



Appropriating Robert Louis Stevenson:

Nakajima Atsushi in Pre-War Japan

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Tusitala means ‘writer of stories’ in English, or ‘a Japanese-owned hotel’ [...] depending on who’s doing the translation or defining.

Sia Figiel, *Where We Once Belonged*¹

Sia Figiel’s *Where We Once Belonged* problematises the legacy of colonialism in the Pacific area, and brings older images of colonial rule into collision with new forces from the globalising 1990s. Located north of Apia market is a bright, fane-style dome. To Po, the heroine, the hotel is a remnant of colonial times when Robert Louis Stevenson employed indigenous people to materialise the western imagination of the South Sea dream. But the passage also registers a shift in the global economy, and draws attention to the hotel’s official name, Hotel Kitano Tusitala. In the late 1980s, excess liquidity caused by the economic bubble boosted Japanese companies’ foreign investment. The purchase of the national hotel by the Kitano Construction Corporation was one example of this process in the Pacific region. The juxtaposition of colonialism and economic expansion might suggest Japan has become a new exploiter in the final decade of the twentieth century, but it also reminds us of older Japanese presences in the Pacific, and of the Second World War.

This essay discusses the many ways in which ‘Stevenson’ was created as a figure in pre-war Japan. Nakajima Atsushi wrote a biographical novel about Stevenson – *Hikari to Kaze to Yume* (*Light, Wind and Dreams*, 1942) – and, in the process, critics began to call him ‘Tsushitara’ after the Samoan Tusitala. On the other hand, Stevenson was a suitable object for ideological projection by writers associated with expansionist views. His interstitial position between European colonisers and Samoans, as well as his popularity among Japanese readers, provided a model for justifying Japanese policy. Japan, for the expansionists, could become Asia’s white knight. Stevenson is a figure Nakajima invests in; he offers much more than mere literary inspiration, and is written as a symbolic hero both for the contemporary Japanese foreign policy and for the author’s unsettled identity. A complex archive around Stevenson made this reception possible, as I show below.

Light, Wind and Dreams and its Critical Response

Light, Wind and Dreams narrates Stevenson's later life in Samoa from 1890 to 1894. Its twenty chapters are thematically categorised in two parts, the protagonist's narration in a diary style, and an omniscient narrator's explanations of biographical detail and asides on the history of Samoa. Each part is arranged alternately; explanatory chapters provide complementary information for neighboring diary sections.² Scholars have not identified all of Nakajima's reading material; the diary parts of *Light, Wind and Dreams* are considered to be based on *Vailima Letters*, whereas the others are based on Stevenson's essays.³

Light, Wind and Dreams was a finalist for, but did not win, the Akutagawa Prize – Japan's prime literary award for new writers – in 1942 when Nakajima was in Palau. Previous stories by Nakajima had utilised Greek mythology and Chinese classics as narrative frames, and had revealed his knowledge of foreign literature and technique; compared to these, the narrative style of *Light, Wind and Dreams* appears plain. Many of its details are redundant and reviews were generally unfavourable.⁴ Criticism, both contemporary and modern, has focused more on Nakajima's biographical similarities to Stevenson. There are clear parallels: shared lung disease from infancy, poor health, a short lifespan. Criticism has tended to base its arguments around Nakajima's adoration of Stevenson, and on the 'exotic' subject matter of his texts, rather than attempting any engagement with his literary techniques and their significance.

More recently, critics have developed another approach to Nakajima's stories, focusing on his Pacific writings and discussing the imperial ideology latent in these tales, alongside his view of the Japanese South Seas. Stevenson's own ambivalent position – being against colonialism while living within it – mirrors Nakajima's, and suggests one reason why a literary treatment of his life could be useful material for a socio-historical study of Japanese imperialism. Robert Tierney examines *Nantô Tan (Tales of the South Seas, 1942)* and *Light, Wind and Dreams* in order to point out the political and racial ambiguity of the Japanese Empire. Nakajima's novels have an affinity, he argues, with contemporary views of Micronesian cultures: 'Stevenson supplies the standard against which reality is measured and his standard is tantamount to the standard of civilisation itself'.⁵ Like Tierney, Faye Yuan Kleeman, who addresses her attention to imperialistic attitudes in the colonial literature in Japan and Taiwan, considers Nakajima's image of Stevenson as a metaphor of his ambiguous feelings towards colonialism.⁶

In fact, one of the initial responses to *Light, Wind and Dreams* commented on these contextual and ideological questions. Kume Masao, in his Akutagawa referee report, linked the text to questions of Japanese foreign policy and imperial expansion:

Honestly, I felt the story was splendidly well written and a product of much effort, but I couldn't tell whether it was a good one or not. However, I definitely – no matter what other referees would say – insist that the most honorable thing is the fact

that a Japanese scholar in the South Seas wrote a story from such a global perspective. What would British citizens in this wartime feel if they read its translation?

For the judge of a literary prize, this is an odd method of evaluation: Kume recognises the elaborate organisation of the story but dodges the question of its literary quality. Kume's concern was more with the political elements in the story than with its literary value. His question about the postulated British reaction, however, invites an interpretation of *Light, Wind and Dreams* as a critique of western imperialism. Contemporary anti-war critics also read Nakajima's novel for its historical and contextual information. Iwakami Jun'ichi attacked the author's inadequate understanding of Polynesian culture and European colonisation, seeing its hero's confession of personal anxiety as a symptom of inadequately processed authorial ideology: '[Nakajima's] deviation from history is often noticeable where the author tries to insinuate his own philosophy in *Light, Wind, and Dreams*'.⁸ Critics from left and right agree, perhaps surprisingly, in under-reading the novel as a *literary* response to Stevenson's Pacific. Its artistic value remains largely under-examined.

Stevenson's Popularity and the Politics of Japanese Empire

Nakajima makes Stevenson's speech on the Road of Gratitude the climax of his novel, and this in turn is the most discussed part of his own text in socio-historical readings. Nakajima's re-writing sticks closely to the original sources, but with crucial modifications:

The land committee and the chief justice prescribed by the treaty will soon serve out their term. Then, the land will be returned to you and you will be at liberty about its usage. That is the very moment when wicked white people will try to lay their hands on your land. The men with surveying rods will surely come to your villages.⁹

Compared to Stevenson's text, Nakajima *racialises* Stevenson's narrative discourse: 'the messenger' in Stevenson's original speech is replaced by the 'wicked white people'. Stevenson thus ends up echoing, in however trivial a way, the language of Japanese colonialism, and is presented as a 'middle way' himself, positioned between native Samoans and 'wicked white people' set on colonial occupation.

Nakajima, whether unconsciously or not, writes within the ideological context of the 'Realm of Peace and Prosperity' (*Ôdô Rakudo*), and the 'Co-Prosperity of Five Races' (*Gozoku Kyôwa*), government narratives justifying Japanese expansion developed since the colonisation of Manchuria around 1930. These concepts emphasised the difference of Western and Japanese imperialism: Japan was creating an earthly paradise (*Rakudo*) of the Great East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere (*Daitôa Kyôeiken*), not by a plundering Western-style military force, but by an application of Eastern virtue (*Ôdô*).¹⁰ These slogans, ironically, indicate the difficulties Japan's government faced: resistance, both domestic, to increasing privation, and foreign, to invasion, forced the

elaboration of ever more developed cases stressing Japanese exceptionalism and ‘anti-imperial’ imperialism. This in turn spurred literary discourse, with writers imagining and sustaining the ideologies of ‘co-prosperity’ and the ‘earthly paradise’ just as administrators worked for its realisation.

An emergent popular genre blending fiction with non-fiction celebrated the toils of Japanese immigrants attempting to start up new industries in the Pacific colonies.¹¹ Maruyama Yoshiji’s 1942 biographical fiction ‘Nankai no Eiyū’ (‘A Hero in the South Seas’) is about Mori Koben, a trader and one of the first settlers in Micronesia. At the climax of the first part of the story, the Japanese fleet arrives at the island on the verge of a native riot. Mori’s long-craved dream, finally, is realised: the islands are now fully possessed by his home country and his islanders become ‘great citizens of Japan’.¹² What follows is strict imperial fantasy and adventure: the narrative stresses Mori’s patriotic devotion to the homeland; it traces his early commitment to a political-extremist sect and his subsequent disappointment; his hardships in the South Seas, including life-threatening battles with native tribes; and then ends with his marriage to a chief’s daughter. However, the most important point in this novel is that the hero’s deeds are assumed to bring great benefits not only to Japanese citizens but also to the colonised peoples. Being the Emperor’s subject, the islanders are under the protection of the Japanese vessels and supposedly enjoy industrial development like people in Taiwan. Thus, Mori becomes a good coloniser.



Figure 1.

‘Savage, you can’t compete with the white man’s wisdom. You shall be forgiven unless you try to eat us.’
 ‘I swear not to eat a white man for good.’

Children's literature of the period developed similar themes even more overtly. *Bôken Dankichi* (*Dankichi, the Young Adventurer*), the popular pre-war comic series, visualises the ideological complexity of 'Co-Prosperity' in a more curious way than Mori's case. On a cannibal island, Dankichi successfully becomes the cannibals' ruler by means of 'the white man's wisdom' (*Figure 1*). Dankichi's self-presentation as 'white' relies on ambiguities in colonial presentation and in the Japanese language. In Japanese white can mean both the 'white' and 'a pale colour'. In this latter sense, Dankichi is correct, but a crucial point is that he uses the word in a quite ambivalent way. He is 'a white king' and at the same time fights for the cannibals' independence against invaders whose physical traits are definitely those of Europeans (*Figure 2*).



Figure 2.

While Dankichi's whiteness justifies his superiority to the 'darker' tribe, he protects them against the 'whiter' colonisers. The protagonist is neither dark nor white, being an outsider in the standardised semantic framework that classifies the races by their skin colors and thus securing his interstitial predicament. Whereas Mori is qualified to be a chief by his native wife, Dankichi obtains the position only by his verbal rhetoric, where ethical judgment of a good coloniser is a

very arbitrary and subjective matter. This is the literary background which made it possible even for a ‘whiter’ Stevenson to be a symbolic advocate for Japanese imperial policy.

How might readers have accepted the words of Nakajima’s Stevenson as a vindication for their country regardless of his being a ‘whiter’ writer? Stevenson’s pre-war popularity may have allowed something of an unspoken ‘naturalisation’ to occur. Stevenson had long been popular in Japan, enjoying huge critical and popular acclaim through the Meiji, Taisho, and early Showa periods, to say nothing of his own evident interest in and knowledge of things Japanese, suggested by his essays on Yoshida Shōin and the forty-seven Rōnin (‘Byways of Book Illustration’). Stevenson, in the era of Japanese imperialism, could be re-written, and consumed, according to national preference. His South Seas became, in Nakajima’s hands, Japanese South Seas; the Scottish Pacific a Japanese Pacific.

Stevenson in Japan

As is well known, European technology and culture flooded Japan after the opening in 1858, and British literature was quickly introduced even to ordinary citizens by remakes and translations.¹³ Taking account of the unstable political conditions in the early Meiji period and Japan’s distance from Europe, it must be judged a speedy response that a few poems from *A Child’s Garden of Verses* were translated less than ten years after its original was first published. The first abridged translation of *Treasure Island* (*Shin Takarajima*) was serialised in a literary magazine in 1895.

A brief overview of Stevenson’s reception in Japan provides some sense of his powerful appeal as a figure for colonial discourse. One of his earliest translators was Oshikawa Shunrō, a renowned juvenile adventure writer. He adapted the framework of *New Arabian Nights*, transforming it into a different story where all characters have Japanese names in a British setting: ‘This book is not its translation but rather a new story that utilised the original structure’.¹⁴

Natsume Soseki also produced adaptations of Stevenson. Soseki, an early Stevenson enthusiast, applied a similar narrative structure of *New Arabian Nights* in *Higan Sugi Made* (*To the Spring Equinox and Beyond*, 1912).¹⁵ The novel makes this intertextual connection clear: ‘This bent in Keitarō seemed to have started [...] during his high school days. A teacher of English at his school used Stevenson’s *New Arabian Nights* as the class text’.¹⁶ Soseki’s joke here works only if Stevenson is a familiar author from readers’ exposure to him in the classroom. He had become, in other words, part of the educational and literary ‘structure of feeling’ of mainstream Japanese social thought by early in the century. As Tanabe Yukinobu’s extensive bibliography suggests, from Meiji to early Showa there are numerous entries of his works in English textbooks for junior high school, not to mention translations of the major stories.¹⁷

In 1938 Sagara Jirô produced a comprehensive reader's guide to Stevenson. At more than three hundred pages it remains the most extensive Japanese-language monograph on Stevenson, combining biography (drawing mainly on Balfour) with an outline of most of Stevenson's works, with literary comments attached. Although we cannot be confident how conscious Nakajima was of the historically-accumulated reputation of his favorite author, *Light, Wind, and Dreams* appeared at the climax of Stevenson's Japanese reputation and appraisal. Sagara's book provides another example of interaction between literary popularity and ideological discourse. Referring to Stevenson's comments on the Transvaal war, he utilises these to produce a Stevenson intervening in contemporary politics:

If he were a Japanese citizen of our time, he would never advocate [...] non-confrontational pacifism notwithstanding the control of freedom of speech. He would, if anything, be willing to take a pen or a sword for this sacred war for the peace of Asia.¹⁸

The context existed already, in other words, for Nakajima's deployment of Stevenson as a model Japanese colonialist in *Light, Wind, and Dreams*. Stevenson existed, in his Japanese reception, as a contemporary, and, crucially, as a symbolic hero.

Nan'yô and Nakajima

Provided the imperialist discourses of the pre-war period and this literary context, it is most likely that Nakajima expected attention to be given to the political aspects of his text. Whatever these expectations, however, Nakajima's paratexts all disavowed any connection between politics and literature. In 'Under the Pandanus Trees', written immediately after his return from Palau, he expresses his puzzlement upon visiting a bookstore where a large number of war books were displayed:

I was very surprised to be reminded of how little I had thought about the political situation and literature when I was under the pandanus trees. It was not little but never. War is war and literature is literature. They have been totally different things for me. [...] It has never occurred to me that the flavor of the current situation should be added to my writings, and, still more, literature could possibly contribute to the national object. (vol. 2: pp. 22-3)

We can hardly take this statement seriously. It is almost unimaginable that Nakajima could have submitted his manuscript to the *Bungei Shunjû* without glancing at the journal's content: literary magazines were full of articles and interviews concerning the wars, even before the period of Nakajima's departure to the Japanese South Seas (*nan'yô*).¹⁹ Neither is it possible to assume that he did not know the aim of his job in Palau: he was required to edit Japanese textbooks produced to transform indigenous children into the Emperor's subjects.

In the final part of the essay, Nakajima discloses his intentions without admitting this complicity:

I had been made to resolutely – almost ridiculously – distinguish war and literature in the islands of pandanus trees by my internal conflict between ‘a wish to make myself helpful for something practical’ and ‘an aversion to offer literary works for practical use such as ad posters’. This inclination is unlikely to be amended even when I am back to the gay city of Tokyo from the islands of pandanus trees. I may be still stupefied by the South Sea life. (vol. 2: p. 24)

This explanation obviously contradicts the former statement. His ‘aversion to offer literary works for practical use’ assumes the notion that literature could be beneficial for that purpose. Nakajima’s contribution to colonial political discourse, perhaps paradoxically, is this insistence on literature’s autonomy, something he aligns with the ‘South Sea life’.

Nakajima stayed in the South Seas for less than a year, but his letters give an impression that he was always travelling. For all this travel, however, his reactions are surprisingly bland with no real examination or inquiry, and almost nothing on political issues. Before his departure to Palau, no harsh criticism in his correspondence can be detected in relation to Japanese colonialism; he travelled in the Pacific for money and in the hope of improving his lung disease. Local people and their conditions seem not to have interested him:

The travel this time has explicitly revealed the nonsense of my textbook editing for local people. More profitable things should be done for their well-being. [...] I like the islanders. I like them far better than selfish Japanese residents in the South Seas. They are simple and lovable. You should understand that the adults are big children. They must have been happier in the old days. (vol. 3: p. 631)

This banal suggestion that ‘natives’ be understood as ‘big children’ may remind us of Wiltshire’s discovery of the nature of islanders in ‘The Beach of Falesá’. His racial prejudice, which cannot be amended by his parenthood of ‘half-castes’, could be taken ironically as a counterpart for Nakajima’s view: partly by his innocent racism, a Japanese novelist did not perceive more than what an uneducated hero could recognise in less than a few months. Nevertheless, it does not mean that Nakajima was unperceptive about his surroundings. Rather, it was not the *real* South Sea that attracted his attention. Just as Wiltshire worries exclusively about his own shop, being utterly indifferent to the economy of colonialism, so Nakajima’s continued to be concerned with nothing more than his asthma, family, and the traditional tropical life that Stevenson experienced: ‘I like Jaluit Atoll best among the islands I have visited, because it was least civilised and most similar to Stevenson’s South Seas’ (vol. 3: p. 607).

For Nakajima, *two* South Seas existed: one is the real *nan’yô* archipelago that had been placed under the mandatory rule of Japan since 1922; the other is the exotic islands whose life could be

peeped at via fantasy through exposure to Western literary works. Although his decision to be a Japanese textbook editor was made on account of 'my illness, and livelihood' (vol. 3: p. 556), he did not seem to entirely give up the hope that the place might provide him with new inspiration, for we come across the fact that he 'brought writing paper to start some work when leaving the mainland' (vol. 3: p. 32). Nevertheless, in a letter to his father dated 6 November 1941, Nakajima confesses to the difficulty of maintaining his physical and mental condition and a wish to return home (vol. 3: p. 628), and at the end of the year is convinced of the rightness of his assessment: 'a cultivated person cannot live in the South Seas physically and mentally' (vol. 3: p. 648). It seems reasonable to assume that the only way available for him to have a sense of well-being in such a situation was to make acquaintances with people of his kind and consider the wonders of the tropics.²⁰ As well as his letters, a passage from 'High Noon' ('Mahiru'), a short story based on the author's Pacific experience, allows us to catch a glimpse of the way he looked at the world he was in at the time:

You are always you. No changes at all. Only sunshine and heat-wind cover your consciousness with a transient thick veil. Now you think you see the glittering sea and the sky. Or you may be so flattered as to consider that you see them as the natives do. [...] You only see the replica of Gauguin. You don't see Micronesia. You only see the faded representations of Polynesia by Loti and Melville. (vol. 1: p. 279)

The unpleasant job and disappointment at the real *nan'yô* forced him to stick to an imaginary version of the South Seas, one which Stevenson's stories had partly created. Conscious of his own limitations, Nakajima's biographical exposure to the world of the South Seas prompted his turn inwards, to his *own* South Seas, those constructed through imaginary communion with Stevenson.

Men of Writing, Men of Action

One of the most remarkable aspects of *Light, Wind, and Dreams* is its intertextuality. It is a mosaic made up of different pieces of Nakajima's stories.²¹ Consider this example, Stevenson wandering drunk in Apia:

When I came to my senses, I found myself fallen flat on the dark, moldy-smelling ground. An earth-smelling breeze was blowing lukewarm on my face. Then flashed upon my slightly conscious mind the idea, 'I'm in Apia, not in Edinburgh', like a fire-ball coming nearer to me from a distance, and gradually becoming bigger strangely enough, thinking of it afterwards, it seems that I felt as if I were in a street in Edinburgh all the while I was lying on the ground. (vol. 1: p. 192)

Almost the same passage can be found in an unfinished exercise story, 'Hoppôkô' ('To the North', 1948), only with a change of the place name: 'I'm in Beijing, not in Tokyo' (vol. 2: p. 167). Since the protagonist in this earlier story is a jobless member of the Japanese intelligentsia,

Denkichi, it seems odd that the author applied the same description to a character with different external circumstances. Denkichi and Stevenson become, in Nakajima's treatment, both examples of the unstable self, something to be explored as autonomous from location or imperial history. For Denkichi, the loss of location is closely associated with his unstable identity. Although the story offers no clear explanation for Stevenson's case, his self-interrogation in the same diary entry metaphorically suggests that the accident is the outcome of his perception of a contradiction in his conception of himself: 'It feels as though a crack was made somewhere in the cerebrum. It does not seem that I fell down only by drunkenness' (vol. 1: p. 193). As the story develops, Nakajima's Stevenson becomes doubtful about his own professional and personal identity.

This theme of unsettled identity thus both destabilises *Light, Wind, and Dreams* and, ironically, stabilises Stevenson as a figure in a specifically Japanese-colonial imaginary. The novel's intertextual elements link its main character with other explorations of similar themes while minimising any specific pull the Pacific material might exert. Stevenson, in the novel, ponders the connections between writing and action, between literary imagination and settlement:

I have been a silkworm. I have only spun cocoons of stories with the silk of words as a silkworm does regardless of its own happiness and unhappiness. Now, the miserable sick silkworm has finally finished forming its cocoon. He has no more purpose for his life. [...] The question is whether I still have a power to break it, mentally or physically. (vol. 1: p. 195)

Nakajima had already argued this dilemma as early as in 1936 in 'Rôshitsu-ki' ('A Record of Anxiety') referring to the Pacific islands.²² The story, set in the modern Tokyo area, depicts the ordinary life and discontents of a high school teacher. It begins with his watching a documentary film about the South Pacific:

It was very long ago. At that time, Sanzô often wished that he had been born as one of them whenever he read a record of the primitive life of the savages and saw their pictures. Certainly, younger Sanzô thought, he could have been born as a savage like them. And, under the brilliant sunshine, he could spend his whole life without knowing materialism, Vimalakirti's categorical imperative, Kant's categorical proposition, and even history and the structure of the solar system. (vol. 1: p. 406)

His yearning for the life of 'nan'yô natives' (vol. 1: p. 405) obviously anticipates the production of *Light, Wind, and Dreams* in later years. At the same time, the illogical dream – without knowledge and the products of letters, Sanzô would not know the culture of the islanders or the disintegration in his self – can be considered as the archetype of Gojô's trouble in 'Waga Sai-yû-ki' ('My Journey to the West', 1942): mental distress caused by literacy.²³

Whereas 'A Record of Anxiety' does not supply a solution to its protagonist's problem, 'My Journey to the West' alludes to a possible alternative to the act of writing: a life of pure action.

Gojô, who was finally enlightened on the futility of obsessive rumination on the self at the end of his pilgrimage in the former part of the story ('Gojô Shusseï' ('The Promotion of Gojô')), observes his comrade Son Gokû's conduct code in the latter part ('Gojô Tan'ni' ('Gojô's Sermon')). He narrates the marvel of the monkey's spectacular achievements with profound admiration:

Gokû has made a move while fools like us are too stupefied to think about what to do. He has already started to walk, taking the shortest way to his destination. People talk about his deeds and strength. However, they notice less of his marvelously prodigious wisdom. In his case, prudence and judgment constitute a harmonious whole with physical actions. (vol. 1: p. 343)

It is worth noticing that Gokû's wisdom was not obtained by writing. He is 'illiterate to such a degree that he knows neither the Chinese characters of Hitsubaon [Protector of the Stables – Gokû's title] nor its duties' (vol. 1: p. 343). His instinctive performances make Gojô painfully aware of 'the incompetence of the culture of writing' (vol. 1: p. 344). 'My Journey to the West' presents an antithesis of writings and actions, but, more importantly, it proposes its sublimation by the sincere approval of the other and improvement of one's own self:

I would never learn from him in the present situation. I have to get closer to him and learn everything from that monkey however irritating to me his rough conduct may be, even if he scolds and strikes me more often and I may sometimes swear at him. It is nothing at all to see and admire him from far away. (vol. 1: pp. 352-3)

Nakajima's adaptation of the Chinese story is judged to be very appropriate in dealing with unsettled identity, because it provided ready-made but handily contrasting characters who are not available in the modern stories such as 'To the North' and 'A Record of Anxiety'. This will also explain why he chose Stevenson as a protagonist.

Stevenson as an Imaginary Model

The life of Robert Louis Stevenson could be another version of 'My Journey to the West'. While presenting an over-pessimistic protagonist, Nakajima utilises the energetic aspects of Stevenson's public image to create a brave hero. In making him stand out as a man of action, Nakajima uses selections from Stevenson's letters and essays in order to exaggerate his isolation from the European community in Apia.

Stevenson as a lonely hero appears in the fourth chapter where a portrait sent by Colvin is mentioned. Nakajima develops the original letter – 'Fanny wept when we unpacked it, and you know how little she is given to that mood; I was scarce Roman myself, but that does not count'²⁴ – in a dramatically pathetic way:

We have received a photograph from Colvin. Fanny – far from a sentimental blubberer – involuntarily shed tears.

Friends! How I am lacking in them at present! Comrades with whom I can talk on equal terms (in various senses). [...] In this refreshing climate and active daily life, those are my only need. Colvin, Baxter, W. E. Henley, Gosse, and – a little later – Henry James; When I think of it, my bloom of youth was blessed with abundant friendships. (vol. 1: p. 123)

While Stevenson's original letters often mention balls and parties, Nakajima's fictionalisation omits these details or refers to them quite briefly. Most visitors to Vailima in the novel are Samoans except for occasional official calls by the Chief Justice. For Europeans in Samoa, he is a nuisance who disturbs their administration: 'Mr. R. L. S. who knows nothing about colonial policy but intrusively extends cheap sympathy to the ignorant natives, acts like Don Quixote' (vol. 1: p. 132). This quixotic disposition is another element of the hero-making that Nakajima employs, displaying enormous divergences of objective and subjective views on the protagonist's ideas about colonialism. First Stevenson's ignorance of practical colonialism is mentioned in the explanatory part of Chapter Five ('the astonishing unawareness of the great novelist' (vol. 1: p. 130)) and then in the following diary section, his unflinching resolution based on 'blind humanitarianism' is represented. After explaining the income imbalance between European administrators and the native king (as is seen in the last chapter of *A Footnote to History*), Stevenson proudly admits his ignorance of colonial policy:

It is the fact that I know nothing about politics and I am even proud of it. Nor do I know what the common attitude prevailing in this colony or semi-colony is, and even if I did know to the extent of understanding it, I could not take it for my criteria because I am a literary man. (vol. 1: p. 132)

Here, in the discrepancy between objective and subjective views, Nakajima converts Stevenson's lack of political experience into evidence of the purity of his motivation. However prominent and influential Stevenson is, his power can be exerted only in literary society and has nothing to do with international politics. Stevenson's acknowledgement of his own defects and impotence enhances the picture of a lonely hero driven to attack vast colonial powers by altruistic and humane motives.

In order to further justify a naively humanistic motivation in the hero, Nakajima equips him with other qualities of leadership. He quotes Stevenson's encounter with Sir George Grey in New Zealand from a letter of 25 April 1893:

The old gentleman agreed with this [Stevenson's idea about colonial policy] in every detail and greatly encouraged me. He said, 'You must not give up hope. I am one of the minority that has live long enough to truly understand that it is no use to give up hope in any circumstances'. Hearing this I felt much better. One must respect a man who knows all about the vulgar, and yet doesn't lose sight of the higher things. (vol. 1: p. 164)

While Grey's encouragement ensures that Stevenson keeps up his anti-colonial campaign, the narrator intervenes and reveals his own judgment about the hero's leadership in the last sentence. A man 'who knows all about the vulgar, and yet doesn't lose sight of the higher things' refers not only to the Governor of New Zealand but also Stevenson himself. We are reminded of his early bohemian life in the previous chapter: 'At twenty, Stevenson was a lump of ostentatiousness, a nasty rascal, and the bastard of upper-class Edinburgh society' (vol. 1: p. 158). The implication is that his decadent youth has made him so aware of 'the vulgar' as to be an eligible chief for the Samoans.

This mode of narrative contrast plays an important part in the invention of Stevenson as a model man of action. Short sentences and sequences of noun phrases are frequently used in the diary sections, particularly in reporting external events. One example is a diary section referring to a rumour of the colonial government's dynamite conspiracy against indigenous rioters. The original passage in Stevenson's letter looks simple enough:

Ever since my last snatch I have been much chivied about over the President business; his answer has come, and is an evasion accompanied with schoolboy insolence, and we are going to try to answer it. I drew my answer to it and took it down yesterday; but one of the signatories wants another paragraph added.²⁵

In Nakajima's narrative, the paragraph is reduced to just three sentences of rather fragmentary phrases: 'The Chief Justice's answer, has finally come. Childish insolence, and cunning evasion. Do not make sense. Immediately, I sent a second questionnaire' (vol. 1: p. 134). This terse narrative style serves to down-play the reflective and meditative aspects of Stevenson's character, and to draw attention to his propensity for action.

In Nakajima's chapter on the Samoan revolt and its failure, Stevenson is a vigorous and lively character. Most of the journal entries begin with a short sentence like a newspaper headline: 'Perhaps the war will break out soon' (vol. 1: p. 171), 'Went to town and heard the news' (vol. 1: p. 171), 'The war broke out at last' (vol. 1: p. 173), and 'The result of the war at length became clear' (vol. 1: p. 175). Omission and combination of the original letters as well as brief sentences and paragraphs emphasise the tension and urgency of the situation, making vivid and lively impressions of the hero as if he were everywhere in Apia. 'After dinner' (vol. 1: p. 173) a messenger came to tell of wounded soldiers, and Stevenson '[rides] on horse back' to Apia, where he feels 'an extraordinary excitement' (vol. 1: p. 174). His visit is so prompt that even doctors have not yet arrived there. Seeing the wounded for a while, he 'ran about the city' (vol. 1: p. 174) and called on committee members at the city hall to obtain their permission to use it as a temporary hospital. 'At midnight [he] went back to the hospital and found a doctor' only to discover that 'two patients were dying' (vol. 1: p. 174). All these events are described in a little over one page, and this rapid narrative is another element in establishing an adventurous hero who commits himself to the cause of humanity whilst risking his own life.

The narrator's representation produces a contrasting image of Stevenson suffering from the instability of an artist while being extremely active in his anti-colonial campaign. However, by putting his own ideas forward, the author attributes these seemingly contradictory aspects to a particular trait of Stevenson—intuitive sensation: 'Indeed, only things which sincerely and directly touch my mind can move me (or any artist) into action' (vol. 1: p. 132). This feature is what the hero shares with the monkey king Gokû, whose principle is seemingly at the opposite extreme to that of Stevenson's.

The most important thematic correspondence between *Light, Wind, and Dreams* and 'My Journey to the West', and by extension in Nakajima's entire works, is the ability to appreciate the aesthetic. The monkey king, regardless of his native roughness, is strikingly sensitive to the beauty of nature: 'he greets the sunrise, intoxicated with its beauty as if he saw it for the first time. Praises it from the bottom of his heart and with a sigh of admiration' (vol. 1: p. 341). The aesthetic intoxication, or pure indulgence in beauty, is the very thing that the narrator attempts to represent in the final part of *Light, Wind, and Dreams*:

Soon the world under my eyes had instantly changed its appearance. The colorless world, in a flash, had begun to shine with brimming colors. The sun had risen from beyond the eastern rock knoll, which is invisible from here. What magic! The grey world had been dyed in dazzling colors of stain-glossy saffron, sulfur yellow, rose pink, clove red, vermillion, turquoise green, orange, lapis, and amethyst. [...]

Looking now at the momentary miracle under my eyes, I felt with comfort the night within me passing away. (vol. 1: pp. 214-5)

The hero marvels at the morning sun as Gokû does, immersing himself in the flood of millions of colours with full pleasure. More significantly, the sense of beauty obliterates the affliction caused by his self-doubt. Through this aestheticism the author is able to represent a more realistic figure than a mythical creature in the light of the antithesis between writing and action. Since a man of pure action and a preliterate condition are hardly available in reality, Nakajima invents a moment of sensation that makes it possible for the protagonist to break the cocoon of the writing system and liberate himself from the imprisonment of anxiety. For Nakajima, Robert Louis Stevenson could become the realisation of his literary motif, which, failing in 'A Record of Anxiety', he had been able to allude to only in his adaptations of classic literary works. With this 'Stevenson', he could also propose an artistic emancipation – of himself and possibly all moderns who crave for somewhere different to settle a troublesome self.

Conclusion

As we have examined, Nakajima's journey to the South was exceedingly disappointing. His

earlier hopes were betrayed when he encountered the real South Seas where the climate was debilitating and native society was devastated by colonisation. However, our discussion of *Light, Wind, and Dreams* suggests that the most afflicting disillusionment would be the denial of the liberation that he had sought for in his life as well as in his literary works. Rather, the South Seas forced him to taste bitter regret as the narrator in 'Mid Noon' questions himself about his present condition:

What you had expected of the South Seas must not have been this idleness and tire-someness. Was it not that you threw yourself into the unknown new place and tried to exert the power that exists but is still latent within you? Was it not the expectation of adventure when the islands became a battlefield in the coming war? (vol. 1: p. 278)

Placed in relation to *Light, Wind, and Dreams* this monologue appears quite symbolic. It sums up not only Nakajima's dissatisfaction with the South Seas, but also the failure of his self-identification with an imaginary Stevenson. In *nan'yô*, he learned that none of his desires would be fulfilled and, what was worse, his artistic talent might be destroyed. Thus, under the pandanus trees, he had to reconsider his own identity as an artist, and to seek reassurance about that conception of the autonomy of literature by which he could attain a more stable artistic self.

Stevenson as a fictional hero provided both advantages and disadvantages for Nakajima. He was able to represent an ideal self in a more realistic setting than he could depict in other stories. However, if we look at the contemporary and later criticism, the disadvantage was as great as the profit. The adaptation of biographical materials with the necessary explanations made the novel look excessive and redundant. Moreover, especially for pro-war readers, Stevenson as an anti-colonial colonialist was too attractive a candidate for posthumous enrolment in the ranks of Japan's colonial champions. Nakajima's Stevenson, then, is one without the complexities, contradictions or tensions of his historical model; a 'man of action' in the South Seas modeling Japanese 'whiteness' without the shading and self-doubt of Stevenson's own Pacific writings. As a result, Nakajima failed to understand the struggle that is evident in the author's own works. Just as the meaning of Tusitala changes depending on the context, so 'Robert Louis Stevenson' presented peculiar dimensions in early-Showa Japan.

NOTES

Unless otherwise specified all translations are my own. Japanese names are cited with the author's surname first in all cases.

1 Sia Figiel, *Where We Once Belonged* (New York: Kaya, 1999), p. 91.

2 The narrative order is inverted in Chapter 16 and 17, both of which employ the diary style. Although the

reason is not clear, a possible explanation would be a narrative requirement of the last chapter (where Stevenson's death and funeral should be put).

3 Iwata Kazuo's detailed examination mentions possible reference to Nakajima in writing the story ("Hikari to Kaze to Yume" to Vailima Letters' ("Light, Wind, and Dreams" and Vailima Letters'). *Hitotsubashi University Research Series: Humanities* 1 1959, pp. 339-98). Besides the materials in the article, Nakajima is supposed to have read *In the South Seas, Essays Literary and Critical* and other biographies. In regard to the availability of Stevenson's text in Nakajima's time, this paper refers to the Tusitala edition.

4 The comments on the novel were generally not very favorable. The referees such as Kojima Seijirō and Uno Kōji were especially critical about the length of the story while the Nobel-prize winning writer Kawabata Yasunari admired both nominees: 'I cannot believe both works do not deserve the prize' (p. 310). See Nakamura Mitsuo's *Nakajima Atsushi Kenkyū (A Study on Nakajima Atsushi)* (Tokyo: Chikuma, 1978), pp. 304-11.

5 Robert Tierney, 'The Colonial Eyeglasses of Nakajima Atsushi,' *Japan Review* 17 (2005), p. 157.

6 Faye Yuan Kleeman, *Under an Imperial Sun: Japanese Colonial Literature of Taiwan and the South* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), pp. 51-4.

7 Nakamura, p.311.

8 Iwakami Jun'ichi, 'Geijutsu no Ronri' ('The Theory of Art'), *Nihon Hyouron* (June 1942), p. 179.

9 *Nakajima Atsushi Zenshu (The Complete Works of Nakajima Atsushi)*, 4 vols, (Tokyo: Chikuma, 2001), pp. 131-2. All quotations from Nakajima are taken from this edition; subsequent pages references are given in the body of the text.

10 The propaganda was conducted not only by the government but also by mass culture industries and travel agencies. See Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 68-72, 259-68.

11 Many of those stories are based on biographies and travel writings of the early pioneers including a founder of the Nan'yō Trading Company, Taguchi Ukichi (1855-1905). The reprint of Taguchi's record of the South Sea journey by the Ministry of Colonial Affairs in 1933 had the political appeal of further development in the southern regions. Maruyama's *Hansen Tenyū-maru (The Tenyū-maru)* is considered to owe much to Taguchi's story. Many writers are now unknown, but some popular novelists such as Yamada Katsurō, also contributed to the political propaganda.

12 In Maruyama Yoshiji, *Na'yo Guntou (The South Sea Archipelago)* (Tokyo: Yumani, 2002), p. 135.

13 Japanese literature from 1880 to 1910 became a microcosm of nineteenth-century European literature. The first movement was the rise of realism in the mid-1880s when Tsubouchi Shoyō's criticism, *Shosetsu Shinzui (The Essence of the Novel)*, and Futabatei Shimei's novel, *Ukigumo (The Drifting Cloud)* appeared. The 1890s was the period of Japanese romanticism which explored the liberation of human nature in the social context of liberalism. Romanticism was succeeded by naturalism inspired by French novelists and new social theories of the time. However, the popularity of naturalism invited another reaction, namely, anti-naturalism in the 1900s, which would lead to aestheticism, the Shirakaba, and the new realism. Regarding to historical relations of Japanese and European literature, see Sasanuma Toshiaki, *Kokubungaku no Shisō: Sono Han'ei to Shuen (Ideology in 'Japanese Literature': Prosperity and Decline)* (Kyoto: Gakujutsu Shuppankai, 2006), pp. 77-124.

14 Oshikawa Shunrou, *Shin Arabiyan Naito (New Arabian Nights)* (Tokyo: Daigakukan, 1903), p. 2.

15 Soseki's enthusiasm for Stevenson is well known. In the magazine interview in 1906, he highly praises the

narrative style of Stevenson: 'Among European authors, I like Stevenson's narrative style best. It is powerful, concise, without any redundancy, and masculine. [...] I think Stevenson is far better than Scott in terms of wordsmanship' (*Chuô Kôron* Jan. 1906, p. 48).

16 Natsume Soseki, *To the Spring Equinox and Beyond*, trans. Kingo Ochiai and Sanford Goldstein (Rutland: Tuttle, 1985), p. 19.

17 Tanabe Yukinobu. ed. *Nihon ni okeru Stevenson Shoshi (The Bibliography of R. L. Stevenson in Japan)*, (Tokyo: Asahi Shuppansha, 1974).

18 Sagara Jiro, *Stevenson* (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1938), p. 73.

19 We find a lot of war-related essays, discussions, and interviews in the 1930s and 40s. For example, the *Bungei Shunjû* issued a special edition entitled *Genchi Hôkoku (A Report from the Scene)* in June 1941 when Nakajima was supposed to be writing *Light, Wind, and Dreams*. In the ordinary issues, political articles often outnumbered literature during this period. According to a letter of 6 December 1941, literary magazines were available in Saipan and Nakajima read them there (vol.3: p. 650).

20 Nakajima's frequent visit to a Japanese sculptor, Hijikata Toshikatsu, was mentioned in many letters and diary entries. His encounter with Hijikata's native assistant, Maria, inspired him to write a short story 'Mariyan' in 1942. As to Japanese artists' visits to and imaginations of *nan'yô*, see Ôkaya Kôji, *Nankai Hyôtô: Mikuroneshia ni Miserareta Hijikata Hisakatsu, Sugiura Sasuke, and Nakajima Atsushi (A Drift in the South Seas: Hijikata Hisakatsu, Sugiura Sasuke, and Nakajima Atsushi in Micronesia)* (Tokyo: Fuzambo International, 2007), especially pp. 25-8.

21 The intertextuality and the similar motifs are supposedly due to the author's exceptionally short artistic career. While the earliest professional work was recognised to be 'Tonan-sensei' ('Master Tonan') completed in 1933, almost all of his representative stories were composed a few years before his death: 'My Journey to the West' in 1939-42; 'Kotan' ('The Ancient Stories'), which includes the most highly appreciated stories, 'Sangetsu-ki' ('The Moon over the Mountain') and 'Mojika,' ('The Curse of Letters') in 1940; all of his Pacific stories except for *Light, Wind, and Dreams*, 'Deshi' ('The Disciple'), and 'Riryô' ('Li Ling') in 1942.

22 Kawamura Minato attempts to interpret Nakajima's entire works employing a motif of *rôshitsu* (over-speculation on the self). His stimulating discussion concerning to 'The Ancient Stories' discloses the significance of letters in Nakajima's work. See Kawamura's *Rôshitsu Seiden: Nakajima Atsushi no Bungaku to Shôgai (Rôshitsu Seiden: Literature and Life of Nakajima Atsushi)* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo Shinsha, 2009), pp. 197-214.

23 'My Journey to the West' is Nakajima's adaptation of a Chinese classic. The main characters are three idiosyncratic monsters – Son Gokû (Sun Wukong, or Monkey King), Cho Hakkai (Zhu Bajie, or Monk Pig), and Sa Gojô (Sha Wujing, or Friar Sand) – who escort a monk to India. Nakajima depicts Gojô as a bystander of the adventure.

24 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Vailima Letters* (London: Methuen, 1901), p. 81.

25 *ibid*, p. 101.