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The Culture of Japan as Seen through Its Leisure

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Outline of the participants and the papers presented

The presentations were not given in any planned order, as we felt that for this first workshop we wanted to register the different personal reactions and various narratives linked to the main topic without putting them into pre-conceived slots. On the contrary, by juxtaposing experiences, observations and personal involvements of quite different type and origin we aimed at receiving the strongest possible impulses for further creative approaches to our field of interest.

Dolores MARTINEZ (London, Britain)
drew upon the novel *Red Harvest* (by Dashiel Hammett) and the films *A Fistful of Dollars* (by Sergio Leone), *Last Man Standing* (by Walter Hill) and *Yōjinbō* (by Kurosawa Akira) in order to show up how underlying narrative strategies travel while the narratives themselves may be remade and always form a font for permutations. It is in this manner – through the borrowing of grammar and narrative technique - that when a new level of meaning enters the story it appears to remain embedded in the tale.

Veronika STEIN (Erlangen/Bonn, Germany)
focused on narratives in the host country Germany, and illustrated how complex the interaction between personal and collective narratives needed to be for refugees from German speaking communities in Eastern Europe as they strove to come to terms with equally German speaking but totally strange surroundings in the West.

Christoph MORGENTHALER (Bern, Switzerland)
introduced questions related to narrating and narratives in the process of mourning, and demonstrated how mourning can be understood as a process of reconstructing narratives in the narrating community of the mourners. He related the narrative of a deceased person on the one hand to the many different kinds of narratives those who mourned that person were trying to establish on the other, showing up the processes by which identities of those who are no longer with us are recreated by the living.

Peter Ackermann

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Respite from Everyday Life

Kôtô-ku (Tokyo) in Recollections

Thoughts Concerning the Concept "Leisure"

When discussing a culture we tend to use fairly abstract terms as frames of reference. The classical categories of the academic world have constituted such frames—for instance, religion, literature, art, music, or history. I have often asked myself whether the use of such categories does not hinder the understanding of a culture that has taken shape over centuries of orientation toward frames of reference quite different from our own.

It appears to me that discussions concerning past, present, and desirable forms of society—topics that can in a wide sense be termed political—have also made extensive use of abstract categories formed in the West. Maybe the best known such category applied to Japan is democracy/democratic. Other examples are rationality, equality, efficiency, quality of life, and so on.

It is of course perfectly legitimate for Japanese to pick up such terms, to view their society against a background of Western categories, and, if necessary, restructure their society to conform to these. However, we should not forget how absurd discussions have been that surround, for instance, a term like *rationality*. Japan, measuring itself by means of the Western concept of "rationality"—and also always being measured by this concept—conceived

the notion that the West was somehow more rational than Japan. This resulted in silly theories, for example, maintaining that the Japanese language was not rational and therefore could not be learned or understood in a rational way, that is, by anyone not Japanese. Obviously the Japanese language is not irrational, but it has developed within a frame of reference different from the great standard languages of the West, wherein, at some point in history, "rationality" was coupled to the ideal of language as a tool for universal communication.[1]

Now, what about the abstract concept of leisure? In the Oxford dictionary "leisure" is defined as "time at one's own disposal." The Japanese word *yoka* denotes "time at one's own disposal." However, whereas probably few speakers of English would stop to puzzle over the meaning of leisure, I have encountered quite a few Japanese persons who consider *yoka* a very strange word. For some, particularly the first element of *yoka—yo* or *amaru* (to be left over, to be superabundant)—had an extremely negative connotation. Does this imply that the Japanese know no leisure, that they have never learned to free themselves from being enslaved to their work?

The impression that the Japanese have not known leisure is reinforced by the recent adoption into the Japanese language of the foreign term *rejâ* (leisure). Thumbing through a JR (Japan Railways) timetable of 1994 I found this word *rejâ* systematically juxtaposed to the word *bijinesu*. For instance: *Shin toshin Shinjuku. Bijinesu, rejâ no kyoten ni* (Shinjuku, the new City Centre. A base for business and for leisure), or *Bijinesu, rejâ ni San Hoteru Cheenu* (The Sun Hotel Chain, for business and for leisure).

Rejâ is seen here not in a general sense as "leisure," but as something equivalent to work, equivalent in the sense of being a relatively large span of time to be filled with something that can be justified, something that makes "sense." *Rejâ* in other words is not just something that the Japanese did not know before because they "worked like slaves," it is a specific concept related to new forms of organization of time. The *Shin kurashi no jiten* (1983:377) accordingly defines *rejâ*—and also *yoka*—explicitly in relation to *shûkyû futsuka-sei ya kaki renzoku kyûka-sei* (the five-day working week and the institutionalization of consecutive free days in summer). If the discussion of leisure forms part of a discussion of new forms of organization of time, then the absence of something called "leisure"

does not necessarily mean that one has absolutely no time to dispose of in a leisurely way.

What forms, then, did "having time" actually assume, and what conceptual categories existed for such "having time"? Such a question may be easy to pose. It cannot, however, be dealt with without some serious considerations as to what kind of material we are basing our argument on, and what specific problems this material presents. Let me therefore insert at this point a few necessary reflections on this topic.

Thoughts Concerning the Use of Japanese Texts Presenting Recollections

To find out what "having time" actually meant for people who did not know leisure, I started to look for published recollections, hoping to find a few indications as to what values were attached to time spans not filled with work, and what terms were used to speak about these.

The search for published recollections proved to be more difficult than I had imagined. First, much of the material consisted of strings of such brief utterances that for me standing outside the cultural context it was hardly possible to grasp their meaning, let alone the background of the experiences recounted.

Second, without exception the texts rendered language as it was actually spoken. Spoken language, however, in contrast to written language, is characterized both by its relationship to an immediate context as well as to the usually quite tiresome process of producing fragments of thought in an often still disorganized form. Thus mere rendering of spoken language in print hardly communicates with people like myself far from the site of the utterance and unable to gather information through direct observation or back-channelling.

A related problem is that all material I found is published giving the exact pronunciation of the speaker. For instance: *horede* (= *sore de*), *so-ntone* (= *sore de ne / sô suru to ne*), *nêsanchiniiru* (= *nêsan no uchi ni iru*), *gochisônnannasaittekoto* (= *go-chisô ni nari-nasai to iu koto*) etc.

This way of rendering the spoken word in a written form that tries to be an exact copy of the phonetic level of speech makes it

practically impossible to deal with material originating among people with whose regional dialect one is not acquainted—that is, with the majority of recollections available in print.

To my mind questions related to the language we use and the language we try to interpret are often brushed aside in Japanese Studies in an over-ambitious effort to produce quick information and, perhaps, to conceal the fact that we are battling with formidable difficulties on the communicative level.

The two specific problems I have tried to increase awareness of in the foregoing reflections are, in order to sum up: (a) the fact that the terms we use to define our area of interest have crystallized out of a view of reality that primarily we in the West, or we members of the academic world, possess, and that these terms therefore can easily cast a grid over the object of our interest, which is not the grid that has generated its actual forms; and (b) the fact that the aim of many Japanese publications is explicitly *hitori hitori no katariguchi o dekiru dake ikasu* (as far as possible to bring back to life the words and sounds people have actually used) (KFB 1987:iii). What readership does such material, that is not universally intelligible, appeal to, in what way does this readership approach it, and what is the most adequate way for us to deal with it?

The Concepts of "Asobi" and "Tanoshimi"

During a recent stay in Japan a six-volume publication by the Tôkyô-to Kôtô-ku Sômu-bu Kôhô-ka (Publicity Bureau of the Administration of the Kôtô District in Tokyo) caught my eye. Its title was *Korô ga kataru* (Old residents speak of the past). The volumes, though observing the principle "as far as possible to bring back to life the words and sounds people have actually used," were fortunately not entirely unintelligible to me and were found to contain interviews made in 1984/1985 with 260 persons who lived in Kôtô-ku between the 1890s and 1923.

I was interested in reading these interviews and finding out with what vocabulary reference is made to "having time" and "enjoying respite from everyday life," and how such situations are valued as an organic element of life. The interviews contain no modern expressions like *rejâ* or *yoka*. Even the common word *hima* (time to

spare) is rarely used. Though nobody portrays him- or herself as a workaholic, we do see that life was busy and duty very demanding. Against this background, however, it is noteworthy what importance is attached to recollections of *asobi* (play, pleasure, fun) and of *tanoshimi* (delight, happiness, pleasure).

Apart from the distinct field of children's play and children's games, *asobi* and *tanoshimi* are a complementary part of the work of someone else, of someone who provides for the *tanoshimi* and can in a sense be called an entertainer. Moreover, *asobi* and *tanoshimi* lack any reference to a person's own structuring of free time, or to contemplation, rest, or what we like to call "regeneration." Accordingly we find no mention of anything like studying, reading, or of something we might label a "hobby."

How far Kôtô-ku was representative for ways of life widely found in Japan cannot concern us here. At all events, we must keep in mind that Kôtô-ku was a district of Tokyo characterized by *shokunin* (craftsmen) and *shônin* (merchants). The largest proportion of accounts stem from persons who earned their living in the timber business, in fishery, in the shipping business, with *nori* production, with the production of casting nets (*toami*), with cloth dyeing, as operators of filling stations, wholesale merchants for toys, rice dealers, restaurant owners, raftsmen (*kawanami*), carpenters, blacksmiths, and construction workers (*tobi-shoku*).

Occasionally someone in a different type of profession will stand out sharply, for instance *jûshoku* and *gûji* (respectively, chief priest in a temple and chief priest in a shrine), or office worker—I will return to these groups of "outsiders" below. Moreover, the lifestyles of members of farming communities on the far side of Kôtô-ku—closer to the Arakawa than to the Sumidagawa—have characteristics of their own (the children seem to have spent a relatively large amount of time playing in and with nature [KFB 1987:V, 134 ff.], and the people of this area are generally referred to as *jimi* [plain, sober] [KFB 1987:VI, 187]).

Not many interviews make explicit mention of actual working time. Occasionally we encounter the following kinds of remarks: "People in the manufacturing industry have a day off on the first and third Sunday, but many do not take free" (KFB 1987:VI, 164). "Craftsmen have a day off on the 1st and 15th of the month" (KFB 1987:VI, 164). "An apprentice (*hôkô shite iru toki*) is free on the 1st

and 15th of the month" (KFB 1987:VI, 185). "An apprentice (*kozô-san*) can almost never take off, perhaps only about four days a year" (KFB 1987:II, 52–53).

Let us now take a closer look at the kinds of *asobi* and *tanoshimi* that are more vividly recalled, and the establishments that lived by providing for these.

Establishments for "Asobi" and "Tanoshimi"

Prominent were theaters of all kinds. When referring to these theaters the general term *shibai* is usually used, but we also find more specific designations, above all *yose* (variety theaters). Sometimes *yose* is further differentiated into *iromono no yose* and *kôdan no yose* (KFB 1987:VI, 165). *Iromono no yose* appear to have been noted for *manzai* (a performing art in which a comic dialogue is carried on by two "comedians"),[2] musical productions, acrobatics, and presentations by magicians. On the other hand, *kôdan no yose*—or simply *kôdan*—were characterized by the presentations of a storyteller. Sitting before a small table, which he beat with a folded fan to mark the rhythm of his words, the *kôdan* storyteller typically recited *gunki* (old war chronicles), *adauchi* (tales of vendettas), *buyû-den* (stories of bravery and heroism), or *kyôkaku-den* (stories of glorified gamblers and gangsters).

The second most frequently mentioned type of establishment is the *eiga-kan* (movie theater). Some interviews show that European and American films were enjoyed (KFB 1987:VI, 165 ff.), but Japanese *jidaigeki* plays portraying the feudal age—with former *kabuki* actors in the key roles (KFB 1987:VI, 163, 186 et al.)—seem to have been cherished most. Moreover, as the films were silent, not only the film itself but also the *benshi* (the speaker) was a central element of attraction (KFB 1987:VI, 163 ff., 186).

A fair number of references are made to *kabuki*-style plays (KFB 1987:VI, 167 ff.) and also to *opera* (presentations of acting and singing) (KFB 1987:VI, 167), to all sorts of performances involving sword fighting, and to *naniwabushi* or *rôkyoku*, emotionally stirring tales narrated to the accompaniment of the three-stringed lute *shamisen* (KFB 1987:VI, 170, 188 et al.).

Some of the establishments frequented by the inhabitants of Kôtô-ku were in their own district, but it appears that whenever possible they went to Asakusa to enjoy the larger variety of theaters there (KFB 1987:VI, 165, 171, 189). As a rule, going to the theater was just one part of an outing, eating and drinking before returning home being of at least equal importance.

Though the majority of the interviewees speak of recitational, musical, and other stage productions from the perspective of passive enjoyment, a few persons also mention amateur theaters and having fun being an amateur actor or narrator oneself (KFB 1987:VI, 178, 182). Concerning amateur productions, there are two interesting references to raftsmen. One took lessons in the extremely high-pitched *kiyomoto* style singing of sentimental[3] texts (KFB 1987:VI, 177). The other raftsman (KFB 1987:VI, 171, 173), known for his good voice, went to learn *shamisen* playing and performed *shinnai nagashi* in the pleasure district of Susaki to earn a few extra pennies (*shinnai nagashi* is a tradition of walking slowly through the streets playing a *shamisen* and singing emotionally stirring accounts).[4]

Even if the interviews show that amateur performances of various kinds did exist, a very clear border was drawn in the world of *asobi* between amateur activity and professionalism. To professionally create the framework for other people's *asobi* was classed *gei o uru* (selling an accomplishment), and a teacher of the arts of *gyôgi* (etiquette, deportment), singing, instrumental play, or dancing was *yakamashii* (severe, rigid, fault finding) when training a professional-to-be (KFB 1987:VI, 197).

Very strict training was a key prerequisite for those persons who were to provide for *asobi* and *tanoshimi* in the "world of blossoms and willows" (*karyûkai*). The *karyûkai* was a specific type of *asobi* insofar as its establishments were a world in themselves, an area into which one consciously had to enter (KFB 1987:VI, 209 et al.). We are not given a complete oversight of the various *karyûkai* in Kôtô-ku, but the most frequently mentioned ones were in the districts of Susaki, Tatsumi, and Kamedo.[5] Moreover, former *geisha* in Kôtô-ku mention having worked in other parts of Tokyo, notably Akasaka and Shinbashi, places that thrived due to patronage of the nearby government buildings (KFB 1987:VI, 192).

The *karyûkai* consisted of a maze of large- and small-scale services of a very tightly interwoven nature. I can only mention the three central types of establishments (KFB 1987:VI, 198), namely the *okiya* (establishments that kept *geisha* and sent them out when

they were requested), *machiai* or *machiai-jaya* (tea houses, establishments that rented rooms in which visitors and *geisha* could amuse themselves), and *ryôtei* or *ryôriya* (restaurants).

Let me emphasize at this point that, as *karyûkai* was a place that operated at night, hard work (at daytime) and intensive *asobi* (at night) do not necessarily preclude one another.

We are not given much information on the people who sought their *asobi* in the *karyûkai*. It is certain, though, that there was a wide span between wealthy and poor visitors, and that a wide selection of possibilities existed for both. Types of customers specifically mentioned are iron dealers, shipbuilders, stock brokers, sugar dealers, fish merchants, and, particularly, craftsmen (KFB 1987:VI, 201, 203). One informant says that lengthy visits to the *karyûkai* by a family heir would cause consternation, but in the case of second and third sons one was rather indifferent—*kaseija tsukai da* (when you've earned, you spend!) (KFB 1987:VI, 205).

Against this background of *asobi* a small group of persons stand out, as they appear not to have shown interest in the common forms of *asobi* in Kôtô-ku. Professionally these persons also diverge from the mainstream of the district's inhabitants.

Whereas the *jûshoku* (chief priest) of Entsûji temple mentions his fondness for going to the theater (where he is given a good square to sit in) (KFB 1987:VI, 166), the *gûji* (chief priest) of the Katori shrine finds respite from everyday life in quite a different way (KFB 1987:VI, 181–82). He has vivid recollections of being taken up Mount Mitsumine by his grandfather, and mountain climbing has been an activity of central importance to him ever since. However, the *gûji* is of course not speaking of mountain climbing as a sport or a hobby, but of mountain climbing as *seishin shugyô* (cultivation of the spirit). Accordingly he mentions a visit to a mountain hut built "in the spirit of Shintô" as having been a kind of *misogi* (purification).

We encounter another marked lifestyle in the recollections of an office worker at a department store (KFB 1987:II, 23). After describing the vitality of the trades- and craftsmen he says of himself: "It was also a bit the fault of my parents. . . . I spent all day studying, they said I was not allowed to do such disreputable things as carry about the portable shrine at the shrine festival. I was after all not a craftsman. Anyway, in a district of trades- and craftsmen an office worker was rather uncommon."

"Asobi" and "Tanoshimi" Provided by Shrines and Temples

Theaters and specific establishments for *asobi* were not the only institutions that provided respite from everyday life; a very important role in this respect was also played by the local shrines, and, to a certain extent, also by Buddhist temples. Thus, *matsuri* and *ennichi* are among the most emphatically mentioned sources of fun and pleasure. The term *matsuri* probably needs no further explanation here.[6] *Ennichi* is literally a specific day associated with a specific deity—further details will follow.

Besides references to *ennichi* and *matsuri* we find a few recollections concerning participation in a *kô*. *Kô* can here be understood as groups of persons that have organized themselves with the principal aim of undertaking pilgrimages (KFB 1987:IV, 225–27)—the interviewees mention pilgrimages to Mount Ontake in the Kiso region (KFB 1987:II, 95) and to the Fudô deity in Narita (KFB 1987:II, 92). It did, however, come as a bit of a surprise to me that the *nenjû gyôji* (the regular annual observances) such as *o-shôgatsu* (New Year) or *o-bon* (the Lantern Festival/the Buddhist All Souls' Day) were not mentioned more often as sources of *tanoshimi*.[7] I also found no reference to *bon-odori*, the *bon* dances that are such a marked feature of summertime district festivals today.

"Formerly there was not much that could be called recreation, but going to *ennichi* was always enjoyable" (KFB 1987:II, 15). This is a typical utterance concerning *ennichi*. The prominence of *ennichi* had, of course, to do with the fact that there were large numbers of shrines spread all over Kôtô-ku, many of these having their *ennichi* at least once, though usually two or even three times, a month.

In each of these shrines a specific deity was revered, very often Inari, Hachiman, or Fudô, but Shinmei (Amaterasu) (KFB 1987:II, 20, 25, 28), Rakan (the [Five hundred] Arhats) (KFB 1987:II, 144–45), Tenjin (KFB 1987:II, 20, 152), and others are also repeatedly mentioned. However, the fact that the various shrines and temples and their *ennichi* had characteristics that carved themselves deep into one's memory, or that a particular shrine was the shrine of the *ubusuna-gami* (guardian deity of the area), appears to be of far greater importance than the individual deity itself.

The chains of associations that the mention of *ennichi* generate are almost endless. Usually they begin with recollections of a maze

of stands arranged inside and outside the shrine precincts. In this world of stands there was plenty of entertainment—tricks and acrobatics, musical performances with flute and drum, and theater (KFB 1987:II, 25)—but particularly vivid are the memories that remain of the many different genres of storytelling, for instance *kami-shibai* (picture-story shows), *nozoki-karakuri* (storytelling together with showing of illustrations to be peeped at through a convex lens) (KFB 1987:II, 16, 83, 144 et al.), and accounts of heaven and hell illustrated with movable dolls swayed on a lotus or attacked by a demon (KFB 1987:II, 83–84).

Undoubtedly the main attraction of *ennichi* was what could be bought there. We have the most animated descriptions of sweets of all kinds, *yaki-imo* (roasted sweet potatoes), toys, balloons, cactuses, and bananas (from Taiwan). The atmosphere is perhaps best captured in the following account of medicine vendors: "They'd use snakes, you know, they'd try to foist medicine or something against the decay of teeth on those who watched, well, you know, in the vein of Matsui Gensui (a vendor of medicine for the teeth who was active in Edo around 1680 and attracted customers with top-spinning show. ...At *ennichi* the things that were sold were often fakes and make-believes. ... You couldn't get anything proper, yet it was fun to just buy" (KFB 1987:II, 13, 24).

Conversely, *matsuri* seem to have been relatively infrequent. In some districts full-scale *matsuri* were held only once every four years (KFB 1987:II, 38, 216–17). We should, moreover, take note of the fact that there were districts without any big *matsuri* at all (KFB 1987:II, 32, 34–35), and several districts that had a few festival carts (*dashi*) but no portable shrines (*mikoshi*) (KFB 1987:II, 35, 135).

In essence, the big *matsuri* are described as outings of the local *mikoshi*, carried by young members of the male population through the district of the *ujiko*—the people of the area for whom the shrine deity is the guardian deity (KFB 1987:II, 4, 99 et al.).

Though the *matsuri* are mentioned in many of the recollections as the greatest *tanoshimi*, they did not necessarily enable participation by all *ujiko*. For one thing the arrangements and activities in conjunction with the *matsuri* were closely interwoven with the social organization of the younger adult male population (KFB 1987:II, 10, 176, 186–87). One informant refers to this fact in the following words: "Nowadays even women, even foreigners carry the portable shrine. This would have been unthinkable formerly."

As many informants point out, *matsuri* were not only male-oriented,[8] they were also an outlet for aggression. Carrying the *mikoshi* through the streets was, we read, not exactly a funeral procession, the *mikoshi* would go forward, backward, crosswise, they would smash into each other, and brawls would ensue (KFB 1987:II, 58, 85).

A particularly impressive element of the *matsuri* were the groups of *kurikara monmon*—the "*yakuza* of former days" (KFB 1987:II, 22, 70, 220)—naked men with huge Kulika dragons[9] tattooed on their backs. There is more than one recollection of groups of young men entering the houses of wealthy and influential persons, extorting sums of money, food and drink, and, in some instances, even smashing up the rooms (KFB 1987:II, 220–21).

Concluding Observations

The six books *Kôtô furusato bunko. Korô ga kataru* by no means give an exhaustive picture of Kôtô-ku at the beginning of this century. However, merely acquainting oneself with personal accounts of the way of life, and with the values attached to this way of life (and especially to situations of "having time"), is in itself time consuming, considering the difficulties presented by Japanese-language interview material.

I am well aware that the books studied are particularly problematic in one respect. Aside from the fact that we have relatively little information on the lives of women, the interviews done in 1984 and 1985 represent memories of people that were youths of thirty and less in the epoch they were interviewed on. Consequently there is a lack of information on the lifestyles of persons from the same epoch who were older.

Let me mention in passing that however young the informants may have been at the time, their experiences are invaluable, as the social fabric of Kôtô-ku has since been destroyed three times: first in the great earthquake of 1923, then by conscription and dispatching the male population to faraway battlefields, and finally in the bombings of World War II.

At the beginning of this century the people of Kôtô-ku did not speak of leisure as an abstract quantity to measure the quality of life, they had their own ways of describing the fact that life did not

consist merely of work. The two central terms used when referring explicitly to situations other than work are *asobi* and *tanoshimi*. Where could the basic difference lie between *asobi/tanoshimi* and the present-day concepts of *yoka* and *rejâ*?

As we might remember, the *Shin kurashi no jiten* (1983:377) defines both *rejâ* and *yoka* in relation to the five-day working week and the institutionalization of consecutive free days in the summer. In other words, *rejâ* and *yoka* are closely associated with a long span of time not taken up by work. Thus the problem arises: *ikani yoka o sugosu ka*—how should one spend *yoka* (free time)? How should one structure *yoka*, give it content, make something as sensible as possible out of it? Accordingly, *rejâ* and *yoka* are also spoken of as *katsudô* (activity, action, strenuous exertion), for instance, in the form of a *shumi* (something one is interested in, fond of doing, a hobby), a journey, sports, listening to music, or looking at pictures, and so forth. Japanese persons I asked about *yoka* and *rejâ* spontaneously mentioned tennis, riding, mountain climbing, yachting, and camping.

It is true that some of the *asobi* we encountered in the interviews did demand a degree of planning. However, *asobi* is certainly not a *katsudô*, an activity in the sense of actively doing something sensible. *Asobi* is enjoyment of a more passive kind—others are active, while one's own actions are limited to a minimum. We find no mention of deeper thoughts, or of anything gained in the context of *asobi*, not even in the case of theaters and movies, the contents of which are not reflected on in a single interview.

Asobi and *tanoshimi* do not appear to be opposites of work, rather they are opposites of "content" and "sense." Whereas *yoka* and *rejâ* stand close to respite from work in the form of doing some other sensible thing, or gaining something that cannot be gained through work, *asobi* and *tanoshimi* might be called "respite from content," and consequently from all effort needed for grasping content.

Awareness of the possibility of finding respite from content through *asobi* as we see it in Kôtô-ku at the beginning of the century is probably still there, and it is likely to tinge the meaning of whatever word is used to render the concept of "leisure." To understand aspects of present-day Japan I feel it is important not to project the modern idea of free time onto the past. Instead we should perhaps acknowledge more fully the existence of characteristic forms of

respite from everyday life that established themselves in contexts where "free time" was not a subject of lengthy consideration.

Notes

1. Renaissance, Humanism, and Enlightenment (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries) must be mentioned here. I am not qualified to go into further details on this point, but I wish at least to draw attention to the fact that universality in the Japanese sense is rooted in quite a different philosophical setting and must be understood in conjunction with the specifically Japanese political, social, or religious developments over the past centuries.

2. It is not possible to explain in detail the different genres of entertainment and their characteristics within the limited space of this article. For a deeper understanding of terms like *manzai*, *naniwabushi*, *kôdan*, *yose*, and others either the specific Japanese sources or at least the Kôdansha Encyclopedia of Japan (1983) should be consulted.

3. Such an arbitrary expression may be forgiven here, as it would lead me too far astray to go into detail. A vague idea of the *kiyomoto* style may be conveyed through a glance at the text of the famous *kiyomoto* piece *Yasuna*, found in any larger handbook on *kabuki*.

4. Most closely associated with the *shinnai* style is the account of *Ranchô*, that contains highly emotional scenes surrounding the double suicide of two young lovers. Details on *Ranchô* may also be found in most *kabuki* handbooks.

5. The Susaki *karyûkai* was established in 1888. In the Taishô era it had, according to KFB (1987:VI, 200), around 270 houses with over 2600 women. KFB (1987:VI, 205) speaks of around 330 houses with between 3 and 20 women each in Susaki and 520 houses with 1 to 2 women each in Kamedo.

6. For a detailed account of *matsuri* in its social setting see, for instance, Theodore Bestor, *Neighbourhood Tokyo*. Tokyo and New York: Kodansha International, 1989.

7. One interview mentions old people gathering at the Jizô image for *o-bon* on August 24, chanting *nembutsu* (invocations) and passing a happy day (KFB 1987:II, 185). There is also occasional reference to the construc-

tion of a stage for performances at *o-bon*, and to the pounding of *mochi* (rice cakes) at New Year (KFB 1987:V, 51–53).

8. One informant says that the women's duty was to cater to the needs of the young men (*wakai shû no mendô mitari*) and to serve tea when visitors came (KFB 1987:II, 105).

9. Kurikara (Kulika) is the Sanskrit name of a dragon king who appears as the "black dragon" of esoteric Buddhism.

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