

Sadakichi Hartmann in America 1887-1918, The Early Literary Works

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サダキチ・ハルトマン イン アメリカ (1887-1918)
初期文学作品

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“Before I tell how it came about, take a good long look at me. Do you discover anything strikingly Oriental: in my sparse figure, the structure of my skull, the position of the eyes, my features (upper jawbone) skin texture, hair, my gestures and intonation of voice? Did you ever meet a Japanese who resembles me? No, you haven’t, as it is biologically impossible. Such mutations do not occur if the proper material is absent.”
Sadakichi Hartmann from ‘A Youngster Dons Mikado Garb – A Confession’¹

Introduction

Identity, as I defined it in my earlier essay on Sadakichi Hartmann, is determined by both nature and nurture. (See Richard 2000.) We are born to a circumstance that we choose to live through, to escape from, and/or to add to in genetic terms. The naturally determined aspect of our identity is the one we never quite rid ourselves of though we often try to suppress it, or to alter it to our own ends. But in the end, it seems there is always a ‘going back’ or a ‘coming home.’ The genes catch up, and the birthright returns in all of its geriatric brilliance. The nurtured side of our identity is quite another matter. Through a process of evolutionary Darwinian adaptation, we mutate within the context of another targeted identity, this one of pure device, and made purely for the advancement of our cultural, artistic, and monetary aims. Japanese critics like to talk about the ways in which naturally identified Japanese nationals, after sojourns of varying lengths outside the country, decide to return, often to recapture the natural aspect of themselves they felt to have been threatened or endangered by the targeted culture. Modern literary giants like Nagai Kafu (1879-1959) and Tanizaki Jun’ichiro (1886-1965) both wrote fictional works either about a sojourn abroad, or about Japanese of their era who lived a life influenced superficially by Western culture. Both Kafu and Tanizaki wrote the greater body of their literary work from within the comfortable boundaries of their natural identities.

The same holds true for two more of the greatest writers of the Meiji era (1868-1912), Natsume Soseki (1867-1916) and Mori Ogai (1862-1922). Both sojourned in England and Germany, respectively. Soseki’s still eminently readable novels of unrequited love, latent homosexuality, triangular affairs, owe a great deal to the fictional tastes of Victorian England of his era. Mori Ogai

wrote a fetching little novel called *Maihime* (1890 The Dancing Girl) that deals with the required though unsuccessful love story between a Japanese male and a German dancer. Yet, both Soseki and Ogai returned to write the greater body of their literary work from within the inevitable boundaries of their natural identities, and in their native language of Japanese.

Japanese critics regard cases such as the above as mere skirmishes with the West that were abandoned once the writers returned to Japan. They almost never speak of the Japanese native born in Japan, but who acquires additional identity nurtured by the experience of living abroad, and, for example, who writes in languages other than Japanese. Mixed blood and mixed identity don't seem to interest the Japanese critic.

But what about identity and mixed blood? Do we have examples of successful writers who wrote from the vantage point of a nurtured identity? Sadakichi Hartmann, born in 1867 in Dejima, Nagasaki, of mixed German and Japanese genetic identity, is one such writer. He lived in the United States for most of his adult life, and wrote in both German and English. His natural identity became totally subsumed in the boundaries of American culture. He was a mutant – a crossover personality whose natural identity, over time, assumed the nature of a guise, while his acquired identity, that of an Anglo-Saxon American, became predominant for all his life. In his early literary works, written mainly in America in the cities of Boston and New York City between 1896-1918, one can experience the emergence of Hartmann's American nurtured identity, and the gradual abandonment of his Japanese genetic identity. Clues to abandonment pop up in most of Sadakichi's earliest poems and short stories. A sense of throwing off the past, acquiring a new identity, coexists with the fear of having been abandoned, while the loneliness of a man 'in process' toward a series of nurtured identities coexists with a full blown sexual appetite born of romantic and symbolist poetic ideas.

I will be examining below a few of the best of Sadakichi's earliest short stories and poems in search of the stresses and joys of the process of a writer's mutation, the following in particular:

1. 'Christmas Eve in a Lighthouse' 1895 from *Schopenhauer in the Air*. 1908. Rochester: The Stylus Publishing Co.: 15-18
2. 'The Deserted Cottage' (1905?) Short story in *The St. Louis Mirror*: 72
3. 'The Little Wayside Station' in *Mother Earth*, Vol. I, no.7, September 1906:56-60
4. *My Rubaiyat*. 1916. New York: Bruno Chap Books.³

Christmas Eve in a Lighthouse 1895

"*Christmas Eve in a Lighthouse*" is an autobiographical tidbit thinly veiled with a literary artistry in which Sadakichi seeks comfort in the transience of a vague and momentary detachment from the urban life he had taken up in the search for work and recognition. By 1895, the date of this short story, Sadakichi had already published his *Conversations with Walt Whitman* which scandalized the trustees of Whitman's estate (he had recently died) because he had recorded verbatim Whitman's excoriation of other major literary figures on the East Coast. Singed by this practical defeat, and perhaps inured to a sense that his writings had been so rejected by the establishment, Sadakichi rows away in a boat to a lonely lighthouse from where he can reassess his predicament and capture a bit of the purity of silence and the whiteness of the sea. He finds his lighthouse on the "edge of a steep, surf bound rock," isolating but not isolated. (p.15) "A vil-

lage with hideous polychromatic summer cottages, reflecting in their silly architecture the anarchism of our age, was within a mile's reach." (p. 15) The world, up close, is somehow unsettling, noisy, and brutal. The stance a poet takes to move away while looking back on a world receding from view, reminds me of the poem by Yamabe no Akahito (?-736 a.d.) in the *Manyōshū* (c. 750 a.d.) in which he rows from a bay until he sees the pure form of Mt. Fuji with snow at its peak:

'Tago no ura yu	From the Bay of Tago
Uchiidete mireba	I row out, looking back until
Mashiro ni zo	Whiteness itself!
Fuji no takane ni	On the high peak of Mt. Fuji
Yuki wa furikeru'4	I see that snow is falling.5

Like Akabito, surprised that the whiteness of Mt. Fuji had awakened his soul, the author goes out onto the platform surrounding the lighthouse, to gaze into the darkened sea, and to experience the roar of waves crashing on the rocks below him. "After each attack the roaring and raging grew louder, and the hissing waters cursing their aimless agitation were thrown back in different directions, crossing the eager approach of their sister waves obliquely." ('Christmas':17)

Just as the urban chaos of the author's life, from which he has just escaped, seems so pointless, so too do the waves and the wind which tear relentlessly at his ears and at his hair, until his separation is dramatically altered:

"And as my eyes looked out with dreamy bewilderment, I saw a white spot rapidly coming towards me; a sea-gull with fluttering wings dashed directly towards the luring light of the lantern, like a solitary human soul rushing blindly towards happiness, striving with selfish zeal to reach a haven of rest in the beautiful soft glow of a peaceful home. In the next moment she shattered her head against the thick panes of the beacon light and fell writhing to my feet.

Stooping, to touch the soft white down of the unfortunate bird, who only a moment before had been so full of vigorous joy, a feeling of despair came over me, realizing that all this endeavor to create something beautiful in this world of rising and falling waves and howling winds, was sheer vanity. . . No paltry exit from this tragical farce with revolver, rope or Paris green, but to leap consciously with heroic joy into eternity." ('Christmas':17)

For a moment the author experiences a moment of an ecstatic joy that comes from standing on the edge of life and death, being drawn toward the latter, then pulling back, tired but exhilarated from the experience:

"I still endeavored to force my emotion to soar to the majestic storm-swept summits where man willingly embraces death, but my thoughts had already turned to less imposing heights. I had learned to understand why we poor decrepit mortals cling to our existence. Needing so much skill and strength even to struggle and float on the tempestuous waves of life, how could we have the superhuman courage to dissolve in it!" ('Christmas':18)

In "*Christmas Eve in a Lighthouse*," Sadakichi pits the inexorable forces of nature around him against one single beautiful moment of exquisite artistry; like the white dove that meets its

eternity by crashing into the blinding light of lighthouse beacon, he pulls away from death defying feats of greatness into a contentedness born of home and hearth. Humble striving prevails over genius. The author returns to the warmth of the lighthouse rooms and the family with whom he shares the *tanenbaum* and the feast of Christmas. He is to be contented with the small things of life.

This early story contains the seed of what is to become Sadakichi's first mutation; from the passive observation of nature prevalent as an aspect of his Japanese identity, he becomes content to find his way within nature defined by the possibility of a flash of genius, the power of genuine conviction. He is searching for a way to contain his Japanese identity within the Western notion of divine inspiration and genius. In his unpublished manuscript *Esthetic Verities* (1927-33), Sadakichi sums up his philosophy as somewhat between two cultural polarities:

"If I personally have any claim of expression myself philosophically, I may state that I lean towards empiricism, moving towards some practical solution of a world and life of many causes, phenomena of irreducible variety and mobility, a pluralistic system, irreligious, skeptical and yet idealistic throughout on every turn of the rough uphill road."⁶

On the power and conviction of a purely Western nature such as that to be found in the painter Manet, Sadakichi has this to say:

"Thirty-three years, to his very death in 1883, he [Manet] strove for nothing but to perfect his mode of utterance. There is something glorious and infinitely noble in fighting like that – to die, so to speak, in uniform, fully armed, on the battlefield.

What a great flamboyant energy there was in that man! He was one of the "hard riders of the winged steeds overleaping all boundaries, having their own goal;" one of the eternal fighting men who let their blood riot and their passions blaze unchecked, who keep up resistance, who never bow or cringe to any accepted authority, who at the age of fifty have the same spirit of revolt, the same fire and enthusiasm as in their youthful dreams."⁷

Sadakichi had set out on his journey, one small step for himself, one giant leap for his artistry, or so this story would have us believe.

The Deserted Cottage c. 1905

Published in *The Mirror*, a newspaper in St. Louis, and kept as a clipping in the Hartmann collections at the University of California-Riverside, with other materials from the period 1900-1905,

"*The Deserted Cottage*" is the best key to Sadakichi's mutant state as a writer and as a personality. Torn from his roots in Nagasaki, Japan before the age of six, then disowned by his German family in Hamburg at the age of fourteen, and once again orphaned by the ill treatment he received from his German-American relatives in Philadelphia, Hartmann had been forced to undergo a number of identity crises, each one embedding in his subliminal memory, traces of light, shadow, and tactile responses. In 'The Deserted Cottage,' Sadakichi encounters his lost identity as a Japanese in the form of an uninhabited two-story house he stumbles on while out on a walk in the parklands of St. Louis.

After a day of being in company, the narrator finds his walk has taken him onto an open road

where he is quite alone with himself, a happy situation, as the writing would indicate, until the narrator confronts the deserted house. The windows are broken, the gate on rusty hinges, while the grass has overgrown the path to the entrance. The door is unlocked. Sadakichi's description of the garden, with its cicadas, is a memory of a lost Japan, and the tiger lilies a memory of the designs on a Japanese kimono:

“The former garden had changed into one vast field of tiger lilies, embedded in a thick, soft undergrowth of weeds, a beautiful sight of orange red and dark green.

I felt a strange desire to enter the forbidding mansion. I made my way slowly along the former path, breaking one of the tiger lilies and scrutinizing its large golden pollen-sacs. The katydids, all around me, hummed a shrill and endless melody, like some Eastern cacophony of sound played on quaint stringed instruments.” (‘Deserted’ :7)

His description could very well fit a Japanese garden, with its summer buzzing of *semi*; a Japanese cicada; the Eastern cacophony and stringed instruments could well be a *koto* or a *shamisen*, or both. Sadakichi often uses flower names to refer to the passionate love of a woman, or to a lovely muse of a past era. For example, here is the third and last stanza from his poem “*Dawn-flower*” (To Maurice Maeterlinck). The dawn-flowers are perhaps a reference to the Japanese *asagao*, morning glory or literally morning face, which denotes a lost or abandoned identity.

“WE [sic.] do not know and we cannot know,
And all that is left for us here below
(Since “songs and singers are out of date”
And the muses have met with a similar fate)
Where the dawn-flowers grow
In the dawn-winds blow,
As morn-rays over life's dream-waste flow
To drown the moon in their ambient glow.”⁸

Here, the tiger lilies, as elsewhere in traditional Japanese poetry, indicate the passion of a young woman who loved willingly, without regret. In “*The Deserted Cottage*,” Sadakichi finds the image of the Japan and of the mother he has lost, fragments of a memory he can never regain.

Subsequently, the narrator goes inside the house where he finds a fireplace filled with cobwebs. Everything is in decay. The floor is earthen. He walks upstairs, not without some awe and unacknowledged fear:

“What child had been romping up and down these rickety steps? What woman holding her hand on the banister had stood here contemplating some domestic scene below! It seemed to me as if I heard the trailing of some robe.” (‘Deserted’ :op.cit.)

The narrator is trying vainly to recapture the spirit of the mother who had perhaps once lived in the house, and to imagine the child running up and down the rickety stairs. The child is himself as a child in Japan, and the mother is his own. In the Japan of his childhood, private dwellings were permitted only a single story. In the licensed pleasure quarters of Maruyama in Nagasaki, from where Sadakichi's mother had most likely been introduced to his father, two story buildings

were permitted that offered patrons a better look at the garden, and private rooms for entertaining male customers. Second floors were the pleasure grounds in Japanese brothels. Could Sadakichi be remembering a vague episode from his early childhood?

Elsewhere on the second floor, the scene is more like the house in Germany where he spent more unhappy years:

“The paper hung in shreds from the walls, the plaster had fallen from the ceilings and displayed the woodwork of the roof. The sills were covered with dead moths and flies.”
(‘Deserted’:op.cit.)

This too Sadakichi had abandoned when he came to America. It is as though he is seeing a vision of that German room transposed to the present.

As the day draws to a close, the narrator gazes from the window out into the distant fields, as though from the Germany of the second floor, he is gazing back on the Japan of the katydids in the garden as well as in the fields beyond the house. His description of the sunset is cast in the Japanese national colors of white and red:

“The horizon looked as if flooded with some white fluid in which the blood-red disc of the sun dimmed so rapidly that I actually saw it sink deeper and deeper, second by second, and finally disappear. The song of the katydids seemed louder and more piercing than ever.”
(‘Deserted’:op.cit.)

The dim and vivid color of Japan oppress the narrator. His response is like a Gothic statement from Edgar Allan Poe whom Sadakichi greatly admired and often included in his public lectures on poetry and esthetics:

“A feeling of depression had come over me. It had crept into me with the languor of an opiate, and I now felt the one desire to leave this place, and yet I stood motionless as if rooted in the floor.” (‘Deserted’:op.cit.)⁹

Sadakichi uses Poe’s diction to bring himself to the point of escape from this abandoned place. Just as he has abandoned his Japanese and German identities in favor of an American version, he finds his key to escape in the ghostly sound of a bat flapping its wings, as does Poe in many of his gothic stories. The narrator bolts out of the house which is his Germany, runs through the garden which is his Japan, back to the highway which is his America, rushing to embrace the present in favor of some dim memory of an unhappy past.

And then at the end of “*The Deserted Cottage*,” Sadakichi indulges in some philosophical speculation that the sweeping fear he experienced while in the deserted cottage had been due to his fear of death, and his fear of the uncertainty of life. He says:

“This thought of sadness – not of doubt – which may drift into any thinking mind, perchance when we lie awake at night as I remember from my childhood days when my imagination changed the figures of the patterned curtain in my nursery into the most gruesome forms and shapes. The tragic thought that the child whose little hand has caressed us, that the woman whose limbs have embraced us, that they, as all other experiences, will be lost for all eternity, that we shall never recall them again, no matter how longingly we may stretch forth our arms

into the darkness.

Absolute denial, absolute belief – I haven't either. My reasoning power tells me that there can be no recollection when we have lost our identity, and yet I wish most ardently that there might be something beyond the dimensions of what we call existence." ('Deserted' op.cit.)

Looking toward the future, Sadakichi, as narrator, admits to the dangers involved in transgressing the borders of identity, and to the always-unfinished task of settling on the final mutation, or of finding a fixed identity. Identity is mutation, with endless variation:

"This is the fear of death. Some may be ashamed to own up to it. But I live my life as it comes, and I give way to feelings of sentimental regrets whenever these thoughts occur. . . ." ('Deserted' op.cit.)

'The Deserted Cottage' says as much, in as few words, as any of Sadakichi's other literary works, about the problem of past, future, and fixed identity. And, as his notations in *Esthetic Verities* attest, this piece is simultaneously inspired, meant to bring pleasure, intellectual, open to individual judgment, artistic, and beautiful in its description of a ruinous place.

Stories from *Mother Earth Magazine* 1906-08

Mother Earth was published by Emma Goldman in New York continuously from March 1906 to August 1917. It was designed as a showcase for her essays on anarchism and women's rights, but it also published excellent original poems and short stories, and excerpted works by writers such as Tolstoy, Maxim Gorky, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Oscar Wilde. I noticed, for example, among the tables of contents that Oscar Wilde had published his 'Notes from Reading Gaol' in *Mother Earth*.¹⁰ Sadakichi Hartmann found a place for his early short stories in the pages of *Mother Earth*, in some extremely good literary company as the various issues attest.

In one of Sadakichi's stories from ME "*The Little Wayside Station*," (1906) a young actress in a traveling troupe, now stranded in a lonely station on the Gulf Coast of Alabama, a 'soubrette' as she is called, has a brief encounter with nature. For the first time, the artificiality of the theatre, the unnaturalness of living only in dressing rooms, or on stage, or in dingy hotel rooms, is replaced by the real experience of a scent in the night air to which she is drawn. Sadakichi has drawn on a Japanese and Buddhist idea that scent triggers memory. One of the most famous poems from the *Kokinwakashu* of 905 a.d. is about the scent of orange blossoms at night that though they cannot be seen, give off such a fragrance that the poet is reminded of the scented sleeves of a former lover, now dead:

"Satsuki matsu	When I read the scent
Hanatachibana no	Of orange blossoms
Ka wo kageba	That wait till May to bloom,
Mukashi no hito no	The scent of her sleeves comes back
Sode no ka zo suru	To remind me of how she was. 11

"Lost in the contemplation of this weird, nocturnal scene she suddenly became conscious of a faint aroma that was lingering in the air. There is nothing that arouses one's senses as much

as the sudden appreciation of some scent, so vague in character that its origin cannot be defined. It is like recollecting a life that we might have led before our present one.” (‘Wayside’ : 57)

The vague scent is of tall-stemmed flowers. She brings an armful back, distributes a few, and then tells the rest of her troupe to pick their own. She sits down and holds the flowers up to her bosom:

“There were no moon nor stars. All forms faded into each other. Everything seemed motionless, only the breeze toyed with her hair, as might the fingers of a lover. It came from far over the sea, and had wandered over dale and dell, over palm tree thickets, and perhaps orange groves, to continue its journey inland, just like the homeless folks who wandered about the earth for the delectation of others. A sail became discernible in the distance. She sat motionless as in a trance.” (‘Wayside’ :op.cit.)

She has had an out-of-mind experience of something beyond her acting skills, her first sensual experience of the world. She knows what she will make of it:

“Then suddenly – perhaps with the passing breeze or the heavy perfume of the flowers – an inspiration came over her. Yes, she would – try at least to bring some truth of nature upon the stage, real emotions that were born out of the experiences of her own heart and in harmony with the elements of nature. She needs must enter upon the big stage of life, revel in the warmth and joyousness of nature, struggle, suffer, experience everything, and then transform it into art.” (‘Wayside’ :59)

Sadakichi’s credo, exactly; experience, then transform to art. The train pulls out, the girl returns to her real world of “frowsy caricatures of women and vulgar men with greasy faces, to which the railroad coaches furnished a prosaic background, shutting out the beauty of the scenery” as the story comes to an end. Here Sadakichi makes perhaps the central statement of his artistic life:

“We all have had such moments in our life, moments when we dreamt of great things we would accomplish, but most of them have faded like the nameless flowers in which the little soubrette had buried her tear-stained face. We all act our parts badly, we all are stilted at times, and the glare of selfish desire throws an unnatural light over all of us. Yet these dreams of unrealized hopes are so beautiful that we should cherish them in our memory. They alone make life worth living, no matter whether we realize them or not.” (‘Wayside’ :op.cit.)

Idealism and the pure hopes of this young girl certainly parallel Emma Goldman’s dreams in publishing *Mother Earth*. Sadakichi had hit the right note with ‘*The Little Wayside Station*.’ The story was later republished with others from the magazine. Championing the working class in these stories helped reinforce the idea, in Sadakichi’s mind, of the possibility of going beyond one’s present, to live beyond the reality of one’s environment, to cross over, and to struggle to the next stage. Endless mutation with repeated patterns echoes in these stories like the shaded variations of color in the repeating pattern of a jacquard loomed obi.

Sadakichi's stories in *Mother Earth* all point us to the truth that our sense perceptions can be trusted, and that we progress through life's stages by allowing momentary experiences of great intensity to determine our mutation to the next stage, the next, and to the final. And, as Emma Goldman, the magazine's founder believed, society, civilization, and life therein can only be modified through realization of the greatness of motivation to change. Both Sadakichi and Emma Goldman trusted in the sensual revolution they knew was coming in the twentieth century. Emma Goldman was thrown out of the country before she had a chance to experience the real fruits of her campaigns for women. Sadakichi stayed, but drifted away from radical politics.

Conclusion

Sadakichi continued to advocate, in his lectures and criticism, the pure and open lyric style of Walt Whitman, but his alternate preference for the lush, romantic, symbolist, turns of phrase common in contemporary European poetry plays a bigger role in his poetry of the period following the stories in *Mother Earth*.

By 1915, Sadakichi had become the man of the 'weird dance,' in the way that Emma Goldman mentions him in her memoirs. (Goldman, *Living My Life*, Chapter 41) He entertained. He had left the radical Jewish intelligentsia in favor of a younger crowd of artists in lower Manhattan. He embarked on a career of acting the buffoon, the charlatan, and the trickster. He became known as the 'King of Bohemia,' hanging out with other *avant garde* artists and painters in the Washington Square area. His first wife Elizabeth Blanche Walsh a poet, had been set aside when he met Lillian Bonham, a painter, at the Roycroft Colony of Elbert Hubbard in East Aurora, N.Y. By 1915, he was back in New York at the garret studio of one Guido Bruno at 58 Washington Square South as one of his stable of bohemians. In this atmosphere of freedom with perhaps less political intensity than his association with *Mother Earth*, Sadakichi republished in the Bruno Chap Books series, in 1916, his own *My Rubaiyat*, a collection of 75 sextains (six line stanzas). As the title suggests, the poems are about sex, pleasure, and passion. Were they not so dense with the images of Western romanticism, one might take them for translations of Japanese sentiments from such classical collections as the *Manyoshu* (c. 750 a.d.) and the *Kokinwakashu* (905 a.d.) In an essay published in 1904, making it possibly the first ever published in the United States about Japanese poetry, Sadakichi makes clear the essential difference between Japanese poetry and European experience:

"They [Japanese poems] are limited entirely to "lyrical" emotions. . . The classic poets of Japan deliberately refrain from didacticism and satire. Even the glorification of war, which plays such a conspicuous part in their dramas and novels, seems to contain no poetical element for them. There are no angers, despairs, enthusiasms, hatreds, violent emotions of any sort, in their stanzas. They are no banner bearers of revolt or reform."¹²

While Sadakichi's stories for *Mother Earth* were cast in evocation of such "lyrical" emotions as he attests are important to Japanese poetry, they are set in the context of radical social and political agendas. I believe this is why Sadakichi could not last forever as a writer for Emma Goldman. He needed to mutate again to his perceived source of inspiration in his native Japanese

identity, abandoned in fact, but seen as both contrast and counterpart to the European tradition he had adopted in his second major mutation during his years in Germany. He says elsewhere in his essay on Japanese poetry:

“They [the Japanese] have amatory verses, which faintly resemble Herrick, poems of sadness and longing, not unlike Heine minus his irony, fervent praises of women and wine of which even an Anacreon would not be ashamed, and lamentations over the uncertainties of life which sound like a faint echo of Omar Khayyam’s rose-scented quatrains.” 13

And hereupon Sadakichi sets his artistic vision; like the Persian poet, like the Japanese sense of amatory verse, his *My Rubaiyat* poems repeat and refine the particulars of his *Mother Earth* stories. Here are two such poems:

1.) the theme of real and healing power of nature when returned to the artifice of the city, or of the theater as in “*The Little Wayside Station*” – poem XIII:

“Alas, that pleasures never last,
That we must leave the fairy woods
And pass along the great highway.
As much as horizons may beckon,
They flee us the more we pursue
To distances we ne’er can reach.” (Rubaiyat:87)

2.) the theme of escape from the city as in “*Christmas in a Lighthouse*” – poem XIX:

“Oh, to escape from the city,
Into the blue, shimmering night,
It speaks of all I could have loved,
It speaks of all I longed to see,
To understand, to own, and feel –
Why did so little come to me!” (Rubaiyat: op.cit.) 14

Sadakichi’s literary mutations continued throughout the 1920’s and 1930’s. He often gave lectures on his favorite topics of art, music, and literature. One of his favorite topics was ‘Art by the Few for the Few.’ Topic and title come from the Preface to Sadakichi’s *Aesthetic Verities* (1927-33), his manuscript containing his views on history of art and beauty. He says the phrase is “the theorem he wanted to prove, the main object of his work, a challenge to mob autocracy, expressed in eight words.” 15 Elsewhere in his preface, Sadakichi states his philosophy, and defines beauty:

“If I personally have any claim of expression myself philosophically, I may state that I lean towards empiricism, moving towards some practical solution of a world and life of many causes, phenomena of irreducible variety and mobility, a pluralistic system, irreligious, skeptical and yet idealistic throughout on every turn of the rough uphill road.” (Verities:16)

“Beauty is some occurrence in nature or life which surprises the mind as a rich and deep sensation. . . Art is the conquest of such a sensation of beauty – a vague but intensity of mind or senses, so urgent that it includes a desire for permanency which if happily translated into

some tangible form different to the original model, may impress other minds in a similar fashion.” (Verities:18)

As Sadakichi once remarked: “Like so many of us, I may be destined to ‘dine late,’ but ‘the hall will be well lighted, the guests select and few.” 16 In such statements, Sadakichi makes clear the extent to which his nature had been nurtured by the experience of American life as well as such German philosophers as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Far from the fleeing identity Sadakichi reveals in his stories ‘To the Lighthouse’ and ‘Tragedy in a New York Flat,’ Sadakichi by 1918 had firmly established his new American identity. He no longer sought solace in the vaguely Japanese romantic ideas of loss and evanescence one sees in the stories from the first two decades of his writing career. Sadakichi was yet to reach his peak as a writer. Sadakichi sat at many of life’s banquets, and his next was to take him to Hollywood in the 1920s. The trickster was about to make a reappearance.

End

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End Notes

- 1 I have transcribed this text from the original typescript in the Univ. of California-Riverside Special Collection Library’s repository of materials by and related to Sadakichi Hartmann. The surtitle ‘Some Cases of Alien Ancestry Demand Expert Discrimination’ leads me to believe that Sadakichi wrote the piece in the 1930’s to counter questions, or to at least respond to questions then being put to him by the FBI or other authorities about his background. It seems meant to clear up certain matters that had been left unsaid for many years, possibly because Sadakichi’s identity in the public eye, and to a large extent in his family’s eyes, had been constructed of a Japonisme, a Europeanism, and an Americanism that had been far removed from

the actual circumstances, and so he felt he had to set the record straight. I believe the major import of the rest of the document is to make clear Sadakichi's fervent American nationalism and patriotism in a period when it was under severe question.

(From the unpaginated typescript of no date, pg. 1, 2nd paragraph.)

- 2 Sadakichi must have considered this work to be among his best, and most important. In his unpublished manuscript *Esthetic Verities*, written in longhand between 1927 and 1932-33, he remarks: "The simple experience of my Deserted Cottage proved to me that a work of art must be inspired (viz Plato), that its aim is immediate pleasure as distinct from utility (viz Aristotle), that the same is largely an intellectual accomplishment (viz Baumgarten), that the appreciation is dependent entirely on individual judgement (viz Kant), that art may be the highest expression of nature (viz Hegel, Schelling), that it is the outcome of superfluous energy of the human organism (viz Schiller, Spencer), and that in some degree all things are beautiful (viz Schopenhauer)."
- 3 All publications and manuscripts courtesy of the Special Collections Library, University of California-Riverside where they are deposited in the Sadakichi Hartmann Collection. Some of these stories have been reprinted, but all are now out of print.
- 4 MYS, III: 318
- 5 The translation is my own.
- 6 From an unpublished manuscript in the Special Collections Library, UC-Riverside. *Esthetic Verities*: 16.
- 7 From "The Fight for Recognition," in the magazine *Camera Work* No.30, April 1910:22. Sadakichi worked for several years as an art and photography critic. The magazine was owned and managed by Alfred Steiglitz, the early proponent of photography as art. He later married Georgia O'Keefe.
- 8 From the magazine *Camera Work*, April 1903:29, in the Special Collections Library, UC-Riverside.
- 9 In his early years in New York City 1895-1911, and even in later years as can be seen in the attached flyer for paid lectures Sadakichi gave in the 1930's, he often used art, music, and literature as his subjects. He often used examples of poetry from Walt Whitman and Poe. From the Hartmann papers in the Special Collections Library, UC-Riverside.
- 10 Wilde's work was published in the initial issues from 1906. I am indebted to the following web sites for information on Emma Goldman and *Mother Earth*: The Emma Goldman Papers from the Berkeley Digital Library SunSITE, ed. Candace Falk, et.al., at <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/Guide/bibliography.html>, a short article by Leopa Berlin at <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/>



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8522/emma_eng.html, and the Anarchist Archives collection of articles from *Mother Earth* at http://ispp.org/anarchist_archives/goldman/ME.

- 11 KKS, III:139 Anonymous. The translation is my own.
- 12 “The Japanese Conception of Poetry,” in *The Reader Magazine*, Vol.3, no.2 (January 1904) :187.
- 13 *Op.cit.*
- 14 All poems quoted below are from *My Rubaiyat* 1916. New York: Bruno Chap Books, in the Special Collections Library at UC-Riverside.
- 15 *Esthetic Verities*:3
- 16 From notes to an exhibition of the paintings of Leon Dado. Unpaginated and undated. Special Collections Library, UC-Riverside.

