

〈翻訳〉

## *Memoirs of Yaeko Neesima*

As told to Kamio Nagasawa

Juliet W. CARPENTER, Editor  
Yasuyo EDASAWA  
Emiko HIBI  
Yasuyo BAMBA

### **Preface**

#### **About the translation**

Who was Yae (or Yaeko) Neesima (1845-1932)? Some facts are known: She was the wife of Joseph Hardy Neesima, the founder of the Doshisha; served as a volunteer nurse in the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars; and later became a teacher in the Urasenke school of tea ceremony. But little is known about what kind of person she was, perhaps because she rarely talked about herself. Written sources about her life are very limited. As far as we know, the only ones existing are *Nijima Yaeko kaisôroku* (*Memoirs of Yaeko Neesima* by Kamio Nagasawa, Doshisha University Press, 1973), translated here for the first time; “Nijima Yaeko toji kaikodan” (“Retrospection by Mrs. Yaeko Neesima,” reprinted by Naoto Yoshikai in *Doshisha Dansô*, No. 20, Doshisha Archives, March 2000, pp. 102-118); “Shiryô shôkai: Nijima Yae no zasshi kiji shûsei” (“Historical Document: Nijima Yae’s Magazine Articles, a

Bibliographical Study,” reprinted by Atsushi Yamanashi in *Neesima Studies*, No. 103, Doshisha Archives, Feb. 2012, pp. 9-55); and a few short letters and reports she contributed to churches and other organizations. There are virtually no English references about her. Therefore, since we believe that it would be valuable for English speakers to have access to material about this remarkable woman, we decided to translate her memoirs into English.

The original manuscript of the *Memoirs of Yaeko Neesima* was written by Kamio Nagasawa, the student editor of the *Doshisha Shimbun*, based on interviews with Yae Neesima (then aged eighty-four), for publication in the newspaper in 1928. All the stories were composed as Yae’s narration although she herself did not write a single sentence. Nagasawa emphasized that he wrote them in Yae’s spoken tone “with careful attention as much as possible not to spoil her voice.” Forty-five years later, in 1973, he decided to publish the memoirs in book form having edited the contents, arranged according to topic, with photographs and notes.

The purpose of our translation is to introduce Yae Neesima to English-speaking readers. For that reason we decided to translate only the main contents of the memoirs and not the foreword by Dr. Sumiya (then chancellor of the Doshisha) or Nagasawa’s notes and afterword. All the notes to this translation are our own. Lastly, we included a brief chronological history of Yae Neesima.

Please note that the text includes some factual errors due to Yae’s or Nagasawa’s faulty memory. Some of these are marked, but correcting them all is beyond our ability and beyond the scope of this project. Names are given in Western order, first name first

and last name last, except for pre-Meiji figures. Although Yae and Jô's surname is commonly romanized as "Nijima," we have retained the spelling "Neesima," which he preferred. Distances and lengths are converted using the U.S. measurement system. Monetary units are given in Japanese currency.

Yae's memoirs contain nineteen sections in total. Sections 1-6 were translated by Emiko Hibi, sections 7-13 by Yasuyo Edasawa, and sections 14-19 by Yasuyo Bamba.

Although we tried our best, we realize this translation is far from perfect. Still, readers will discover in these pages a woman who was far more independent and had a far more equal and loving relationship with her husband than most Japanese women in those days. Also they will find interesting episodes about her husband Jô, many of which are not recorded anywhere else.

Finally, the translators would like to express our sincere gratitude to Professor Juliet Carpenter of Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts. Without her careful review of our draft, this translation would never have come to completion. In addition, we would like to thank Professor Emeritus Kiyone Sakamoto, Professor Kathleen Kitao, and Professor Chûsei Ôshima for their valuable comments and encouragement.

## **Section 1**

Dr. Learned<sup>1</sup> has already written almost everything about the beginning of the Doshisha.<sup>2</sup> It began in 1875, before we were married.

I don't remember exactly, but it was in about April or May that

Jô<sup>3</sup> first visited Kyoto. After that he got acquainted with Masanao Makimura,<sup>4</sup> who was then the [vice] governor of Kyoto prefecture, concerning matters of founding a school. Through his introduction, Jô came to meet my brother Kakuma.<sup>5</sup>

Since before then, I'd been studying the Bible at Dr. Gordon's.<sup>6</sup> Dr. and Mrs. Gordon had come to Kyoto for their health and were renting a room in a small house in Kiyamachi.

One day I went to Dr. Gordon's as always to read the Gospel According to St. Matthew, just when Jô—I learned his name later—was there. I saw him shining shoes at the front entrance. Thinking a family servant was shining Dr. Gordon's shoes, I entered the house without giving him a word of greeting. After a while, Mrs. Gordon told me she would introduce me to a man named Jô Neesima. That's how Jô and I met.

At that time I was serving as a matron in the school Jokôba,<sup>7</sup> which is now the First Kyoto Prefectural Girls' High School. Jô asked me various questions about the school and asked me to help him go there for a visit, so I told the school staff what he had in mind. A few days later, he came and made classroom visits. The students were already reading Dickens after a British teacher had taught them a smattering of English using a basic English textbook. Jô was surprised to see them reading such a difficult book. He talked a lot with the British teacher before leaving.

After that, I continued to visit Dr. Gordon's after school every day, but I never saw Jô there again.

I think it was some time after that when Jô visited my brother.

I don't know how the talks between the two of them went, for I wasn't home at the time. Anyway they decided to establish the Doshisha.

- 1 Dwight Whitney Learned (1848-1943), an American Board missionary, came to Japan in November 1875. In the following year he joined the Doshisha, where he taught church history, political economy, political science, gymnastic exercises, and Biblical studies. He retired in 1928 and went back to the United States.
- 2 By "the Doshisha," Yae mainly referred to Doshisha Eigakkô, or Doshisha Training School. Her memoirs contain no reference to Doshisha Girls' School, founded on October 24, 1876. The Doshisha as we know it today is one of the biggest educational corporations in Japan with an integrated educational system that includes a kindergarten, an international academy, an elementary school, four junior and senior high schools, and two universities: Doshisha University and Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts.
- 3 Joseph Hardy Neesima (1843-90) left his native Japan for the United States in 1864, when the Tokugawa Shogunate still imposed a strict overseas travel ban on Japanese people. With assistance, he was able to smuggle himself out of the country and later found passage on a ship heading to the United States, arriving in Boston, via Shanghai, in 1865. The ship was the *Wild Rover*, owned by Alpheus Hardy. Mr. and Mrs. Hardy took Neesima under their wing, called him "Joseph," and provided him with a first-rate education. Neesima graduated from Phillips Academy, Amherst College, and Andover Theological Seminary. He was the first Japanese to receive a degree from a Western college and the first Japanese to be ordained as a Protestant minister. In 1874, the year he returned to Japan, he was appointed a corresponding missionary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Before leaving, he was given the middle name "Hardy" by Alpheus Hardy. After that his name in English was Joseph Hardy Neesima, and he took the first name "Jô" in Japanese (see Section 13, p. 168). On November 29, 1875, he opened Doshisha Eigakkô, or Doshisha

- Training School (now Doshisha University), in Kyoto.
- 4 Masanao Makimura (1834-96), a statesman, became governor of Kyoto prefecture in 1875. Although initially cooperative toward Neesima's project of founding a school in Kyoto, later he reversed his attitude because of anti-Christian prejudice.
  - 5 Kakuma Yamamoto (1828-92), Yae's older brother, accompanied the lord of Aizu to Kyoto in 1864. After the first battle of the Boshin Civil War (1868-69), he was taken prisoner as an enemy of the new government. While confined, he went blind and lame. Later he became a prefectural government advisor and helped found the Doshisha. He was baptized in 1885.
  - 6 Marquis Lafayette Gordon (1843-1900), an American Board missionary, came to Japan in September 1872 and was first assigned to Osaka. In spring 1875, while he and his wife, Agnes Helen Gordon (1852-1940), were staying at an inn in Kiyamachi, Kyoto, he called on Kakuma Yamamoto and gave him a copy of *Tendô Sogen*, or *Evidence of Christianity*, written in Chinese by W. A. P. Martin (1827-1916), an American Presbyterian missionary in China. The book helped Yamamoto resolve his questions about Christianity. In 1879, Gordon began teaching courses at the Doshisha, including homiletics, pastoral theology, mental philosophy, and hymns.
  - 7 Jokôba, founded in 1872, was a Kyoto prefectural girls' school and also the first girls' school in Japan. In 1904 it became the First Kyoto Prefectural Girls' High School, predecessor of Kyoto Prefectural Ôki Senior High School. Yae actually worked there as a teacher as well as a matron, but was dismissed soon after her engagement to a Christian.

## Section 2

The Doshisha opened on November 29, 1875. They first planned to found a school in Osaka. Jô received a letter from Kôin Kido<sup>1</sup> and then negotiated with the governor of Osaka prefecture, but the governor wouldn't consent. As a last resort, Jô consulted Gov. Makimura in Kyoto, who eagerly gave his approval to founding a

school in Kyoto. That was because the Osaka governor and he didn't get along, and so after the Osaka governor refused, he was bound and determined to say yes.

And so, the school opened at last and several foreign teachers came, including Dr. Davis<sup>2</sup> and Dr. Learned. The future looked bright for the school, but then Gov. Makimura changed his mind and began to oppose the Doshisha.

According to Jô, Makimura-san was a leading figure but he had an envious streak. He seemed to resent Jô for having more foreign teachers in the Doshisha than there were in Kyoto prefectural schools. Jô faced strong objections from the governor, who said, "Neesima has no money and yet he can employ so many foreign teachers. That's because he gets money from America." So as a result, every time Jô wanted to employ foreign teachers, he had to go to Tokyo to ask for the residence permits.

I remember a story. I don't know exactly who Jô was going to employ at the time. He went to Tokyo, held prior consultations with Yûrei Mori<sup>3</sup> and Fujimaro Tanaka,<sup>4</sup> and then reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They told him getting resident permission for foreign teachers would depend on a cover letter by the governor of Kyoto prefecture. Right away he sent off a telegram to Gov. Makimura: "Foreign Ministry says permission depends on your cover letter." Soon the letter from Gov. Makimura came, and he got the permission certificates from the Foreign Ministry. When he heard this, Mori-san laughed and told Jô, "You are too literal."

- 1 Kôin Kido (1833-77) was a statesman and one of the leaders of the Meiji Restoration of 1868. He was an associate ambassador on the Iwakura Mission to the United States and Europe (1871-73), met Neesima in the U.S., and asked him to join the mission.
- 2 Jerome Dean Davis (1838-1910) was an American Board missionary. He came to Japan in 1871 and preached the gospel in Kobe. When the Doshisha opened, he moved to Kyoto as the first teacher there. He taught systematic theology, ethics, and apologetics.
- 3 Yûrei (or Arinori) Mori (1847-89) was a diplomat and a statesman who became Japan's first minister of education (1885-89). He stayed in the United States from 1870 to 1873. In 1871, he met Neesima in Boston and persuaded the Japanese government to formally approve Neesima's study in the U.S. and issue him a passport.
- 4 Fujimaro Tanaka (1845-1909) was a diplomat and a leader in the Ministry of Education. He joined the Iwakura Mission as an educational councilor and asked Neesima to assist him in inspecting American and European schools.

### Section 3

The school opened in the house of an aristocrat named Takamatsu-san. It was surrounded by row houses, just south of Rakuyô Church. Takamatsu-san rented it from a man called Monto Nakai, who was chief fireman at the Imperial Palace. Takamatsu-san was a very poor nobleman and decided to rent out the house and one of the row houses at a monthly cost of thirty-five yen. The rent was to be paid in three-month installments.

When he heard about it, Makimura-san summoned Takamatsu-san to the Kyoto Prefectural Government Office and told him, "Don't rent the house to Neesima." But Takamatsu-san was utterly unable to return the three-months' rent he had received in advance, so he had no choice but to leave things as they were. More than one



hundred yen continued to be paid every three months, and Neesima was never asked to leave. One hundred yen was quite a sum of money at that time.

#### **Section 4**

Soon after the Doshisha opened—it was in December, I think—officers from the section of school affairs of the Prefectural Government Office inspected Doshisha Training School. They found Mr. Doane,<sup>1</sup> one of the missionary teachers, teaching the Bible and shouted at him in a fury. “We told you never to teach the Bible at school. How dare you!”

When I came home, my brother said, “I hear officers of school affairs inspected the Doshisha today, found the Bible was being taught, and left in a rage. Neesima-san must be terribly upset. You should go and comfort him in my place.” It was already late at night, but I went straight to his rental house with my niece. He was living in a rather large house owned by a Yamaguchi-san, on the southeast corner of what’s now the First Prefectural Girls’ High School.

When I called on him, he was studying at his desk. After he heard my words of sympathy, he said, “Thank you very much for your concern. But I have absolutely no cause for worry. The Doshisha is in God’s hands and we rely entirely on God. Please tell your brother not to worry, and give him my best regards.”

Then he escorted us home. I forgot to say we were living at a house south of the bookstore Daikokuya, in front of Kyoto Hotel on Kawaramachi Avenue. When I told my brother what Jô had

said, he jumped for joy. “Yes,” he said, “that’s right! The Doshisha is in God’s hands. It’s sure to prosper gradually. I’d forgotten that. I’m ashamed I sent you to call on him. Still and all, Neesima-san is an exceptional man.” He was full of admiration.

- 1 Edward Topping Doane (1830-90) was an American Board missionary. He came to Japan in 1875 after first serving in Micronesia, and became the first music teacher at Doshisha Training School. He went back to the United States in 1877 because of his wife’s illness.

## Section 5

Jô and I became engaged in October 1875.<sup>1</sup> He often used to visit Gov. Makimura. One day the governor asked him, “Are you going to marry a Japanese woman or a foreign woman?”

Jô told him, “I want to marry a Japanese woman after all, because foreigners’ lifestyles are different. But I want nothing to do with a traditional Japanese woman, the kind who, if her husband told her to turn east, would face that way for three years.”

I heard that Gov. Makimura went on to say, “Then I know the right woman for you. She’s Kakuma Yamamoto’s sister. She’s working at Jokôba and every time she calls, she pesters me with a lot of difficult questions. Well, are you interested in marrying her? I’ll act as go-between.” But Jô paid no special attention to me at that time.

Together with a few friends, I was studying the Bible with Jô at the inn Menukiya. The inn is still standing at the west end of the Sanjô-ôhashi Bridge. I enjoyed talking to him about my experiences

in helping to defend the castle in Aizu.<sup>2</sup>

A little later in the summer, the heat got to be too much for me, so one day I set a plank over the well in the courtyard at home and sat down there to do my sewing.

Just then, Jô came by to see my brother. He warned him, "Your sister is doing something dangerous. If the plank breaks, she'll fall into the well."

My brother said, "What am I going to do with her? She is always doing something outrageous." At that moment Jô remembered what he'd heard from Makimura-san. I heard he began to have his eye on me around then, thinking we could be engaged if I said yes.

1 Because of their engagement, Gov. Makimura dismissed Yae from Jokôba. On Nov. 23, 1875, Neesima discussed the matter in a letter to Mrs. Hardy: "Soon after the occurrence of this happy event [the engagement], she was discharged from a female school sustained by the Kiyoto Government where she has been a teacher for four years. It was done by the Governor's own decision without consulting the officers of the school because he feared if she should teach Christian religion in the school all pupils would certainly leave off it... She was very suddenly discharged from her school but was not sorry at all. She was saying another day 'it is all right, hereafter I will get more time to study the Gospel truth.''" (*The Complete Works of Joseph Hardy Neesima* Vol. 6, *Letters in English*. Kyoto: Dôhôsha Shuppan, 1985, p. 169.)

2 When the Boshin Civil War was in its final stage in August 1868, the lord of Aizu holed up in Aizu Wakamatsu Castle and fought a rearguard action against the government forces. During the siege, about six hundred women worked under the command of his sister-in-law Teruhime, cooking meals, caring for the wounded, and disposing

of exploded shells. Among them was Yae. After her younger brother was killed, she bobbed her hair, dressed in his clothes, and fought with a Spencer repeating rifle. As the daughter of the master gunner of Aizu Domain, she had expert knowledge of gunnery. One day she was called to the lord's presence to explain how cannonballs explode. With the lord and his soldiers looking on, she disassembled a cannonball and demonstrated its structure and function. The castle surrendered a month later. When leaving, she wept and inscribed this poem on the white wall:

Tomorrow night  
someone from I know not where  
will gaze upon it here —  
my castle drenched in moonlight.

## Section 6

Jô and I were married on January 3, 1876. About two years later, a delicate problem arose among my relatives. Jô wanted to forgive the person concerned and let it go. But I insisted, "We mustn't hide unpleasant realities. Things have to be made clear." I wouldn't give in. Then Jô said, "I heard about your stubbornness from your brother and Makimura-san, but I never thought it was this bad. Oh, what a horrible mistake I made!" He laughed heartily.

Jô was generally an impatient, short-tempered person. But, no matter how angry he became, he was always able to regain control of himself at once. I was never able to follow his example.

One day, he came home after some big trouble at school. He was extremely concerned about it, and began eating dinner without saying anything. At times like that, a big vein stood out on his forehead, so I could always tell how he felt.

"Today is a fine day, and yet it's going to thunder." Whenever Jô was in a terrible mood, I always told jokes.

"What are you talking about?" he asked, looking at me, in surprise.

"Have you ever read the old book *Onna Imagawa*<sup>1</sup>?" I asked.

"No, I've never read such a stupid book," he answered.

"It's not stupid at all. You should really take a look at it."

"What on earth are you talking about?" Jô looked more and more puzzled.

"The book says, 'First, it is very impolite to wear an ill-tempered look on your face in front of others when they come to call.'" I recited the passage from memory.

Then Jô clapped his hands and said, "Today at school, there was an unpleasant incident between teachers and students. I carelessly let my feelings show on my face. I'm sorry. Please forgive me."

I told him, "I don't mind a bit. We two are alone in this house. Unless I tell you jokes, who can comfort you when you are out of sorts? I can stand the faces you make in any case. But if the Doshisha people saw you looking like that, how would they feel?"

He said, "Don't worry. I never, ever look like that in front of my students. So forget it."

We finished our dinner pleasantly and then prayed together.

I was often encouraged by Jô's prayers. He was a man of prayer until the end. When he suffered through sleepless nights, sick in bed, he would often quietly get down out of bed to offer fervent prayers. We prayed together in Japanese, but when Jô prayed

alone, he used English, so I wasn't able to understand exactly what he said. But when he warmed to his prayers, I would often hear him say the words, "Please my Doshisha [*sic*]."

- 1 Written by a woman named Sawada Kichi in 1687, *Onna Imagawa* was used to teach Confucian-style moral lessons to small girls as well as to make them practice calligraphy.

## Section 7

One morning, Jô gave the students a talk. His talk was about Napoleon, I believe. For some reason, in the middle of the talk he suddenly stopped and sat down. Kôtarô Shimomura,<sup>1</sup> who was sitting next to him, wondered what had happened and asked, "Do you feel ill?" Jô answered, "While I was talking, the students were reading books. It's no use to talk if they're not listening. So I stopped." Then Shimomura-san got angry and scolded the students severely, saying "You must apologize to your teacher!" After that, no one read books during his talks. But only one student came to Jô to apologize for his bad behavior. Jô sighed deeply. "Why don't the rest of the students think they are wrong when they do something wrong?"

- 1 Kôtarô Shimomura (1861-1937) was a Japanese chemical engineer known for his many inventions. From about age twelve, he attended Kumamoto Yôgakkô, or Kumamoto English School, established in 1871, where he studied under the American educator Capt. L. L. Janes. In 1876, he transferred to Doshisha Training School and three years later graduated with a degree in theology. In 1885, he went to study

chemistry at the Worcester Polytechnic Institute and Johns Hopkins University. He came back to Japan in 1891 and became a professor and vice-principal at Doshisha Harris Science School. He was the sixth chancellor of the Doshisha (1904-07).

## **Section 8**

In 1884, the Doshisha experienced a Christian revival<sup>1</sup> in February and March. There was such a commotion that the term examinations were cancelled. Four students got so carried away that they became deranged.

One of those students was named Kimura. After he went mad, we brought him home with us for a rest. During that time, Jô tried to avoid him. But Kimura-san was in the east room on the second floor and they used the same stairway, so one night he suddenly came across him face-to-face. Then Kimura-san dragged Jô into his room, grasped his hands tightly and said, "I endow you with the Holy Spirit." After a while, taking his hands away, he said, "Well, have you received the Holy Spirit?"

Jô answered, "Whether I received the Holy Spirit or not is God's will, so I don't know."

"Not even you, Jô Neesima, know whether you received the Holy Spirit or not? How can that be?" And he began to sob.

Related to this, there is a very heartwarming story. While Kimura-san was sick, the father of Prof. Katagiri, the present dean of the Faculty of Letters, who was then a young fellow of eighteen or nineteen, came to take care of him. He treated him with more kindness than a member of his own family could have done. I was really impressed and thought no one could have done a better

job.

- 1 A nationwide revival started in May 1883. At a prayer meeting on March 16, 1884, thirty-seven Doshisha students accepted Christ. Yosaku (Tsuneo) Kimura, then a senior, took an active role in the revival but never recovered from his nervous breakdown. He died in July 1884.

## **Section 9**

This happened shortly after Jô came home from the States.<sup>1</sup> At that time, students were not allowed to watch entertainment shows. But one day, a Doshisha graduate reported to school anonymously that he'd found three students out listening to comic monologues. The school checked the report and found it was true. The three students were suspended for five days and their names were posted on the bulletin board next to the chapel. The next day, as he entered the chapel, Jô glanced over and found that someone had scribbled insults beside the names. He was outraged and tore down the poster. As soon as he went into the chapel, he scolded the students. "How ashamed the three were just to have their names on the board! But, you, their classmates, don't show them any sympathy, but kick them while they are down. What shameless behavior! Those who scribbled, stand up!" But no one stood up.

Then Jô sighed and said, "One time, a widow lost her son and was going to hold a funeral for him, but no one came because it was raining. She decided to have it all by herself, in solitude. Then someone just passing by, even though he didn't know the woman at all, felt great sympathy for her and helped her, so she



could safely send her son off. How different you are! Don't you feel any pity for the three students? If none of you wrote this, then the devil might have done it with an invisible hand." Jô never put up such a notice again.

- 1 From April 1884 to December 1885, Neesima traveled to Southeast Asia, Europe and the United States to rest and gather information.

## **Section 10**

Once at the Doshisha there was a gatekeeper whose name was Gohei.<sup>1</sup> He came to the Doshisha around the time of its foundation, by the introduction of Rev. Teiichi Hori.<sup>2</sup> I think I heard that his hometown was the same as Rev. Hori's or he was working for the Horis when Rev. Hori was born. Gohei-san was quite short; his wife was a good foot and a half taller than him.

Gohei-san liked funny things. Although he didn't even know his ABCs, occasionally he said he was going to give an English speech and spoke gibberish with a strange intonation, trying to make it sound like English. Anyway, he worked very hard at school.

When Jô died, someone asked Gohei-san how he felt. He answered, "Other people called me 'Gohei' without any honorifics, but only Neesima-sensei called me 'Gohei-san.' I cannot forget it."

Gohei-san got sick, and as he lay dying, he asked a student to tell me this: "When I die, please bury me outside Neesima-sensei's tomb. I would like to be his gatekeeper even after I die." I hadn't known Gohei-san was sick, so I went to see him right away. He said to me weeping, "Please grant me this request." I promised,

“When you die, you won’t be buried outside the gate, but inside.” He was overjoyed. To this day, Gohei-san’s ashes are buried inside the gate of the tomb at Nyakôji. I’ve never promised anyone but Gohei-san that they could be buried inside the gate.

- 1 According to a pamphlet about the Doshisha graveyard, Gohei Matsumoto (1831-99) respected Neesima so much that he was baptized in order to spend eternity with him.
- 2 Teiichi Hori (1863-1943) graduated from Doshisha Training School in 1884 and was ordained the next year. He preached the gospel in Shiga, Niigata and Gunma prefectures, and also pastored a Japanese church in Hawaii for eighteen years. From 1927 to 1940, he was head of the religious department at Doshisha University as well as pastor of Doshisha Church.

## Section 11

Jô loved hunting. One time he tried to shoot pigeons in a farmer’s yard because he thought they were wild. But the farmer warned, “Hey, don’t shoot them! They’re ours.” This was one of Jô’s anecdotes that made him blush.

Generally, although Jô loved hunting, his shooting skills were quite poor. He often went hunting but usually came home empty-handed. If he got two or three birds from a morning hunt, that was a big triumph. Once he went hunting with Ichirô-san, Ebina-san’s<sup>1</sup> brother. Each of them got a pigeon and that was the best he ever did.

So I used to laugh and say, “You’re going out to chase birds, not to shoot them!” One day he went to the Ogura pond to shoot ducks, but he couldn’t catch any. He didn’t want to get a teasing

from me, and so he bought a live duck on the way, tied its legs and brought it home to surprise me. Jô stopped hunting before he went to the States, but my house is still full of rifles, bullets and whatnot.

- 1 Danjô Ebina (1856-1937) was a famous Japanese Christian leader and educator. In 1872, he attended Kumamoto Yôgakkô (see Section 7, Note 1). In 1876, he was baptized and went on to study at Doshisha Training School. After graduating in 1879, he became a Congregational pastor and traveled around Japan to spread Christianity. He was the eighth chancellor of the Doshisha (1920-28).

## **Section 12**

This happened in 1888, a little before Jô's death, after he came back from the States. He and I were staying in a rural area of Kobe called Warakuen.

As there was no other entertainment, we used to sit in the corridor and enjoy shooting at targets with air-guns. We competed to see how many targets each one got and I always won.

One day, a man called Saihei Hirose<sup>1</sup> visited us to ask after Jô's health. He was very attentive and kind. He said, "Neesima-san, what did you come here for?" Jô answered, "I came here for my health, why do you ask?" Then Hirose-san pointed to the letters piled in a wicker trunk a foot wide and 15 or 16 inches long. "You came here for your health," he said, "but if you continue on like this, it will be quite impossible for you to recover from your illness."

One night Hirose-san invited us to dinner to cheer us up. When

we went to his house, a Western-style dinner was set out only for us, but the host wasn't there. I wondered what was happening. Then, from the next room, which was darkened and partitioned by a bamboo blind, a *shamisen*<sup>2</sup> began playing and the host started singing *jôruri*.<sup>3</sup> The piece was "Awa no Naruto,"<sup>4</sup> one of his favorites. Hirose-san was very good and Jô was so impressed tears came to his eyes. That was the first and the last time he listened to *jôruri* music.

When Jô was in Tokyo at age sixteen or seventeen, there were many places to hear *jôruri* and *saimon*<sup>5</sup> near Ryôgoku Bridge. He wanted to listen to *jôruri*, so he paid 16 mon to enter a shop surrounded with bamboo blinds. He sat on a bench, removed his swords from his waist and waited for the show to begin. Soon clappers were struck and the bamboo blind was drawn up. A woman with her face painted white bowed in front of a low music stand. Jô just had time to think she was pretty before she began to perform. Then her white throat swelled up like a small balloon and she emitted an unearthly sound. It was so funny that he couldn't help laughing out loud. The man next to him yelled, "Shut up!" Jô hurriedly picked up his swords and ran out. He said, "Since then I always thought *jôruri* sounded like groaning, but Mr. Hirose's *jôruri* is very good." I heard this story for the first time on that occasion.

1 Saihei Hirose (1828-1914) was the first head of the board of directors of the Sumitomo merchant house to be chosen from outside the family, and a strong supporter of the Doshisha in its early days.

- 2 A shamisen is a three-stringed musical instrument played with a plectrum. The sound is similar to that of the American banjo.
- 3 *Jôruri* is a form of traditional Japanese narrative music associated with *bunraku* puppet theater, in which a singer-narrator sings to the accompaniment of a *shamisen*.
- 4 “Awa no Naruto” by Chikamatsu Hanji (1725-83) is one of the most famous titles of *jôruri*. It was first performed in June 1786.
- 5 *Saimon* was one of the most popular music forms in the Tokugawa period (1603-1868). It originated from stories that *yamabushi* (Buddhist mountain ascetics) told about the supernatural powers of gods and Buddha, using conch shells. Later chanters of *saimon* told daily news with *shamisen* accompaniment.

### Section 13

Jô was the fifth of six children. His elder siblings were all girls. When the third girl was born, his grandfather was so disappointed that he decided to bring her up as a boy because he believed if he did that, the next child would be a boy. So he changed her name from “Miyo” to “Miyokichi” and made her wear boy’s clothes until she was four. However, the fourth child was again a girl, so he was discouraged and let “Miyokichi” go back to being a girl.

Jô was born at six o’clock in the morning on the fourteenth day of the New Year,<sup>1</sup> 1843. His grandfather was asleep at the time, convinced it would be a girl again. When the midwife said, “Master, the child was born,” he asked uninterestedly, “What is it, another girl?” The midwife answered, “No, this time it’s a boy.” His grandfather then shouted, “*Shimeta* [Bravo]!” and clapped his hands. It was the fourteenth day and so the *shimenawa*<sup>2</sup> was still hanging at the front gate. So, connecting “*shimeta*” and “*shimenawa*,”

he named the boy “Shimeta.” That was Jô’s name until he left Japan.

When Jô arrived in the United States, Mr. Hardy<sup>3</sup> asked the ship’s captain, “What is this man’s name?” The captain called him “Japanese boy” and didn’t know his real name, so he answered, “John.” This had an offensive meaning and so Mr. Hardy renamed him “Joseph.” When he came back to Japan, he made people read his name “Joseph” written in Chinese characters, but as it was too difficult to read, he changed it to “Jô” using another character.

- 1 The New Year in Japan was traditionally celebrated until January fifteenth, a day known as *koshôgatsu* (literally “small New Year”).
- 2 A sacred rope straw with dangling white strips hung to mark the temporary abode of the *toshigami* (deity of the New Year) and to keep malevolent spirits out.
- 3 Alpheus Hardy (1816-87) was a successful businessman in Boston and a father figure for Neesima (see Section 1, Note 2). He paid most of Neesima’s expenses in the United States and continued to support him financially even after Neesima returned to Japan.

## Section 14

As I said before, Jô was the first boy born after four girls, so his father doted on him, and he was a rambunctious boy. From around age seven he began reading books, but when he played, he mainly flew kites.

When Jô was eight in October, his married sister named O-Kuwa came for a visit. When she went home in the evening, she left her headscarf behind. Jô’s mother said, “She forgot her headscarf. She’ll be cold.” Jô said, “She won’t be far from here. I’ll run after

her and return it." He shot out the door.

On Jô's way back, when he was in front of the Itakura<sup>1</sup> residence, off in a corner there was a garbage dump. Wooden slabs enclosing the garbage were 3 inches thick and 4 feet tall. A few children were walking on top of the slabs around the edge. Not everybody did it. Jô tried to walk on them in his *geta* clogs. Then he accidentally fell and hit his head on some pieces of wood at the bottom. He injured himself seriously and was knocked out cold. The wound went from his left upper eyelid to his hairline.

He had the scar his whole life, so rumors spread that he'd been kicked in the head by a foreigner wearing boots or cut down by an anti-Christian when he escaped from Japan. They were just rumors, without any truth.

As Jô lay there unconscious, an Itakura family servant who happened to be nearby grew alarmed. He picked him up and carried him home, pressing down on the cut with his hand.

Jô's parents sent for a doctor immediately. The doctor started sewing up the open wound. The gash was so large that his hands shook, and after ten stitches he stopped sewing. Back then, people believed a patient would get tetanus if air got in the wound, so Jô's father put in six more stitches after the doctor was done.

The scar where the doctor sewed was smooth, but higher up where his father sewed, it was rough.

Later, Jô used to hide the wound with his hair. I told him, "Soon you'll be old and won't be able to hide your scar." He said, "Don't worry. By the time my hair falls out I'll be dead." And he laughed.

- 1 Lord Itakura was the lord of Annaka Domain, served by Neesima's father and grandfather. Annaka Castle was in southwest Gunma prefecture, but the Itakura residence was in Tokyo.

## Section 15

Jô was so rambunctious that at age nine, his parents made him learn to draw pictures to settle him down. His art teacher was the Itakura family's chief counselor, a man named Eba. After that Jô seemed to calm down a little.

Jô started his studies at age ten and began practicing swordsmanship around age twelve. When he was thirteen, he wanted to win a three-point-match in winter practice. He vowed that if he won the match, he would perform *o-hyakudo mairi*<sup>1</sup> at Suitengû Shrine to give thanks.

Jô won the match, and as soon as he came back home, he went upstairs without saying anything. He was so quiet that one of his sisters grew anxious and peeped in his room. She found him earnestly twisting thin strips of paper into strings. She asked him, "Shimeta, what are you doing?" He said, "Women should keep silent." And he went out in a huff.

Jô went to Suitengû Shrine near Lord Arima's residence with the one hundred twisted-paper strings he had made. It was fairly far from the shrine gate to the hall of worship. Each time he prayed, he laid down one string. At last he had worshipped one hundred times and came back home. And then for the first time he began to tell his family about the day's events.

Telling the story to me, he told me he had wanted to give up



after the first fifteen times. It was so difficult to keep going that he decided he would never make any promise to a god again. After that he scarcely visited the shrine, he said.

- 1 *Hyakudo mairi* (“one hundred times worship”) is an ancient ritual that people undertake to have a specific prayer answered. Worshippers make one hundred trips from the cornerstone near the shrine gate to the worship hall and back. It is believed that unless one does this without talking to anyone, his wish will not be fulfilled. Worshippers often use twisted-paper strings or small stones to keep track of how many times they have prayed.

## Section 16

Jô's mother had a dream when he was five. In the dream, Jô fell in a pond named Shinobazu. He seemed almost dead. She held him in her arms and rubbed him with a good luck charm from Suitengû Shrine. Then he was restored to life. After that his mother begged him never to go in the sea, so he never learned to swim.

At age fourteen, one day after Jô practiced *kendô*, he dropped in at the barber shop in front of the Itakura residence where he always had his hair done, because his hair was disheveled. He put his face guard and *kendô* gloves near him and sat down. The barber loosened his hair. Because he had just been doing *kendô*, his hair was moist with perspiration. The barber made a sound of disgust under his breath. His voice was low, but Jô heard it and thought, “I can't ask anyone to dress my stinky hair.” He grabbed his face guard and gloves and rushed out with his hair hanging

down.

He went back home and tried to tie up his hair by himself. It was his first time to tie his own hair while looking in the mirror. He didn't know how to use a comb, so he struggled. As a result, he ended up looking like the old man in *Takasago*.<sup>1</sup> Jô went downstairs and showed his hair to his sister. He said, "Look. I tied my hair by myself. Not bad, huh?" She, and the five or six girls who were learning sewing from her, laughed out loud. He rushed out of the room in shame. The rough shape of his hairdo was reflected on the wall by the light of the setting sun. The hair was tied so poorly, with one side of the cord longer than the other and hair sticking out all over his head, he couldn't help laughing at himself. From that time until he wore his hair short,<sup>2</sup> he never asked anyone to tie his hair again.

In the same year, Lord Itakura had a mistress who meddled in government. As a result, some well-qualified people were dismissed and the government was in an uproar. Jô's teacher was one of those who lost his position because of the woman's slander. Although Jô was young, he was very angry and decided to kill her. He consulted the teacher, whom he trusted. Then the teacher said seriously, "If you murdered the mistress and only you were punished, it wouldn't matter. But if you did that, you would be a nuisance, causing much trouble for your family and relatives. You must not carry out your plan." Jô changed his mind then.

Later Jô confessed to me that if he hadn't consulted the teacher, he would have gone through with the dangerous and reckless act.

- 1 Yae here refers to the main characters in the Noh play *Takasago*, an old man and woman named Jô and Uba who are symbols of long life and wedded happiness. The old man's hair is tied in a rough topknot.
- 2 Samurai were distinguished by their topknot and the carrying of two swords. In June 1864, Neesima cut his topknot just before reaching the port of Shanghai. He kept a little of his hair and threw the rest into the sea. In his diary he wrote, "If the water has a spirit, it will immediately send my hair to my parents in Japan, and I shall come back to Japan when I finish studying abroad." He gave his long sword to Captain Horace Taylor of the *Wild Rover* in Shanghai to pay for his passage and sold him his short sword in Hong Kong to cover the cost of a Chinese Bible.

## Section 17

Jô started to learn the Dutch language soon after the Americans came to Uraga.<sup>1</sup> His teacher, Gentan Sugita, was a doctor who lived in Kanasugi, Tokyo. Jô was living in Hitotsubashi, so he walked 2.5 miles from Hitotsubashi to Kanasugi with a sword and a tobacco bag marked "Beware of Fire" slung at his side. He went there wearing *geta*, and later wearing shoes.

In those days shoes were not made in Japan. Probably he got them from a sailor called Matoros. The shoes were too big for his feet, so he walked dragging them.

Since Jô's father was a *yûhitsu* [amanuensis] for the han government, he expected his son to inherit his work, so he didn't like Jô studying Dutch. To go to the teacher's house, Jô had his mother make rice balls for lunch. Jô's father always looked at him with displeasure, but he studied earnestly. Sometimes when his father was away, Jô had to cover for him, but he would go out without permission and leave his work undone, so his superior

would scold him.

While he was learning Dutch, Jô wanted a dictionary called *Zûku*.<sup>2</sup> It was very expensive, six ryô. So he doubted if his father would buy it for him. Since Jô knew where the money was kept, he sneaked some out. Then he left a memo that said “Borrowing for a short time,” and bought the dictionary.

Two months later, his mother realized that some of the money was missing. She cried out, “It’s gone!” His grandfather warned her, “There are young people in the house. Don’t make a commotion. It may be someone we know.” He added, “Call Shimeta and ask him first.” Jô heard from upstairs what they were saying. “They found out already,” he thought. He went down to the first floor with the dictionary, apologized, and told all the details.

His grandfather and mother had been afraid Jô used the money frivolously. Once they learned how he used it and saw the memo, they forgave him without getting too angry.

- 1 U.S. Commodore Mathew Perry led an expedition to Japan in July 1853, anchoring off Uruga in Kanagawa prefecture. His arrival led to the end of Japan’s era of seclusion. Jô was a boy of thirteen or fourteen at the time of this episode.
- 2 *Doeff-Halma*, a Dutch-Japanese dictionary edited in 1833 by Hendrik Doeff, a director of the Dutch Trading House. It was based on a Dutch-French dictionary edited by François Halma.

## Section 18

After Jô started Dutch studies, he once attended a private

school. Back then he had a hasty temper. He brought a dried fish for lunch, but a cat stole it. He was so angry that he killed the cat, and he and his friends made it into a pot of soup and ate it.

Another time during the New Year holidays, students put on a play for fun and Jô took a female role. He had the teacher's maid paint his face white and wore a towel on his head to make himself look like a woman. He thought nobody would know it was him. The teacher's wife peeped through a sliding door and laughed, "Neesima-san, you look good." Jô was upset and took off the towel and powder. He told me that was the most embarrassing thing that ever happened while he was in the private school. He decided he would never do such a silly thing again.

The year Jô was eighteen, on the third day of the third month, Ii Naosuke was assassinated outside Sakurada Gate.<sup>1</sup> People made a fuss because the snow in front of the gate was blood-red and heads were rolling. Jô started to go to the scene. Just as he was putting a sword at his waist, his grandfather laid a hand on the sword and said, "Shimeta, where are you going?" Jô said, "To see the place where Lord Ii was killed." His grandfather said, "How shameful! Now that the powerful Lord Ii has been murdered, for you to look on the scene would be highly inappropriate!" When he heard that, Jô gave up going out.

1 Ii Naosuke (1815-60) was a daimyo of Hikone for the last ten years of his life, and Tairô (chief minister) of the Tokugawa Shogunate for the last two. He is most famous for signing the Harris Treaty with the United States, granting access to ports for trade to American merchants and seamen and extraterritoriality to American citizens.

In what is known as the Sakuradamongai Incident, Ii was murdered by eighteen anti-foreign samurai of Mito Domain outside the Sakurada gate of Edo Castle.

## Section 19

When Jô went to Hakodate by boat in order to escape from Japan, only his grandfather seemed to realize that he would surely go abroad.

His mother and sisters knew that Hakodate was cold, so they prepared his winter clothes. Although Jô knew in his heart he wouldn't have a chance to use them, he couldn't help being grateful for their kindness.

In the meantime, his grandfather sat at a hibachi and closed his eyes calmly. After a while he said these words:

If you can go there,  
then be off to the hill  
of blossoming cherries.

He said this over and over, making sure that Jô could hear him. Jô said he felt encouraged, because he knew his grandfather understood his hidden thoughts.

Getting back to Jô's childhood, his grandfather loved him dearly. When his mother punished him, sometimes she would roll him up in bedding and throw him in the closet. Then his grandfather would come to rescue him. Jô thought his mother's punishment was too severe, since he didn't do anything so bad. And he would

sit and sulk. Then his grandfather would recite this poem:

Striking the burden of snow  
from the bamboo shoot,  
not in hate.

And he told him, "You must never hate your mother."

### **A Brief Chronological History of Yae Neesima**

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Nov. 3, 1845  | Born the fifth child of Gonpachi and Saku Yamamoto in Aizu Wakamatsu. Gonpachi was a grand master of artillery.                         |
| 1865          | Married Shōnosuke Kawasaki from Hyogo prefecture.   |
| Aug. 1868     | Fought in the Boshin Civil War with a Spencer repeating rifle. Her father and younger brother were killed in the war.                   |
| Sep. 1868     | Aizu Wakamatsu Castle surrendered. A few years later her first marriage ended.<br>The Tokugawa period ended and the Meiji period began. |
| 1869          | Her brother Kakuma became a government advisor in Kyoto prefecture.   |
| Oct. 1871     | Moved to Kyoto with her mother and niece.   |
| Apr. 1872     | Became a weaving instructor and assistant matron at Jokōba (later Kyoto Prefectural Girls' School).                                     |
| Oct. 5, 1875  | Became engaged to Joseph Hardy Neesima.   |
| Nov. 1875     | Dismissed from Jokōba.  |
| Nov. 29, 1875 | Founding of Doshisha Training School (now Doshisha University).   |
| Jan. 2, 1876  | Baptized at the Davis' home by Jerome Davis.  |
| Jan. 3, 1876  | Married Joseph Hardy Neesima. Theirs was the first Christian marriage ceremony between two Japanese held in Kyoto.                      |

- Oct. 24, 1876    Founding of Doshisha Girls' School (now Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts).
- Jan. 23, 1890    Death of Joseph Hardy Neesima.
- 1891            Joined Japan Red Cross.
- 1894-1895       Served as a volunteer nurse in Hiroshima during the Sino-Japanese War.
- 1896            Received the Seventh Order of Merit.
- 1904-1905       Served as a volunteer nurse in Osaka during the Russo-Japanese War.
- 1906            Received the Sixth Order of Merit.
- 1924            Had an audience with Empress Teimei when the Empress visited Doshisha Girls' School.
- June 14, 1932    Died at home in Kyoto, aged eighty-six. She is buried next to her husband on the hill Nyakôji in eastern Kyoto.