainty with which this is stated suggests that he retained a copy of his steamship ticket or otherwise noted the date in a journal—this we are not told. But given that it fits with the timeline of his travels in America and Europe, the date appears to be accurate and also serves as something of an anchor to which subsequent events can be tied. It is also the last fixed date that we are given by him until well after his return to Japan.

Approximately five days after leaving Marseilles, we are told that he encountered the yogi Kaliappa in Cairo; that he then accompanied Kaliappa on a journey that lasted for about three months and ended in India; that he lived in India, studying at the feet of the master, for something just short of three years; and that he departed the ashram in late winter or early spring. Here again, if we credit the three months during which he was travelling in Kaliappa's company toward his just-less-than-three years of ascetic study and practice, then all is well.

Next, however, we are told that he participated in the Sun Yat-sen's Second Chinese Revolution, and here the narrative breaks down. The Second Revolution began in July of 1913—just over two years from Nakamura's departure from Marseilles. Furthermore, it ended quickly in disaster and with Sun and his generals hastily fleeing to Japan. Nakamura, on the other hand, did not return to Japan until spring or summer of 1914.

The numbers simply do not work. We are left with two possible explanations, neither of them entirely satisfactory: either Nakamura's sojourn in India lasted less than two years rather than three, or he arrived in Shanghai too late to participate in the Second Revolution.

As far as I have been able to discover, neither Nakamura, in his writings or recorded talks, nor his biographers even note this discrepancy, let alone address it. Furthermore, the record is sufficiently spotty to preclude a definitive answer. Nevertheless, we are forced to choose, and on

balance, I come out in favor of the second possible explanation over the first, for the following reasons.

First, Tempu was generous with his stories about India and it seems unlikely, at least to me, that all he recounts could have been condensed into a time period that would have been in the order of eighteen months. Nor does it seem to me likely that, given the late stage of his tubercular condition, eighteen months is a sufficient window for his recovery.

Second, we know much less about his experiences in China; Tempu seems to have been uncharacteristically tight-lipped on the subject. We know that he was injured on the streets of Shanghai, that he saw live action, that he spent time in and around Peking, and that for whatever services he did perform he was handsomely compensated and returned to Japan a wealthy man.

None of the above, however, necessitates his being present during the actual summer of 1913 revolution. Moreover, had he participated in that revolution he would have been branded a revolutionary and would have had little reason to stay on and very compelling reasons to leave. If he indeed participated in the revolution and then stayed on for an additional eight to ten months, then the questions raised are many: Why did he stay? Where did he stay and what did he do? And what contribution could he possibly have made to a failed revolution that should have earned him such an extraordinary reward?

The second alternative likewise leaves us with questions—especially those pertaining to the nature of his mission in China and the source of the funds that he brought home with him—but these questions, I believe, are less challenging than those raised by the first. Let us look first at the circumstances surrounding the Second Revolution and then attempt to reconstruct what may have been Nakamura Saburo's involvement and contribution.

In the time elapsed since Nakamura's departure from Europe, the long but encumbered peace in place since Napoleon's final exile had been shattered by the outbreak of the First Balkan War, setting in motion a domino effect that was soon to unleash a fury of aggression such as the world had yet to see. Meanwhile in China, the three-hundred-year-old Manchurian regime of Qing had finally succumbed to the winds of change, a new republic had been formed, and now, only a year and half later, that republic was quickly disintegrating.

One of the few places that Nationalist and Communist histories of modern China agree is in their crediting of the founding of the first Chinese Republic to the revolutionary Sun Yat-sen. But Sun, as Marie-Claire Bergère has shown in her biography entitled simply, *Sun Yat-sen*, may have been less a force for change than an astute opportunist riding an unstoppable wave.

A son of Pearl River Delta peasants, Sun lived most of his life outside China, and in fact most of that time in exile. At the age of thirteen, he followed an older brother to Hawaii, where he attended the Iolani School and Oahu College. His education continued in Hong Kong, where he attended the Government Central School (later to be renamed Queen's College) and the Canton School of Medicine. Socially adept, Sun quickly developed a wide network of influential mentors and friends, first in Hawaii, then in Hong Kong, and later in Japan, the United States, Europe, and Southeast Asia.

In his late twenties, Sun permanently set aside all other professional ambitions to pursue revolutionary politics. He founded the Revive China Society in Hawaii in 1894, and after his participation in what would be the first of many failed uprisings with which he was to become involved, during which he narrowly escaped from the Chinese territories with his life, he spent the next sixteen years in exile traveling the globe. The first refuge he sought was in Japan.

In Japan—the first and only Asian nation at the time to have successfully engineered, on its own terms and without colonial influence, a modern transformation—Sun's eyes were opened to what might be possible for China. This first visit was brief, but he returned two years later in 1897 after gaining international notoriety from having survived a kidnapping in London at the hands of the Chinese embassy. This time he stayed for three years.

Helped by the London incident, Sun was brought to the attention of number of progressive Japanese intellectuals, and under their mentorship he flourished. He became an earnest student of Japanese culture, learning the language, adopting the manners and habits, and even adopting the Japanese name Nakayama by which he is often referred to in Japan even today. In an address delivered in Tokyo one year after the end of his short-lived presidency, Sun referred to Japan as his “second home.”

The emerging current in Japanese intellectual circles that most appealed to Sun's sensibilities was what has subsequently been termed pan-Asianism. In the 1920s and 30s, this term would be turned into a euphemism for Japanese imperialism, but in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the doctrine it described was largely pure in intent. Its proponents were motivated by a genuine desire to see Asia freed from the yoke of Western colonialism and brought into its own as a collection of sovereign states under indigenous rule. As concerned China, in response to the English-American “open door” doctrine that only thinly masked intentions of partition, Japan supported a “preserve China” policy that favored reform and modernization adequate to withstand Western aggression.

Sun's closest advisor in Japan was the pan-Asian idealist and romantic Miyazaki Torazo, also known as Toten. Miyazaki was five years Sun's junior, but he shared Sun's passion for the

dream of a modern and independent China. Their friendship continued until Miyazaki's death in 1922, with Miyazaki working tirelessly behind the lines to secure funding and arms for Sun's long succession of failed revolutionary attempts.

Through Miyazaki, Sun was introduced to a number of Japanese men of power and influence. One of these was the distinguished statesman Inukai Tsuyoshi. Another was Toyama Mitsuru, Genyosha elder and mentor to Nakamura Saburo. Sun was ever in danger of assassination by Chinese agents, and Toyama assisted first in securing a protected place of residence for him in Tokyo and then in providing him with round-the-clock bodyguard protection. Among those assigned to the bodyguard detail was the young Nakamura.

By the time that Nakamura's narrative places him again in Shanghai, Sun's career had passed its zenith and was in meteoric decline. He had come to power on the coattails of a successful 1911 insurrection against the Manchurian regime with which he had had little directly to do: he was traveling in America and Europe at the time, but in his absence, the Revolutionary Alliance, a body made up of highly competitive northern and southern factions, elected him to the office of president of the new Republic. The qualities that commended him for this role appear to have been his charisma coupled with a perceived lack of political acumen: he was viewed by all parties as sufficiently harmless and even as someone over whom they could exercise control. He was inaugurated in Nanking on the first of January 1912. By mid-February, his presidency was over.

Sun's strength had always been as a catalyst for revolution and as a fundraiser, but never as either a visionary (few of the ideals to which he gave voice in his speeches and writings were original) or an administrator. On February 15th, after heeding the advice of his closest confidants, he abdicated to the far more astute Yuan Shikai.

Yuan was no revolutionary. He had been brought up as a mandarin and served as both a general and a high-ranking administrator under the Manchurian regime. A favorite of the dowager empress Cixi, he had found himself suddenly on the wrong side of power after her death in 1908. In the 1911 revolution he saw his opportunity to reverse the tides of fortune. After recommending himself to the imperial court as the man best suited to represent their interests at the meeting of the Revolutionary Alliance, he ruthlessly consolidated his own power at the regime's expense; it was in fact Yuan who secured the peaceful abdication of young Pu Yi, China's last emperor.

Sun's act of handing over the seat of power to the wily Yuan is eulogized in China's official histories as selfless and well-intentioned, even if misguided; he saw in Yuan someone more capable than himself of uniting north and south and thereby furthering the republican agenda. The more likely explanation, however, is that Sun saw only too clearly that he was no match for Yuan,

and that to remain in power would be to invite bloodshed, including most probably his own, leading to the premature fracture and demise of the nascent and all-too-fragile republican enterprise.

But Sun grossly underestimated his successor's intentions. Fifteen months after Sun's abdication, the republican reform agenda had fallen by the wayside and Yuan was well on his way to consolidating his rule under military control.

The Meiji government's special envoy to China at this time was Yamaza Enjiro. Yamaza was one of Japan's diplomatic stars. China was not new to him; he had served previous assignments there, as well as to Korea and England. He had also been a member of the Japanese delegation to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, that negotiated the 1905 treaty with Russia at the end of the Russo-Japan War.

A native of Fukuoka, Yamaza was also close to the Genyosha and shared many of its ideals. In 1904 he had been an adamant advocate of war with Russia, a position that had put him at odds with the political powerbroker and former prime minister Ito Hirofumi. He was also an outspoken "Asia for Asians" proponent.

When Yamaza arrived in Shanghai in the spring of 1913, Yuan was methodically transferring the seat of power away from Nanking to Peking, a strategy that spelled doom for the fledgling republic. Sun Yat-sen was only recently returned from yet another Japan visit—this one cut short by news of the assassination of fellow patriot and long-time friend Song Jiaoren—and now once again engaged in the business he knew best, that of insurrection.

After consolidating the resources and political will of the south, the insurrection went live on July 27th and lasted for all of seventeen days. Sun's insurrection, if heroic, was poorly conceived, insufficiently funded, and militarily no match for Yuan's machine. The provisional Guomindang government abandoned Nanking on July 29th; and while the revolutionary forces continued to defend the city for another month, the revolution was effectively over by early August. Sun hastily removed himself from Chinese soil and returned to the life of exile with which he was so familiar.

So how and when does Nakamura fit into this story? Again, the best that we can do is to speculate, but the narrative based on speculation that I believe also most closely matches the facts runs something as follows.

Assuming that he remained, as he says he did, under Kaliappa's tutelage for about two years and ten months, Nakamura returned to China in March of 1914. Upon setting foot in Shanghai, he

would have either contacted or inevitably been put into contact with Yamaza Enjiro, with whom he had a prior acquaintance, by way of the Genyosha's Shanghai cell.

Yamaza, in his capacity as a representative of the Government of Japan, could not openly oppose Yuan or his policies, since Yuan's regime, if ill intentioned, was at least legitimate; his power had been granted by republican assembly and his government was recognized by the nation of Japan. But, as with all diplomatic missions, more was going on than met the public eye, and what Yamaza could not do openly, he was not averse to doing covertly.

Nakamura Saburo not only came with Genyosha credentials; he was also a veteran with a background in intelligence. Moreover, he was familiar with China and spoke Chinese. At the same time, Nakamura was in need of diplomatic assistance: he was still travelling without a legal passport, a situation that Yamaza could remedy at the stroke of his pen. In all likelihood, then, he was recruited by Yamaza to act as a go-between in the embassy's covert relations with the underground opposition.

Even though the revolution had been suppressed, many of its operatives were still active, and outbreaks of violence were common; thus Nakamura, even if not part of the revolution proper, would have had ample opportunity to come into harm's way. Tempu says that he saw live action on several occasions in China, including at least one in or around Peking. He would remark that following his training in India, his attitude toward conflict was fundamentally changed. No longer the impetuous and hotheaded man he had been in Manchuria, he approached danger alert yet unattached—that is, with the emptiness described by Miyamoto Musashi in his *Book of Five Rings*: “A warrior . . . polishes the two hearts of his mind and will, and sharpens the two eyes of broad observation and focused vision. He is not the least bit clouded, but rather clears away the clouds of confusion. You should know that this is true emptiness.”¹ Musashi, a 17th century swordsman, is said to have fought over sixty duels and to have never known defeat; Tempu would often refer to Musashi's story and quote from *The Book of Five Rings* in his talks.

We are told that Nakamura earned the enduring respect of his Chinese associates for his calm and clear-headed ability to respond under fire. He did not, however, come away entirely unscathed: when brushing away the sword of a would-be assassin on a dark Shanghai street, he severed the nerves to his right middle finger. The wound healed but feeling never completely returned, and in his later years, this finger remained permanently extended, having lost all motor reflex and muscle control.

¹ Miyamoto Musashi, *The Book of Five Rings*; English translation, William Scott Wilson; Kodansha International Ltd, Tokyo, 2001; page 179.

What exactly was the nature of his mission in China? That we know so little about it suggests all the more strongly that it was covert in nature and that Tempu's silence on the subject was in deference to his allegiances. We know that Yamaza Enjiro died suddenly in May of 1914 while visiting Peking; and while his death was attributed officially to natural causes and no evidence to the contrary was ever found, it was widely speculated both at the time and later that he was poisoned by Yuan's agents.

And what about the money? By Nakamura's own account, this was paid to him by a Chinese benefactor. It most certainly would not have been paid by the Japanese government.

One possibility is as follows. Sun Yat-sen was at this time actively advocating insurgency from Tokyo, and with him in Tokyo was Chen Qimei, the military governor of Shanghai who had likewise been routed by Yuan's forces. Chen was a man of extraordinary connections extending deep into the Chinese underworld, and as a result he also had access to some very deep pockets. Also with Chen at this time was a young lieutenant with similar underworld connections named Chiang Kai-shek.

Sun, as we have seen, had well-established lines of communication with Toyama and the Genyosha, and he would almost certainly have introduced Chen and Chiang to Toyama as he sought support for his plans. Could Nakamura's participation in whatever was afoot have come about as a result of these connections? Could the source of his reward have been Chen and his moneyed Shanghai associates?

This reward, whatever its source, amounted to a small fortune by standards of the times. Furthermore, Nakamura's legal transgressions were evidently caused to disappear, for he suffered no recriminations upon reentering Japan; more than likely, in light of his record—first in Manchuria and now in China—as well as his reputation among friends in high places, the inconvenient details regarding his departure from Japan five years earlier were simply swept under the rug.

In the final analysis, Nakamura's sojourn in China, his relationship to the 1913 Second Revolution, and the circumstances and events whereby he came into money remain a mystery. By early summer of 1914 he is back in Japan—his departure probably precipitated by Yamaza's death—and our narrative picks up again on more solid ground.

Nakamura had left Japan in a critical state of health, in contravention of state quarantine, and with only enough money to purchase a one-way fare to New York. After a hiatus of five years, he was now returning with his health fully restored, his legal transgressions pardoned, and his personal net worth sufficient to launch him on a successful career.

As much as I would like to do the hero's return romantic justice, neither Nakamura nor his biographers leave us much in the way of personal details. Presumably he would have sent word ahead to his family from Shanghai; more than likely this would have been their first word from him since before his sojourn in India; and his mother and wife probably greeted him with the same samurai-like stoic restraint they had shown upon his return from Manchuria.

He would learn for the first time that his father was no longer of the world; he had died of a stroke suffered just months after Saburo's departure.

Also deceased was the Meiji Emperor; his passing had occurred while Saburo was still in India. And in one of the last and most notorious displays of extreme imperial loyalty, Count Nogi Maresuke, the revered victor of the Russo-Japan War, together with his wife, committed ritual suicide on the day of the emperor's funeral.

Just as Nogi's death symbolized to many the end of Japan's romantic warrior tradition, Meiji's death was felt for the vacancy in leadership that it left behind: the ascending emperor Taisho lacked both his charisma and his statesmanship. Where the legacy of Meiji's 46-year reign could be characterized as a great leap forward—the leap from agrarian feudalism to industrial constitutional state—that of Taisho would be lack of direction and domestic unrest.

Furthermore, concurrent with Nakamura's return, the Europe with which he had become briefly acquainted was consumed by the dogs of war. Japan, by virtue of its distance from the main theatres of conflict, was only marginally engaged; but it did, at British bidding, expel the Germans from Tsingtao in China, thereby acquiring Germany's lease-holdings in Shandong Province. It also used the momentum of the war to negotiate a second treaty with the Russians, enhancing that of Portsmouth and further securing its hegemony in Manchuria.

Nakamura passed most of his first year back in the quiet seclusion of his home. As something of a pastime, he took up speculating in financial markets. Not until the summer of the following year did he seek out gainful employment, and even then, the position he secured with the Jiji News Service, the publisher of a Japanese equivalent to the Financial Times, appears to have been more of an extension of his newfound hobby than the choice of a career.

As well as financial speculation, however, his wealth enabled him to pursue another pastime with even greater passion: that of the playboy.

Nakamura had been introduced to the world of "teahouses" and geisha at an early age by Toyama. Toyama was in his own right a playboy of almost mythic proportions; he was known to have left a trail of conquests from one end of Japan to the other in the course of his political

activism. But in this one respect at least, he was almost certainly surpassed by his protégé, Nakamura Saburo.

This is perhaps all the more extraordinary in that Saburo was abstinent with regard to alcohol. This fact is yet another indication of the singular nature of Nakamura's character: drinking is and has long been an accepted part of the social fabric in Japan, and if anything this is particularly true of the political, military, and now entrepreneurial circles within which Nakamura mingled.

Indeed, in his younger days, he drank and carried on with the best of them. The turning point occurred in 1903 on his way to Manchuria; he and his associates had been dispatched first to Peking, where they received a briefing from the Japanese consul general. The following morning, the party was to embark on a clandestine journey that would take them deep behind enemy lines. The occasion was deserving of a proper night on the town, young Saburo brazenly proposed.

The consul came down on him like a bolt of lightning. If you think that drinking will do anything to further this assignment, then you had better think again, he said. This is no time for celebration. This mission is going to require of you clarity and focus, and the nation is depending on you. I advise you get a good night's rest.

Saburo's ears burned with shame. The admonition made such an impression on him that he never touched alcohol again for the rest of his life.

Thus his participation in the after-dark world of Tokyo's entertainment districts revolved around the women and their art. The word *geisha*, also *geiko*, means literally, performing artisan. It is a title not easily attained; aspiring women live austere and undergo years of rigorous training before reaching formal recognition within their guilds. Ostensibly, the arts in question revolve around music and dance; all *geisha* are accomplished musicians and dancers. But musical and dancing skills alone do not make a *geisha*: more important is her ability to put her patrons—men, predominantly from the upper echelons of society, who she must assume are also shrewd and astute judges of human character—at ease and to stimulate conversation.

Moreover, this art of entertainment places almost equal responsibilities on the guest. The first of these responsibilities is of course financial; off-limits to all but those who can afford the price of admission, teahouse entertainment is decidedly a rich man's game. But while money will always go a long way toward winning a *geisha*'s heart, seldom is it the deciding factor. Teahouse indulgence calls on the sophistication and skill of the patron. And of course, one of the allures of the sport is that skill improves with practice.

On top of providing for his family, the money that Nakamura received in China was sufficient to allow him to visit the teahouses at his leisure. And in so doing, he inadvertently came into contact with prominent figures in the business and political world. Good company makes for

good entertainment, and Nakamura soon became sought after by prominent patrons as a welcome addition to their guest lists, as well as by the establishments themselves for the business that he naturally attracted.

Among the acquaintances made in the course of such gatherings was a man named Hiraga Satoshi. Hiraga lived in Tokyo but played a major role in the economic development of Osaka and the Kansai region. After a long banking career, and by the time that he met Nakamura, he had helped to found the Hankyu Railway Company and Daiwa Securities; several years later he would found the Fuji Fire and Marine Insurance Company.

Hiraga was able to see beyond the playboy to recognize in Nakamura the qualities that make a natural leader. He recommended Nakamura to one of his protégés, Ikeda Kenzo, President of the Daihyaku Bank, and Ikeda was equally drawn to Nakamura. After recruiting him to a Daihyaku affiliate, the Tokyo Industrial Depository Bank, Ikeda in short order made Nakamura bank president. And soon thereafter, as bank president, Nakamura was elected to the boards of some of the bank's most prominent corporate clients, beginning with Izu Electric Lighting and Nippon Flour Milling.

Predictably, Nakamura proved himself the able leader that Hiraga and Ikeda had taken him to be. He had an uncanny ability to see to the heart of problems and to make the right decisions at the right time, and consequently the businesses he touched seemed almost magically to flower and thrive. Needless to say, his reputation, along with his personal wealth, grew commensurately.

His heart, however, was not in his work. If anything, he found the world of business too easy, and he soon became bored. His typical day would begin at the bank and then involve visits by carriage to each of the corporations with which he was involved; but by three in the afternoon he would have finished his workday and would already be weighing his options for the evening ahead. Will it be Shinbashi, Yanagibashi, or Kagurazaka tonight, Sir, his driver would ask.

Frivolity ended, however, where his mentor Toyama was concerned. Toyama, now in his early sixties, was at the peak of his influence; he was asked to address populist gatherings around the country, and Nakamura often accompanied him. On more than one occasion, Toyama would ascend the podium to the sound of fervent applause and then hold the crowd spellbound in his speechless gaze. At the end of a long and pregnant silence, his eyes and mouth would turn up in an elfish grin. I am Toyama Mitsuru, he would say. It pleases me greatly to be in your company today. But I am not very good with words. My assistant here, Nakamura, is a far better public speaker than I am, so I will turn the podium over to him.

This cue would be given without so much as a hint of advance notice; but Saburo would rise with complete composure and without missing a beat—also without notes—deliver to the audience what he knew to be foremost on the elder's mind, as faithfully as if the two of them were wired into each other.

At some point during this period, Toyama began to introduce Nakamura by the name Tempu. While less the practice today, given names were traditionally something of a fluid value; people would often assume different given names at different periods in their lives, and this was particularly the case as an individual rose in social position. Sometimes these names were self-selected; but other times, as in this instance, they were bequeathed by an elder, mentor, or teacher.

Toyama had often remarked during Nakamura's younger, more tempestuous years that Saburo suffered from the affliction of having been born to late in history; if only he had been born amid the mayhem of the 16th century, a period commonly referred to as the Age of Warring States, he would have been in his own element. Tempu is written with the characters 天 'heaven' and 風 'heaven', "heaven's wind"; as noted in part one, Toyama borrowed it from the name of one of the *kata* or forms practiced in the *zuihenryu-battojutsu* school of swordsmanship, of which Nakamura Saburo was an accomplished practitioner. As it would turn out, the name would, to the many thousands of people touched by Nakamura and his teachings, stand for the seemingly heaven-sent breath of inspiration that his teachings imparted. Nakamura himself did not begin to use the name until after that next of turn of the wheel—that is, not until he began teaching.

The year was 1918; the month was February. Toyama was contacted by the Italian Embassy to say that a world-famous wild animal trainer², in town to perform at the Yuraku Hall in Yurakucho, was anxious to meet him. This trainer had made a hobby of seeking out men of extraordinary fiber and had evidently learned of Toyama through reputation.

Toyama was sufficiently intrigued by the invitation to accept and asked Nakamura to join him. Also in tow were a reporter from the Jiji News Service, the same paper for which Nakamura had worked upon his return from abroad, a nephew of Toyama's named Matsushita, and a fellow powerbroker named Uchida Ryohei. Uchida was a dark but ubiquitous figure of the political landscape who headed an ultra-right organization called the Black Dragon Society—"Black Dragon" being the Chinese name for the Amur River that formed Manchuria's northern boundary, a boundary that Uchida's organization sought to claim for Japan.

² The animal trainer's name is recorded in Japanese katakana as Kon; this could be Cohen or Cone or Corn or anything else phonetically similar. Any leads as to his identity will be appreciated.

According to Tempu's account, the animal trainer, at first sight of Toyama, smiled broadly and declared, Ah! Just as I guessed—a man of character. Were I to put you in with my lions, you would be fine!

His eyes then met those of Saburo, standing slightly behind Toyama. This fellow also, he added.

Uchida, not to be outdone, was quick to ask, What about me? But the animal trainer dismissed him without hesitation. Not a chance. The animals would be at your throat in an instant!

Toyama's nephew also received a failing grade.

He can smell whether or not someone has walked the line between life and death, Toyama commented. I guess it comes from walking that line himself on a daily basis.

After belated introductions and light conversation, the man—whose actual performances were not to begin until three days later—proposed that they visit his lions, tigers, leopards, and elephants now housed backstage in the performance hall. I must first warn you, the trainer said before they entered by the backstage door. I have three Bengal tigers, a mother and her grown cubs, that are not yet broken in. They are likely to make a lot of noise when we approach. But you needn't worry; they are safely behind bars.

Sure enough, as they entered the dimly lit room backstage, they were greeted loudly with ferocious snarls from the mother tiger.

She is indeed a feisty one, Toyama commented. What about it, Nakamura? Do you want to go in?

Nakamura did not hesitate. Sure, he said. If you say so.

The two of them looked at the Italian trainer, and he also did not so much as bat an eye. Come this way he said.

Tempu would explain that his confidence in Toyama, by whom he had been raised as if he were Toyama's own son, was so complete that the thought of danger did not so much as cross his mind. On top of that, the man who knew these cats better than all of them was likewise urging him on; this foreigner could hardly expect to receive much sympathy from the Japanese courts should one of his guests end up eaten alive.

Nakamura was also not a complete stranger to wild cats. While meditating in the Himalayan foothills, he had been visited from time to time by a leopard. The cat had taken to him as an object of curiosity, and on one occasion, it had come close enough to allow Saburo to pat it on the face.

Wild animals, Tempu said, prey on fear and can sense it immediately. They also react instinctively to a threat. As I projected neither, the animals were left with no cause to do me harm.

The cage consisted of a double barrier; this way, the caretakers could feed them by bringing the food first through the outer barrier and then throwing it to them through the inner door without worry that the cats might escape. The construction also ensured that the cats could not reach passers-by with their paws. The trainer opened the door to the outer cage for him and handed him a key; Nakamura opened the inner door on his own and slipped inside.

The tigers looked him over with curiosity and then sidled up to him, the two younger ones curling up at his feet and the mother tiger standing calmly behind him.

At that moment, the flashbulb on the reporter's camera went off with a pop. The mother leapt forward at the cage bars with a ferocious growl, fangs bared.

Toyama laughed. Yes indeed! She has plenty of life in her, he remarked.

Nakamura, still smiling broadly, nodded in agreement. He stroked the mother tiger lightly on the head until she came away from the bars and took a seat on the floor. Then, when he had had enough of tigers, he quietly let himself out of the cage and returned to the party on the other side of the bars.

The reporter's photograph appeared in the Jiji News the following day. It showed Nakamura Saburo standing inside of a cage, dapperly dressed in haori and hakama, and surrounded by tigers. He was grinning broadly from ear to ear.

In 1955, a man named Kaneko would join the Osaka chapter of the Tempukai claiming that he had seen the photograph clipped, framed, and hanging on a wall in a friend's living room twenty-five years earlier. The friend could not tell him much about the picture, other than that he had received it from a cousin in Tokyo who worked for the Jiji News Service. The man in the photograph, the friend was able to tell him, was named Nakamura Tempu. Now, twenty-five years later, Kaneko had come across a small piece in the Mainichi Newspaper regarding the Tempukai. Neither Tempu nor the Tempukai engaged in any form of advertising or other promotion; a Mainichi reporter who also happened to be a Tempukai member had written and placed the article of his own volition.

To Kaneko, the name Tempu meant only one thing: The man in the tiger cage! He contacted the Mainichi Newspaper and learned that the Tempukai was meeting in Tennoji. Kaneko was by now the president of a real estate firm in Osaka, but he dropped all other obligations and immediately joined the Tempukai summer training session, then underway. To Tempu he said, when introduced, Twenty-five years ago I saw a picture of you standing in a cage with tigers hanging on a friend's wall. I have been looking for you ever since!

The rise of the industrialists as Japan's new elite and ruling class led to greater social inequities than had ever occurred during either feudal times or the reign of Meiji. In stark contrast to the gaiety and affluence of the metropolis, rural communities of northern and western Japan slid into ever more abject poverty. Starvation in these areas was rampant, and social unrest followed not far behind.

Nakamura had just arrived in Odawara, a coastal town south of Tokyo where he had been asked to speak at a convention of business leaders, to be handed a telegram from Toyama. Your help needed; return immediately, it said. Nakamura needed no more explanation. He hastily arranged to have someone else take over his speaking engagement and returned to Tokyo.

This was early March of 1918—less than one month since the tiger incident. Disembarking at Shinbashi, Saburo took a carriage directly to Toyama's Azabu residence. Toyama's instructions were typically sparse: There is trouble in Taira at Nezu's coal mine. Please go there to settle things down.

On his way out, Nakamura was handed an envelope by Toyama's wife, Mine, the matron who had served as Saburo's surrogate mother during his adolescent years in Fukuoka. In the envelope was a cash sum of fifteen hundred yen—a sizeable sum, given that twice that amount would build a very decent house in the city. Whatever the problem, Nakamura deduced, money was going to be part of the solution.

Taira, contained by the modern-day city of Iwaki, is in Fukushima—what by today's high-speed electric trains can be done in two hours was at that time an eight-hour journey behind a steam engine on the Joban line. Taira's Joban coalfields ranked third in size in Japan after coalfields in northern Kyushu and Hokkaido, but they were disproportionately important because of their proximity to Tokyo.

The man Nezu to whom Toyama had referred was Nezu Kaichiro, one of the most illustrious industrialists of the day; Nezu had made his initial capital in investments and then become a railway magnate and financier before branching out into a host of other enterprises in industries as diverse as electricity and beer. He was also a prominent political figure, having served four terms in Japan's parliamentary upper house; and in this capacity he could not help but be acquainted with Toyama Mitsuru.

The mine in question—one of many dotting the Joban coalfields—was known as the Iwaki Mine. As it turned out, it belonged not to Nezu but to Asano Soichiro, a fellow industrialist who controlled a major share of coal distribution nationwide, as well as both the manufacture and

distribution of cement. Nezu, on the other hand, had a significant portion of the capital for the mining venture at stake, and as the strike wore on, he had become more and more impatient.

This strike was in fact just one of over one hundred similar strikes to occur at mines throughout the country. If the war underway in Europe never reached Japanese shores, the effects of depressed foreign economies did, and when the pinch was felt in financial circles, it was inevitably passed down to the workers. On top of this, rice speculators acting on rumors of possible Japanese troop deployments to Siberia were jacking up the price of rice. Prices by the time of the strike had almost doubled; by late summer they would triple, sparking nationwide riots.

Nevertheless, the idea that the miners might have cause for their discontent does not seem to have entered either Asano's or Nezu's minds; their first and foremost concern was the protection of their investments. The miners, on the other hand, finally pushed over the edge by hunger and destitution, were prepared to go down fighting before returning to work for sub-subsistence wages. And so the standoff persisted, now into its second month.

The miners were about fifteen hundred strong. Armed with hunting rifles, pickaxes, and knives, they were ensconced behind a barricade at the mouth of the mine, rendering it inaccessible.

The first cry for help from the owners of the mine went out to an ordained Buddhist scholar and teacher of the Nichiren sect named Tanaka Chigaku. Tanaka was the founder of a politically motivated Buddhist organization called the Kokuchukai, or National Pillar Society, a progenitor of today's Sokagakukai. A skillful orator, he was also renowned for his powers of persuasion, and it was upon these powers that Asano set his hopes.

The miners, however, were an especially ungodly bunch, and talk of Amida and salvation carried little weight with them unless backed by hard cash. Tanaka's entourage was met at gunpoint and the strike leader categorically refused to see him.

Next to volunteer his services was General Oosako Naomichi. Oosako was a seasoned warrior. He was a veteran of the front lines in both the Sino-Japan and the Russo-Japan conflicts, and many of these striking miners had served under his command during these same conflicts. Oosako assumed that the respect he had been shown as a military officer would somehow carry over to the civilian domain and at least gain him entry into the miners' compound.

He was badly mistaken. The miners had no interest in generals, short of generals armed with cash, and Oosako, like Tanaka, was turned away at gunpoint.

Only in sensing Asano's desperation did Nezu finally turn to Toyama. Nezu had contributed from time to time to Toyama's various political causes, including the financing of Sun Yat-sen's

revolutionary activities. But he also knew Toyama well enough to understand that the man's political allegiances were not for sale: Toyama, as long-time champion of the cause of the common man, was more often than not at odds with the industrialist agenda. In this instance, however, it appeared to Nezu, only a champion of the common man could hope to get close to this band of unsavory miners.

By the time that Nakamura arrived at the scene of the strike, it was late afternoon and the sun had already disappeared behind the surrounding hills. Directions to the mine had not been entirely straightforward, but he had eventually found what were clearly cog railway tracks built to carry away coal, and these he followed through the forest for about an hour until coming out into a meadow. The spectacle before him made the situation instantaneously clear: In the middle of the meadow stood an open tent under which about thirty uniformed policemen lounged in folding chairs. A short distance from the tent, the meadow was cut by the Yumoto River, and spanning the river was a solidly constructed bridge, worn from years of coal-cart traffic. Then on the far side of the bridge, backed by low hills, could be seen a roughly hewn bulwark capped by a primitive flag—the miners' line of defense.

A policeman, catching sight of Nakamura from a far, called out to him. Who goes there?

Nakamura cut a strange figure, appearing alone out of nowhere but immaculately dressed in haori and hakama; the policeman clearly did not know what to make of him. Approaching the policeman, Nakamura responded.

My name is Nakamura. I have come from Tokyo to mediate in this dispute.

The policeman called his superior from the tent, who eyed Nakamura from head to toe.

You have come from Tokyo, you say. Who have you brought with you?

The previous missions headed by Tanaka and Oosako, as well as displaying regalia appropriate to their authority, had each been backed by a small army of support staff, some armed. Thus when Nakamura assured the squad leader that he, an unknown entity named Nakamura, was the current mission in its entirety, the squad leader quickly concluded that he had a crackpot on his hands.

I see, I see, he said. Now please turn around and go on home.

You misunderstand, Nakamura replied. I am here on behalf of Toyama Mitsuru.

This answer had an immediate effect. Toyama was well known in these parts; he had even once visited while campaigning for democratic rights. That was now almost forty years ago, but Toyama, traveling barefoot in a single kimono with his few belongings wrapped in a cloth and slung over his back, had stayed for several days, during which he won over the hearts and minds

of many of the local leaders. Since that time, a number of notable figures from the region had joined Toyama in some of his most difficult political causes.

The squad leader offered profuse apologies for his rudeness and invited Nakamura into the tent. But Nakamura's interests lay on the other side of the bridge. It was getting late and he needed to be on his way.

That, the policemen insisted, was madness. Those men will open fire on you if you so much as set foot on that bridge.

Maybe so, Nakamura said. But unless I cross the bridge I will not be able to talk to them.

Overhearing this conversation, policemen swarmed out of the tent like bees from a hive. The ultimate concern of these men was the prevention of bloodshed. And now more than ever, the squad leader was convinced that he had a madman on his hands.

Politely but firmly turning a deaf ear to police objections, Nakamura walked toward the bridge. Sure enough, as soon as he set foot on it, the first shot rang out.

Saburo did not break stride for so much as an instant. More shots ensued. This was hardly the first time that he had been under fire, and he could judge the proximity of the bullets to him as they passed; at the distance in question he should have been an easy target, so these shots, he reasoned, may have been aimed with the intention to maim but not to kill. Later, he would count a total of five bullet holes in his sleeves.

Tempu would explain his frame of mind at this time as follows: It never occurred to me to be afraid. Fear for one's own skin only occurs when one's sense of self is associated with one's body. Now I have a body and I have a mind, just like everyone else; the difference is that I know I am not that body or that mind.

What carried me over the bridge was my desire to help the people on the other side. I had only one purpose, and that was to help these miners. Clearly, they and their families were the victims in this dispute.

Halfway across, a figure appeared from behind the bulwark. Are you deaf, he yelled. Can't you hear the shots being fired? Those are meant for you.

Nakamura did not stop. I thought they might be meant for me, he yelled back. But whoever fired them is not very good with a rifle. As you can see, he missed and I am still standing. I have come to talk to your leader.

This response rankled his adversary; the miner did not anticipate such provocation while occupying a position of strength. He hurled a torrent of threats and insults, which Nakamura chose to ignore. Then, as Nakamura drew ever nearer, the miner, in final desperation drew a short-sword from inside of his jacket and flashed the blade in Nakamura's direction.

Do you want me to make tofu out of you? Nobody is allowed across this bridge.

Is that the way you treat visitors? To make tofu out of them?

That is right. And I would be delighted to serve you up in the usual way.

Nakamura was by this time standing within three feet of the miner and looking him squarely in the eye. You can serve me up any way that you like, he said. But first, let me talk to your leader.

Recognizing that he had met his match, the miner finally gave way. Nakamura was led behind the barrier to a shack, where he was introduced to a gray-haired man with piercing eyes and a square jaw—the strike leader. Nakamura made his remarks short and to the point.

Your men have been out of work for a month, he said. Both they and their families are going hungry. We need to do something with them.

How much money did you bring with you, the leader asked.

None, was the reply. But I do have a proposal. Nakamura pointed to the small mountain of coal piled outside of the mine. Your men can fetch a fair price for that in the village. Give them each a sack to carry as much as they can and let them keep the receipts.

The leader looked back at him incredulously. That is theft, he said. The owners will indict us for larceny.

Should it come to that, Nakamura replied, I shall assume full responsibility. I give you my word. But there is one condition. After selling the coal, your men then need to return to work.

When word of this arrangement was passed down the line, the camp broke out in excitement; the miners slapped each other on the back and began attacking the mountain of coal. Nakamura hastily retreated across the bridge to inform the police of what had transpired and to order them to allow the coal-bearing miners to pass.

Nezu, when word reached him of this outcome, was enraged: the mediator sent to protect his interests had in fact given away the store. Ten days later, Nakamura was served with a summons to the Taira regional court to answer to charges of misrepresentation of authority and misappropriation of private property. That news was enough to spark a second revolt by the miners.

All charges were dropped, however, after Toyama appeared on Nezu's doorstep. Toyama was bristling from head to toe. Didn't you come to me, he asked. Didn't you say that you would leave the matter in my hands if I could find a solution? In that case, what right have you to question Nakamura's authority?

Cowered by this scolding, Nezu returned to his rational senses. Nakamura was not only pardoned but offered a cash reward of ten thousand yen—this at a time when the typical miner's annual income was about three hundred yen.

I will accept the reward on two conditions, Nakamura responded. One is that you give it to me in one yen notes. And the second is that you do this in front of the miners.

Nezu had no choice but to consent to both of these demands, and several days later they met again at the mouth of the mine. Upon receiving the sizeable bundle of one yen notes, Nakamura handed it immediately to the strike leader and foreman. Distribute this to your men, he said.

The leader was taken aback. Keep at least part of it, he said. You more than deserve it for what you have done.

But Nakamura was adamant. This money belonged to the miners; they were the ones who were most deserving.

The effect of this action on Nezu was as sobering as it was heartwarming to the miners. In addition to his lasting contributions to Japan's industrial development, Nezu would leave behind, at his death in 1940, an impressive legacy of social philanthropy. His private residence was posthumously converted into an art museum that continues to the present day.

His encounter with the miners at Iwaki and his witnessing of their plight was the first of several events to cause Nakamura to question his ways. What right had he to wile away time and money in the company of geisha when so many of his countrymen were living day to day under the threat of starvation? Seeds of self-doubt had been sown.

The next impetus came from a most unexpected quarter. A full year had passed since the Iwaki Mine incident. Nakamura, still spending most nights with that particular evening's geisha of choice, was something of a stranger in his own home; but on one of the rare occasions that found him seated at the family dining table, his wife, Yoshi, made an unusual request.

You know those stories that you sometimes tell us about your experiences in India? Would you be willing to tell them to a few of my friends?

Yoshi, like Saburo, was a product of the bushi or samurai lineage; and if the age of the samurai was long over, the values of its tradition did not die easily. Among those values as they pertained to marriage was the notion of loyalty.

The marriage between Saburo and Yoshi, it is to be remembered, was hastily arranged by their respective parents prior to Saburo's dispatch on mission to Manchuria. Saburo had just enough time to leave Yoshi pregnant with their first child; both of them knew that the odds were against his ever returning. If his safe return was not blessing enough, the fact that he should have

then returned to the land of the living yet a second time, health restored, was nothing short of a miracle.

Saburo had provided financially for his family during both of his absences; and now that he was moving among the elites of society, they enjoyed relative affluence. He and Yoshi had produced a second daughter, Masako, in 1909.³ Yoshi was fortunate; she had stature within the community and a wide circle of friends. Whatever pain her husband's infidelities caused her, she did not show it; fidelity, after all, while certainly desirable, had never been part of the bargain by which they were joined.

At the same time, Yoshi also knew a side of her husband that could not easily be seen from the outside. She had been closest to him at his lowest ebb—the period during which he hid for months in his room, small and intimidated by the specter of death. And she had probably also had more confidence in his ability to beat the odds than had Saburo himself at the time.

The adage that “behind every man, there is a woman” was certainly true for Nakamura Tempu. Tempu himself unabashedly admitted this to be so. Yoshi attempted neither to push nor to restrain her husband; she simply waited patiently until the timing was right. Nor was she probably conscious of her timing; call that woman's intuition. But for Yoshi's subtle influence, the transformation of Nakamura Saburo, the playboy, into Nakamura Tempu, the inspirational teacher, would almost certainly never have occurred.

The prospect of devoting an afternoon to a group of women from the neighborhood was not especially appealing; but given his record of late, Saburo was also in no real position to refuse. It was a small favor to grant in order to keep him in his wife's good graces.

In casual conversation among her friends, Yoshi had occasionally repeated some of the stories that her husband had told her; and these friends had in fact asked if she could arrange for them to hear the stories told from the horse's mouth. But this request had allowed Yoshi the means to fulfill her primary agenda: A first cousin had recently arrived in Tokyo from his rural home town in North Kyushu and was struggling to make a living in this new, strange, and fast-paced urban center. His every setback, Yoshi could plainly see, was sending him deeper into self-defeat and despair. If only she could induce her husband to talk to him.

The added familial dimension, however, made this a far more difficult favor to ask than that of meeting with a group of friends. On the other hand, the gesture of inviting her cousin to join an already planned gathering at the Nakamura household needed no explanation to either her

³ Masako was still appearing regularly at Tempukai events when I joined in 2004. She died in 2006 at the age of 97.

husband or her cousin. Thus, when Yoshi's cousin joined the gathering on a Sunday afternoon several days later, he found he was the sole male among five women in the audience.

Something happened to Saburo that he could not himself explain. He had made no preparations in advance and had no clear idea of what he would say or what these women wanted to hear. But no sooner did he open his mouth to talk than the words came to him effortlessly, one after the other. The two hours that had been set aside for this gathering went by before anyone noticed; his small audience had been spellbound.

When the advancing hour could no longer be ignored, the group, almost as one, asked if they could hear the sequel on another occasion. Yoshi glanced apprehensively at her husband but was surprised to see him agree without so much as a moment of hesitation. As he had been speaking, memories of incidents not in his thoughts since they occurred came back to him in vivid detail; the story seemed to want to tell itself, and he was not inclined to stand in its way.

With this beginning, the informal gatherings at the Nakamura household became a regular event. Word circulated among the women of the neighborhood, and the numbers grew. Saburo never ran out of material, and his audience's fascination never waned. Also, his stories ceased to be just stories but became stories with a point: never succumb to circumstances. No matter what the situation, never give in to despair. Determination and strength of conviction is the key that opens all doors; if you act mindfully and with clarity of purpose, the path ahead will inevitably open.

The third and final impetus toward change was the return of symptoms related to his tubercular condition. TB, when it takes up residence within the human organism, is there for life—even today's medicine is unable to effect its eviction—and Saburo would carry tuberculosis within him until the end of his days. Through austerity and self-reflection in the foothills of the Himalayas he had succeeded in putting the disease into remission and was able to return to the world fully restored and capable of living a healthy life. But now the effects of a frivolous life-style began to catch up with him.

Spending, as he did, many of his nights in the various houses of entertainment that he frequented, Saburo had trouble sleeping. He would often awake in the early morning hours and pass away the remaining hours of darkness sipping tea or smoking his beloved Cuban cigars while a multitude of questions—What am I doing here? What am I doing with my life?—ran through his mind.

After the second of the gatherings at which he spoke to those gathered in his own home, Saburo was surprised by how well he felt. He had spoken continuously for over two hours but

was not the least exhausted—to the contrary, he was both energized and peacefully satisfied in a way that he had not been for years. The most lavish of soirees in the company of the most sought-after geisha did not come close in terms of the satisfaction that it provided. Furthermore, that evening, for the first time in many months, he slept soundly until morning, awaking rested and eager to face the day.

I have been thinking, he confessed to Yoshi several months later. You know the gatherings that you have been putting together? What if I were to make that my vocation?

Yoshi looked at him in disbelief. Are you serious?

Saburo nodded. Yes, he assured her.

If you are serious, then nothing would please me more. But only if you are absolutely sure. If you are less than absolutely sure, then it's probably not such a good idea.

This, Saburo had to agree, was prudent advice. But how could he be sure? All that he knew was that these simple gatherings provided him with a sense of fulfillment that was absent from the rest of his life. Would he not be better off failing in the pursuit of something that made him happy than continuing in the service, successful as that service was, of business enterprises established to benefit their owners?

But then, what of his responsibilities to his family? Such a decision would bring a cloud of uncertainty over all of their heads. Could he rightly subject them to the threat of severe privation just because he was experiencing a personal crisis over his own sense of self-worth? These were questions not easily answered.

Several days later, Saburo was sitting again beside Toyama. They had just finished a presentation sponsored by Tanaka Chigaku, the same Nichiren Buddhist priest and scholar who had unsuccessfully attempted to mediate in the Iwaki Mine dispute. Once again Saburo had been called upon by Toyama to speak on his behalf, and while at the podium, he had looked out over the sea of faces in the room. Despite the sincerity of his remarks, they seemed infected with cynicism and distrust. This, he thought to himself, is symptomatic of a greater social malaise, one that affects the nation. The spiritual fabric of our society is in jeopardy. Something must be done.

Toyama nodded after Nakamura had finished and returned to his seat. Not an easy audience today, he noted with a wry smile.

Sensei, Nakamura said. Just now while I was standing up there, I thought to myself, would I not be of better service to the nation by contributing to our spiritual culture? I am considering leaving business to teach. So many people lack clarity and direction in their lives, and I believe

that I may have something to offer to these people in the way of advice. What do you think of this idea? Do you think that I should pursue it?

Tanaka, seated to the other side of Toyama, overheard the exchange. Nakamura, he said. Better that you forget this idea and stick to what you are good at.

Saburo had touched a nerve. Tanaka clearly regarded the cultivation of Japan's spiritual tradition to be his own domain. Who did this upstart think he was?

You are still young, he continued. Take it from one who knows. First off all, spiritual work requires money.

That I have, Saburo responded.

However much money you have, it will not last long. But that is not all. It also requires a reputation. You may be well known in the business world, but your name carries no weight with the man on the street. Better that you bide your time until you have ripened a little more.

In between the two of them, Toyama sat quietly, stroking his long white beard. Nakamura addressed him again.

What do you say, Sensei?

Toyama stroked his beard one more time. It might work, he said at last. I say, give it a try.

When Nakamura returned to his wife with this news, she sat in silence for a full minute, all the time looking him squarely in the eye.

You are serious, she said at last. I can tell.

Saburo restated the potential risks. They would face ridicule and possible financial ruin. They could end up living on the street. All this Yoshi understood, but she was unmoved: this, in fact, was the life she had signed up for when they had been married. In her own way, she understood that a life worth living inevitably involved risk, and living in the shadow of a man who was attempting to make a difference in the world was infinitely more appealing than the continuation of her current role as wife to a successful playboy.

In order for his plan to work, Nakamura decided, he needed to put everything on the line. He could not serve two masters. Accordingly, the following morning he set to work to tie up the ends of all his many business associations. One by one, he informed each of the companies with which he was associated of his decision and then nominated his own successor. He also systematically disposed of all of his shareholdings in these corporations.

Needless to say, in all of this he encountered considerable resistance. First on everyone's mind was the question, why?

Because that is what I have decided, Nakamura responded. To elaborate would only be to invite argument and a litany of all the sound and rational reasons as to why his decision was a mistake. Nakamura had given himself just ten days to sever these relationships, and in all of his years in business, these ten days were the hardest that he ever worked. But in the end, he met his own, self-imposed deadline.

The resistance he encountered from family and friends was equally strong. A first cousin with whom Saburo had always been close strode into the house one day unannounced and without so much as a word of greeting to Yoshi when he passed her in the hall.

What is this I hear about you quitting the bank, he asked.

Word travels fast, Saburo responded.

The tirade that followed was fairly predictable: Are you out of your mind? What of your wife and children? What of your mother? There is more at stake here than your simple-minded fancy; what you are doing is totally irresponsible.

Furthermore, there is talk of you pursuing public speaking.

Yes, that is also true, Nakamura acknowledged.

In that case, I must insist that you come to your senses and give up on the idea completely.

The cousin was a licensed physician working in the area of public health, and his specialty was the treatment and containment of tuberculosis. He knew how close to death Nakamura had come and was as impressed as anyone that he should have recovered to the extent that he could carry on a full and productive life. But the tuberculosis was not gone; it was still there. Your body, he said, is like a ceramic rice bowl with a crack in it. Under stress, it will break.

This was in keeping with the understanding of medical science of the day. Nakamura may have been carrying on as though he was completely healthy, but given the opportunity his disease could reassert itself at any time. And of all the activities to be avoided, public speaking ranked highest on the list.

This was long before the day of microphones, and it was up to the speaker to make himself heard at the back of the room. And that meant placing an extraordinary demand on the speaker's lungs—the very lungs, in Saburo's case, that housed his disease. You are signing your own death sentence, the cousin insisted.

Saburo listened patiently and politely, but would not be persuaded. The argument ended only when the cousin, exasperated and exhausted, took his leave.

June 6th, 1919. Nakamura Tempu stepped out of his front door and embarked for the first time upon a career that would ultimately affect the lives of tens, even hundreds of thousands of people. He was forty-three years old.

This moment more than any other marks his personal transformation. The transformation of Nakamura Tempu was not his awakening in the Himalayas: Yes, that awakening had been a profound personal realization. It had brought him in touch with his essential being, his infinite self, and in so doing allowed him to regain his health. And while no small achievement, the stakes of the game revolved around the life or death of a single individual. What had now occurred was much larger than that; the individual who had successfully cured himself was, for the first time, taking full responsibility for his humanity.

Nakamura's life had always been about testing his own limits. This time, however, the limits he sought to test ran up against the edge of human knowledge and understanding. What did it mean to be alive? What control did we as humans exercise over our health, fortune, and happiness? And most of all, what could one human being, armed with no more than the box lunch consisting of two carefully wrapped rice balls that his wife handed to him at the door, do to advance the cause of human peace, happiness, and wellbeing?

Yoshi watched not without apprehension as he left. He had said very little to her about just where he was going and what he planned to do.

Nakamura himself had less than a well-defined plan. From Hongo he walked toward Ueno, coming to the shore of the pond and its floating carpet of lotus leaves. He wandered along the shore for a way and then ascended the stone stairs that lead into Ueno Park. The stairs brought him out in front of the Seiyoken, one of the first restaurants in Japan to specialize in French and western cuisine.

The Seiyoken, if fundamentally remodeled and greatly enlarged, continues to operate at the same location to this day. Founded in 1876 with financial backing from a couple of the Meiji Reformation's most prominent political figures, Sanjo Sanetomi and Iwakura Tomomi, the restaurant was by this time already an institution. Nakamura had dined there numerous times during his career as an industrial banker. But that was hardly his intention today.

On the park grounds directly facing the restaurant, Nakamura spotted a stone pedestal standing a couple of feet off of the ground. It had been placed there to support a stone lantern, but the lantern was missing—perhaps it had been cracked by the weather and had been removed to make way for a replacement not yet arrived.

This will work, he thought to himself. He stepped up onto the stone pedestal. From the tied *furoshiki*, or cloth satchel, that also contained his lunch, he drew a hand bell, the only other accessory he had carried with him. This he now rang as loud as it would ring; the bell's reverberations dissipated quickly in the open air, but they were enough to catch the attention of one or two passers-by.

Gather here, Nakamura called out. Listen to my story. Don't worry; I won't ask for your money and have nothing to sell.

Ueno is still one of the largest parks in metropolitan Tokyo, and as such, it collects a wide variety of human traffic—including visitors to any of the several museums housed within the park grounds, suited salesmen hiding out in dereliction of their rounds, homeless vagabonds, and foreigners of every nationality hawking various wares when park authorities are not looking. The sounds of the surrounding city permeate the park's innermost recesses, rendering incomplete the respite from the oppressively busy pace of city life that most of these visitors come to the park to seek.

The scene in 1919 would have been both similar and different. Automobile traffic was still almost non-existent, so the park would have been much quieter; the city and city life operated at a more leisurely and humane pace than is the case today. Nevertheless, the park stood then as it does now as a pocket of serenity within the hub of urban life, and its foot-traffic included a fairly accurate cross-section of the town's citizenry, including the elite and well-to-do as well as the common, working classes, and including matrons and working women as well as men.

Visit the park on a Sunday or holiday today and one cannot fail to encounter street performers of every description—jugglers, mimes, acrobats, magicians, and musicians. This however was not the case in 1919, and to come upon someone ringing a bell would have been rare indeed. To most, Nakamura, neatly dressed in his cleanly pressed haori and hakama and standing atop this stone podium, bell in hand, would have come across as odd—too odd to contend with. These people would have averted their eyes, turned a deaf ear, and hastily continued on their way.

But for some, curiosity would have outweighed suspicion. These people would have stopped, looked, listened, and then cautiously approached.

Once he had in this manner assembled an audience of six or seven, Nakamura began. Listen up, he said. The only guarantee in life is that each of us will eventually die—could be tomorrow, could be ten, twenty, or thirty years from now, but sooner or later that day will come. So isn't it a good idea to live life to its fullest and make every minute count?

Political rallies excepted, this sort of public audition was without precedent. Christian evangelism was confined within church domains or other private gatherings, and even the followers of Nichiren, the most evangelical of all the different brands of Buddhism, were not given to proselytizing in this manner in public places. The closest parallel to Nakamura's performance was that of the street-side vendors in places like Asakusa—men whose livelihoods revolved around drawing attention to themselves and their wares from among the passing crowd. Knowing the right hooks and how to hold their audience's interest were essential to their trade, and their deliveries were highly sophisticated, as is so brilliantly portrayed by Tora-san in the *Otoko wa Tsurai yo* film series.

Tempu, as witnessed from time to time by participants at the Tempukai Summer Retreats, was a master of the traditional art of story-telling known as *rakugo*; when and where he had received his instruction and taken time to practice this art is uncertain, but it was probably a product of his frequent visits to the teahouses of Shinbashi and Kagurazaka and therefore a competency already at his disposal when he mounted the stone pedestal in Ueno for the first time. Rakugo is a form of humorous monologue, typically thirty to forty-five minutes in duration. The performer sits alone on a single cushion in *seiza* facing the audience, his only props a folding fan and a hand towel. The art revolves around verbal delivery, and even gestures are minimal; the *rakugo-ka* pulls the audience into his story through oral expression alone and holds their interest right up until the final punch line, called the *ochi*.

But a *rakugo* audience comes to the performance venue expecting to be entertained. His audience in the park was wary and skeptical, and Tempu knew that he had all of three minutes at the most to both catch their interest and gain their trust. He slipped easily and quickly into the story of how he had survived a war, only to contract tuberculosis; how he had then circled the globe in search of a cure; and how at the foot of the Himalayas he had learned something about the fundamental nature of life and had returned to Japan with his health restored.

Inevitably, he lost most of his audience along the way. One by one, they returned to their business of the day. But a couple of people remained until the end. Not a bad beginning, Tempu thought to himself. That is all for today, he announced. If you want to hear more, come back tomorrow at the same time.

In this way, the morning vanished before he had a sense of the time, and noon was announced by a distant factory siren. Tempu sat down on the edge of the stone and removed the lunchbox from his satchel. The rice balls and slices of pickled radish consumed, he descended the other side of the park in the direction of Ueno Station. There, upon reaching street level, he was greeted by the

bell of an approaching trolley with a sign above the window that said Shibazonobashi. Good idea, he thought. With no further deliberation, he hopped aboard.

The trolley ambled down the middle of the city streets making frequent stops—from Ueno to Kanda, then Otemachi to Hibiya and on to Onarimon and Shiba Park. At Shiba Park it passed in front of Zojoji, the main temple of Jodo Buddhism, before arriving at Shibazonobashi and the park's southern entrance. What today is a fifteen-minute journey by subway, including changes, had taken the streetcar close to an hour, so that when Tempu alighted, the time was already mid-afternoon.

Entering the park, he wandered back in the direction of Zojoji, until he came upon a copper statue of statesman and Waseda University founder Okuma Shigenobu. Erected upon the occasion of the Emperor Taisho's ascent to the throne just eight years earlier, while Okuma was serving as Prime Minister, the statue was one of the park's newer landmarks. It was also destined to become one of the more short-lived ones, as it was carted away in 1944 in answer to a wartime metal drive.

The statue, however, was of little interest; what caught Tempu's eye was its broad stone base providing him with a platform slightly higher but similar in area to the one he had found in Ueno. On top of that, the statue was situated on a relatively heavily trafficked cross path that connected Azabu on the west with the park's main gate in front of Zojoji to the east. This will do quite well, he thought to himself.

From atop the stone pedestal he once again drew his bell from the satchel and began to repeat his performance of the same morning.

Thus began a new routine. Each morning he would return to the same spot in Ueno Park and continue his delivery to whatever small audience he could muster. After lunch, he would ride the streetcar to Shiba Park where once again, in the shadow of Okuma Shigenobu, he would recruit a new audience and repeat his talk from the morning.

On the fourth morning, Yoshi asked with hesitation whether or not he would be going out again. The colloquial description of someone who rapidly falls down on his resolutions is *mikka bozu*, 'a monk for three days'. Tempu laughed. He had no real idea how long he would continue or where this exercise was headed, but he was not, he assured her, giving up after only three days.

He was having too much fun. We think of people speaking out in public places, if not political activists or salesmen, as fanatics or religious proselytizers, and for that reason, this description of Tempu's conduct might give the impression that he was a zealot—that he was driven by some sense of messianic vision to change the world. Such was not the case. A more

fitting description would be that of a middle-aged schoolboy out on a lark. He enjoyed telling his story. It was after all *his* story, and it was sufficiently entertaining to require no embellishment.

Tempu had yet to formalize his philosophical arguments and he was limited anyway as to how far he could take his itinerant and capricious audiences in a philosophical direction. But perhaps he could ever so slightly alter their thinking with regard to the possibilities that life afforded them. Perhaps he could kindle in them a desire to question their own beliefs. Perhaps he could insert a glimmer of hope into the deep-seated resignation with which they approached life's tribulations.

His reward came in seeing the numbers at these gatherings increase day by day—this in direct proportion to his own growth of confidence and delivery skills. Particularly gratifying was the sight of familiar faces; he was developing a small but sincere group of return listeners.

One of these was a young man, always immaculately dressed in suit and tie. On the first occasion he had been passing in a jinrikisha along the cross-path in front of the statue of Okuma when the sound of Nakamura's voice caused him to ask his driver to stop. Several days later he returned, again by jinrikisha, but this time he descended from the carriage and had his driver wait while he moved closer to the podium. Tempu noticed him returning on foot several times during the next several weeks.

One day, as Tempu concluded his talk and descended from under Okuma's towering likeness, the man approached him. I have enjoyed listening to you speak now a number of times, he said. By way of self-introduction, he handed Tempu a business card, on which was printed the name Mishima Miyoshi and the title President, Chiyoda Paper Corporation.

My friends and I have an association that we call the Sakura Club. I was wondering if you would be willing to speak at one of our gatherings?

On the appointed day, Tempu left home by jinrikisha. The journey took him along the moat surrounding the Imperial Palace and into Marunouchi to a brick building bearing the placard, Japan Industrial Club; this association, of which the Sakura Club operated as a subset, had been founded two years earlier for the express purpose of advancing the nation's industrial agenda and was made up of some of industry's most powerful leaders, as well as some of its most powerful political advocates. The headquarters building, today overshadowed by edifices of glass and steel but still standing just to the side of the old Tokyo Station building, was then so new that its formal opening had not yet taken place.

Inside, Tempu was ushered into a second-story sitting room occupied by some twenty men, most of them in business attire. Seated on the cushioned sofas and chairs that skirted the room, all

jumped to their feet when Tempu entered. From among them, an elder man dressed, as was Tempu, in traditional haori and hakama stepped forward and introduced himself as Mukai Itsuki; Tempu recognized him immediately for his wispy, sloping mustache as another visitor to his talks in Shiba Park. Mukai, he now understood, was the decision maker behind the invitation, with the younger Mishima acting as his emissary. A former public appellate court prosecutor, Mukai was at this time serving as a consul to the imperial throne.

Mukai and Mishima were men of uncommon nerve. Given the stations they occupied, the personal risk they shouldered in bringing Tempu—an unknown entity they had encountered delivering an address in a park while most of the world passed him by as a lunatic—to this venue was considerable. They would continue to support Nakamura and to wield their influence in bringing his teachings to wider public attention during the months and years to come.

One by one the introductions continued, until each of the men in the room had come forward. Tempu was impressed by the professional diversity represented; as well as business entrepreneurs like Mishima, he was also meeting members of parliament and powerful officials from governmental institutions.

Formalities out of the way, Nakamura was invited to a small podium at the front of the room. His audience, he was surprised and delighted to find, warmed quickly to his delivery: for the first time, he was speaking formally before an audience who had requested his presence and to whom he had been introduced, allowing him to enter more deeply into the heart of what he wanted to say. When the allotted two hours was up, neither was he done talking nor his audience done listening, so he continued for an extra hour. And when he concluded, not only was the applause loud and his audience's approval vociferous, but also each of the members again came forward to personally express their appreciation and to implore him to return.

He was also presented with a generous honorarium, which he accepted only at the unyielding insistence of his hosts and after making it understood that he would not accept any such payment in the future—a travel and meal allowance, yes, but not an honorarium. To the end of his days, Tempu never again accepted anything more than an expense allowance for speaking engagements. The privilege associated with such opportunities to share what he had to say with others was remuneration enough; this privilege was not, he insisted, to be confused with livelihood and personal gain.

And such opportunities now became frequent occurrences. A series of lectures at the Japan Industrial Club followed the first one, each drawing a larger audience than the last. More importantly, out of these audiences, drawn from among the nation's industrial and political elite,

came requests and invitations to address other professional organizations and associations in cities nationwide.

This social network quickly brought him to the attention of the top echelons of Japanese society. The following year, Tempu was invited to meet with Prime Minister Hara Takeshi. Hara and Nakamura were acquainted from earlier in Hara's political career and held each other in amiable regard, despite a divergence in their political views. Now however, upon visiting the prime minister at his residence, Tempu neither talked politics nor wasted time in getting to what was on his mind: Just because you are the prime minister does not excuse you from the need to know how to live as a human being, he began. Out of consideration for the prime minister's schedule, he kept his remarks brief; but even in the short time allotted he was able to deliver a synopsis of his mind-body unification discipline. Delighted, Hara is said to have said, you don't know how important to me this has been; most people don't tell me what I need to hear.

Tempu would comment in later years that truly great men are great because they know how to receive criticism. Where the ordinary man reacts to his critics out of anger and wards off their arrows by shielding his heart, the great man welcomes criticism as a means to self-improvement and asks how he might use it to become more effective in fulfilling his mission.⁴

⁴ Hara was assassinated the following year in front of Tokyo Station by a knife-wielding assailant whose motives have never been clearly established. One of Hara's most ardent and vociferous critics, however, had been Toyama Mitsuru, and an editorial in the popular press is said to have commented that the only two people in all of Japan capable of murder with impunity were the emperor and Toyama Mitsuru. Speculation as regards Toyama's involvement continues in some quarters even today.

Whether or not Toyama commanded the loyalty necessary to muster such martyrdom is a question quite beside the point; assassination as a means to political ends was categorically out of character.

The major point of contention between Toyama and Hara had been the planned tour by the crown prince, soon to become the Showa emperor, Hirohito, of Europe; the tour, which would take the prince to England, France, Belgium, Holland, and Italy, including the Vatican, had been deemed by the elders advising the monarchy, known as the *Genro*, as well as by Hara, as an essential part of the young prince's education and an opportunity for him to observe other constitutional monarchies in action. Toyama, along with Uchida Ryohei and several prominent members of the Diet, voiced his objections, believing that the visit constituted an open display of weakness on the part of Japan and that it would be viewed by the world as an act of homage to the western powers.

On this matter, Tempu disagreed with his mentor and told him as much: To see that the future leader of Japan be exposed to other monarchs and other countries was a good thing and would almost certainly benefit Japan in its international relations down the road. These remarks were overheard by some of

Several months after his first Japan Industrial Club lecture, in the fall of 1919, Tempu, with financial and legal help from Mukai and Mishima, established the first precursor to the current Tempukai, a foundation for the purpose of disseminating the principles of mind-body unification, with an office not far from Marunouchi in Uchisaiwaicho. He called this organization the National Society for the Improvement and Unification of Mind and Body, but soon afterwards changed the name to the Society for the Unification of Philosophy and Medicine. The society was supported by its membership, which grew rapidly, and made it possible for Tempu to draw a salary adequate to the needs of his family.

Nakamura Tempu's Sakura Club lecture series continued into the following year and produced a core group of supporters and benefactors who in turn brought Tempu to the attention of a wider circle of influence. Many of these men were from provincial cities, and soon Nakamura was being invited to speak at venues in northeastern, western, and southern Japan. Tempu's venture into the field of spiritual education was no longer an experiment but a movement, and his activities entered their first golden age.

To be continued.

Toyama's younger and more zealous protégés, and for a short while Tempu was *persona non grata* at Genyosha quarters in Tokyo.

The prince's tour went ahead as planned and was lauded both at home and abroad. Hirohito's youth and enthusiasm made a strong impression on the Western press and he was favorably received by England's George V, Belgium's Albert I, the Netherlands' Wilhelma, Italy's Victor Emmanuel III, and the Vatican's Benedict XV. Copious press coverage at home was also overwhelmingly favorable, giving the public the first positive news of its monarchy in years.

Shortly after the prince's return, Tempu was called by Toyama to dine at an exclusive establishment in Akasaka. The old man looked Tempu solemnly in the eye and then lit up in his characteristically impish grin. You were right, he said. I was wrong.