From "Ten Nights' Dreams" Part III

-The Last Four Dreams of Ōseki-

「夢十夜」より —漱石の残りの四つの夢—

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Foreword

I have contributed the translation of "Ten Nights' Dreams" by Sōseki Natsume to the Bulletin of Nagasaki Wesleyan Junior College since 1991: three dreams of the work to No. 14 (1991) and three to No. 15 (1992). In this present issue, all the other four dreams, the fifth, the seventh, the eighth and the tenth, are being printed.

Some people say the things in dreams are quite colourless. But these dreams of Sōseki have clear colours, which, I think, makes his dreams not only vivid and lively, but also remarkably suggestive.

There are many colours employed in these dreams. But among others, the flame colour of the campfire in the fifth dream suggests the cruel war and the intense and tragic love. In the seventh dream, the black smoke of the ship and the black waves of the seas show the gloomy and desperate destiny of life. In the eighth dream, the white smocks of the barbers seem to indicate the commonplace and boring everyday life. In the tenth dream, the various colours of many kinds of fruits and the green field appear to be suggestive of the complication and irritation in life.

A number of critics remark that "Ten Nights' Dreams" is an extremely important work for the psychological study of Sōseki's literature, showing very profound significances. But here at least I could say that we can clearly feel what the images of some colours in those dreams signify.
The Fifth Night

I dreamed a dream like this:

It was long, long ago, probably in the times near to the age of gods. In a battle we were unfortunately defeated, and I was captured and brought in front of the captain of the enemy.

The men of those days were all taller. And they all had long beards. Everyone wore a leather girdle with a rod-like sword attached to it. Their bows had strings which seemed to be made of thick parts of natural wisteria vines. The bows were neither lacquered nor polished. They were quite simple ones.

The captain of the enemy was seated on something like a sake cask laid bottom upward, holding the middle of a bow in his right hand with its lower end on the grass. As for his face, the two thick eyebrows were connected above the nose. In those days there were no such things as razors, of course.

I was not allowed to sit on a chair because I was a captive. I was squatted on the grass with my legs crossed. I had a big pair of straw boots on. The straw boots of those times were so deep that, when one stood in them, they covered one's legs up to the knees. On the upper brim, straws of some length were left unknit for decorative fringes so that they would swing as one walked.

The captain looked at me by the light of the campfire, and asked whether I would die or live on. It was the custom in those times to ask this question of every captured man. A captive who answered that he would live on was acknowledged to have expressed his submission to the enemy, and one who said that he would die his insubordination. I answered simply, "I'll die." The captain threw away the bow he had been holding, and began to draw the rod-like sword on his side. Upon it the flames from the campfire, driven by the wind, blew sideways. I raised forth my right hand open like a maple leaf higher than my eyes with the palm toward the captain. It was the sign of "Wait a
moment.” The captain put his sword back into the sheath with a clank.

There were love affairs even in those days. I told the captain that I was eager to see the woman I loved once more before I died. He said that he could wait till the first cock’s crow in the morning. I had to call the woman there to me before the first cock’s crow. If she failed to turn up till the first cock crowed, I should be killed without seeing her.

The captain was looking at the fire from his seat. I was on the grass with my big straw boots crossed, waiting for the woman to come. The night was gradually advancing.

Sometimes the sound of the burning wood collapsing was heard. Every time it broke down, the flames rushed upon the captain frantically. The captain’s eyes twinkled below his black eyebrows. A man came up and threw new sticks into the fire. Soon the fire began to crackle. The sound was so cheerful that it seemed almost to repel the darkness.

At this time the woman was leading out her white horse which had been tethered to an oak-tree in her backyard. She stroked its mane three times and then swung up on to the tall back of the horse. It was a bare-backed horse with no saddle nor stirrups. When she spurred the horse on its sides with her long white legs, the horse began to run at full speed. The sky in the distance was tinged with the dim light of the campfire, to which some wood had probably been supplied. Toward this light the horse came dashing through the darkness. It came flying with two fiery columns of breath out of its nostrils. Yet the woman kept spurring the horse on with her slender legs. The horse flew so quickly that the sound of the hooves rang in the air. The woman’s hair trailed long behind in the dark like a pennant fluttering in the wind. But she was still far from the camp.

At that time, in the dark on the roadside, was heard the sudden crow of a cock, cock-a-doodle-doo. The woman leaned herself back and drew the reins quick and hard with both her hands. With a clack the horse struck the hooves of its forefeet deep into a solid rock.
Another cock-a-doodle-doo was heard.

The woman uttered a cry, and slackened the reins all at once. All the horse's knees suddenly bent, and the horse leaned forward together with its rider on its back. Below the rock was a deep abyss!

The marks of the horse hooves are still left on the rock. It was Amanojaku that imitated the cock's crow. As long as the marks of those hooves remain impressed on the surface of the rock, Amanojaku would be my enemy.

Note:
1. Amanojaku: A very perverse and cross-grained female devil, trampled upon by one of the gardian deities (cf. "the Sixth Night"). A perverse and cross-grained person is often called "Amanojaku".
The Seventh Night

It seems that I was embarked on a large ship.

The ship was sailing on through the waves puffing out black smoke incessantly day and night. It was giving out a tremendous sound. But I did not know what place the ship was bound for. I only saw a red-hot sun rising from under the waves. The sun came up high and lingered for a while just above the tall mast, and soon passing the large ship, it travelled ahead. And finally it sank under the waves making a sound like red-hot tongs soaked in water. Every time the sun set, the blue waves in the distance seethed in a dark-red colour. The ship sailed after those waves with a terrific noise. But it was unable to overtake them by any means.

One day I stopped one of the crew and asked, "Is this ship going west?"

The sailor stared at me for a while with a puzzled look, and then asked back, "Why?"

"Because the ship seems to be sailing after the setting sun."

The sailor laughed loudly. And he went away.

"Is the westering sun's destination in the east? Is it true? Is the easterly sun's home in the west? Is it true, too? We are all on the waves. All on a sea voyage. Let it go. Let it go." These words were being sung. I went to the bow and found a number of sailors pulling in a thick mast-robe.

I felt forlorn and helpless. I could not tell when I would be able to get on land. And I did not know where I was going. The only thing that I knew was that the ship was moving on through waves puffing out black smoke. The wavy seas were quite extensive. They looked unlimitedly blue. They sometimes looked purple. Only the waves around the moving ship were always white in foam. I felt absolutely forlorn. I thought I would rather throw myself overboard than be embarked on such a ship as this.

There were many fellow passengers on board. Most of them seemed to be foreigners. But they had many varieties of features. When the sky was cloudy
and the ship was pitching and rolling, I saw a woman weeping bitterly leaning over the railing on the deck. The handkerchief which she was wiping her eyes with looked pure white. But she was dressed in something like printed cotton. When I saw this woman, I noticed that I was not the only person in the world that felt sorrowful.

One night while I was looking at the stars by myself on the deck, a foreigner drew near to me and asked me if I knew about astronomy. As I even thought of dying because the world was so weary, I did not need to know anything like astronomy. I did not give any answer. Then the foreigner told me something about the Big Dipper on the top of Taurus. And he said that the stars and the seas were all the creations of God. Finally he asked me whether I believed in God or not. I remained silent looking up at the sky.

One day I happened to enter the saloon and found a young woman in a gay dress playing the piano with her back toward me. By her side a tall handsome man was standing, singing a song. His mouth looked very big. But the couple looked quite oblivious of anything other than themselves. They seemed to have forgotten even the fact that they were on board a ship.

I felt more and more tedious. At last I made up my mind to kill myself. So one night when I saw nobody around me on the deck, I dared to plunge into the sea. But—the moment I felt my feet leave the deck, with the connection between the ship and me broken off, I suddenly came to feel my life dear. I regretted my deed heartily. But it was too late. I was destined to get into the water whether I wished to or not. The ship was probably very tall, and so after my body got off the deck of the ship, there was a long time before my feet reached the surface of the water. But as I had nothing to hold to, my body was steadily getting nearer and nearer to the water. However hard I might try to draw in my legs, the water became nearer. The colour of the water was black.

Meanwhile the ship had passed me puffing its usual black smoke out of the chimneys. I realized for the first time then that I should have been on board
the ship though I did not know where it was going. But it was too late for me to take advantage of this realization, and I went on falling toward the black waves with infinite regret and fear in myself.
The Eighth Night

When I crossed the threshold of the barber's shop, I was received with a simultaneous voice of greeting, "Welcome!" from a group of several men in white.

Looking around standing at the centre of the room, I found myself in a square room. There were some windows open on two sides of the room and the other two sides had mirrors on the walls. I counted and found six mirrors in all.

I seated myself on the chair in front of one of the mirrors. At that moment, the seat gave a dull and soft sound. The chair was so made as to be quite comfortable to sit on. In the mirror I could see myself reflected finely. Behind my face I could see a window. I could also see a lattice-screen to the counting corner aslant. Inside the screen nobody was seen. I could have a full sight of the busts of the people in the street who were passing by the window.

There was seen Shōtarō passing accompanied by his girl-friend. He had on a Panama hat which I did not know when he had bought. The woman I did not know when he had become acquainted with, either. He looked very proud of both of them. I wanted to have a better look at the woman's features, but they passed by too quickly.

There passed by a bean-curd seller blowing the bugle. With the bugle applied to the mouth, his cheeks were bulged as if they had been stung by bees. As he passed away with his cheeks bulged, I felt anxious about him. His cheeks might remain swollen all his life with such bulges as the stings by bees.

There turned up a geisha-girl. She had not yet dressed herself up for the night. Her hair looked somewhat slovenly with the base of the Shimada coiffure loose. Her countenance also looked drowsy. She had a pitiably bad complexion. She was making a bow to somebody and saying something or other, but the person whom she was talking to would not appear in the look-
ing-glass.

Then a tall man in a white smock, came to stand at the back of me and began to gaze at my head with scissors and a comb in his hands. Twisting my thin moustache, I asked him, "Is it likely to become anything good?"

The man in white said nothing and tapped me on the head with the amber-coloured comb he was holding in his hand.

"Well, though I'd like to ask about my hair too, what do you think about the moustache?" I asked the man in white. "Is it likely to become something good at all?" He made no answer all the same and began to click the scissors.

I was keeping my eyes wide open intending to look at everything in the mirror, but as black pieces of hair were blown against my face with every click of the scissors, I felt afraid and closed my eyes soon. Then the man in white said, "Did you see the goldfish seller in front of our shop?"

I answered negatively. The man in white said nothing after that and kept clinking the scissors earnestly. Then I suddenly heard someone shout in a loud voice, "Watch out!" It made me open my eyes suddenly, and I saw a wheel of a bicycle under the sleeve of the man in white. I could see the shafts of a rickshaw, too. But at that time the man in white held my head with both his hands and jerked it aside. The bicycle and the rickshaw got quite out of sight. I could only hear the clink of the scissors.

Soon the man in white came round to my side and began to cut the hair around my ear. Pieces of the hair no longer flew in front of my face, and so I opened my eyes at ease. There was a voice calling near at hand: "Millet-cake, millet-cake, cake, cake." Steamed millet was being pounded into cake in a mortar with a small wooden pestle, which was intentionally being hit against the brim of the mortar to beat time. As I had never seen a millet-cake seller since my childhood, I was anxious to have a look at his appearance. But he would never come out in the mirror. I could only hear the sound of pounding in the mortar.

I tried to look into the corner of the looking-glass with all the sight
I had. Then I saw a woman sitting at the counter inside the lattice-screen, though I did not know when she had come out there. She was a large-framed woman of a dark complexion with thick eyebrows. With her hair dressed in the ginkgo-leaf style, she had on a lined kimono with a black-satin collar without underwear; and squatting with one knee drawn up, she was counting bank notes. They seemed to be ten-yen notes. With her long eyelashes downward and her thin lips tightly compressed, she was engaged in counting the number of the notes. She was very quick at counting them. Yet the number of the notes did not seem to be coming near to an end at all. The notes on her lap were at most about one hundred in number, but the hundred sheets of notes remained a hundred sheets of notes left to be counted however long she might engage herself in counting them.

I was looking at the woman's face and the ten-yen notes absent-mindedly. Then close to my ear the man in white said in a loud voice, "Let me wash your hair." It was a good chance for me to have a look at the woman, so the moment I rose from the chair, I looked back toward the counter. But I could see neither the woman nor the bundle of paper money inside the lattice-screen.

Having paid the fee, I went out, and there on the left side of the front door, I saw several egg-shaped wooden vessels in a row, in which were swimming lots of goldfish, red and spotted, lean and fat. Behind the row of vessels was a goldfish seller. He was sitting still with his chin on his hand, gazing at those goldfish in front of him. He took little notice of the heavy traffic on the street. I was standing there for a while looking at the goldfish seller. But he would never stir while I was staring at him.

Notes:
2. the ginkgo-leaf style: A style of women's hair dressed in a shape of a ginkgo-leaf.
3. had on a lined kimono without underwear: It was thought in those days that wearing a lined kimono without underwear was a smart way of dressing.
The Tenth Night

Ken-san came to tell me that Shōtarō, who had been kidnapped by a woman, had suddenly come back on the seventh night after his disappearance, and had fallen ill in bed with a sudden attack of fever.

Shōtarō is the handsomest young man in our neighbourhood, and an honest and good-natured fellow. His only amusement is like this: spending every evening sitting at the entrance of the fruit store with a Panama hat on, and watching the faces of women who are walking on the street in front of the store. He admires their beauty very much. He has no other special traits than that.

When there is no woman passing for a long time, he looks at the fruits instead of the street. There are many kinds of fruits there. Some baskets piled beautifully with peaches, apples, loquats, bananas and so on are laid out in two rows so that they will serve as presents. Shōtarō looks at these baskets and says they are beautiful. He says the most attractive business is the running of a fruit store. Yet, instead of trying to do so, he is idling his time away with a Panama hat on.

He sometimes comments on summer oranges and others, saying that their colours are fine. But he has never bought any fruit with his money. Nor would he eat any for nothing, of course. He only admires the colours of the fruits.

One evening, a woman happened to appear and stood at the entrance of the store. She seemed to be a respectable lady, judging from her refined attire. The colours of her kimono struck Shōtarō’s fancy. Moreover, Shōtarō was deeply impressed with the woman’s features. So he took off his favourite Panama hat and made a polite bow before her. The woman pointed to the biggest basket of fruit saying, “I’ll take this.” Shotaro took up the basket right away and handed it to her. The woman, taking the basket in her hand, said that it was very heavy.

Shōtarō, not only a leisured man but also a very jolly fellow by nature,
was ready to say, "Then I'll carry it to your house," and go out of the fruit store accompanying the woman. And he never returned since.

However happy-go-lucky a person Shōtarō might be, it was too easy-going a way of his; something must have happened to him. So saying, his relatives and friends were very anxious about him. Then he suddenly came back on the seventh night. The people gathered around him and inquired where he had been. He answered that he had been to the mountains, where they went by streetcar.

It must have been a long ride of the streetcar. According to Shōtarō, he and the woman got off the streetcar to find themselves in a field. It was a very vast field with green grass all over as far as his eyes could see. A little walk together on the grass brought them to the tip of a cliff. Then the woman said to Shōtarō, "Jump off from here." Looking into the abyss, he could see the wall of the precipice but not the bottom. He again took off his Panama hat and bowed his declaration of the woman's demand over and over. The woman said, "If you dare not jump off, swine will lick you. Are you prepared for that?"

Shōtarō had a strong aversion to swine and Kumoemon. But for his dear life, he refrained from jumping off. Then there came a swine grunting toward him. Shōtarō was obliged to strike the swine on the tip of the nose with the slender palm-tree stick he was holding. The swine tumbled over with a dull cry, and fell into the abyss. While Shōtarō was taking a little rest, another swine came up to rub its big nose against him. He could not but swing up his stick once more. The swine also gave a dull cry and fell headlong into the abyss. Then a third one appeared. At that time Shōtarō happened to look across the field and noticed hundreds of thousands of swine running straight toward him in a crowd from the distant horizon of the grassland all grunting. He was heartily frightened. But he could do no other than strike those rushing animals on the noses carefully one after another with his palm-tree stick. It was quite strange, however, that a slight touch of his stick on the nose made the swine fall easily into the abyss. Looking
down, he saw innumerable swine falling headlong in a line along the precipice without the bottom. He became afraid of himself for throwing so many animals down into the gulf. But the animals were coming in close succession. Like legged black clouds dashing swiftly through the green grass, the animals were rushing upon him grunting endlessly.

Shōtarō plucked up his courage and kept on striking the swine on the noses for seven days and six nights together. But at last his energy was exhausted and his arms became numbed. In the end he was licked by swine. And he fell on the cliff.

Ken-san told me the story about Shōtarō in this way and added that it was not good to look at women so earnestly. I thought he was right. Ken-san said he would like to have Shōtarō's Panama hat.

There is little hope of Shōtarō's recovery now. The possessor of the Panama hat will probably be Ken-san soon.

Note:
1. Kumoeemon: Kumoeemon Tōchūken (1873—1916). A reciter of naniwa-bushi (a kind of Japanese tale with some melody) who was very famous and popular about the time when the present work was written (1908).
Afterword

When I had "From 'Ten Nights' Dreams'" printed in the Bulletin two years ago, I did not necessarily have any intention or expectation of the complete publishing of all the work. But, fortunately, I could manage to finish all the work this year. I appreciate the encouragement of the professors and the other staff of the college.

Moreover, I am very grateful for the kind consideration of Prof. Kawahara, editor of the Bulletin, and his assistants.

References

4) Shigeo Hayashida: Sōseki no Higeki (Tragedy of Sōseki), Siraishi Shoten, 1982.

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