

## Sanshirō – Chapter 10

Natsume Sōseki – 1908

Hearing that Professor Hirota was under the weather, Sanshirō went to visit. After passing through the gate, he noticed a pair of shoes in the entryway. He thought maybe the doctor had come. He entered as usual through the side door. No one was about, so he went in and made his way to the hearth room. He heard voices from the living room and paused for a moment. From his hand hung a large, furoshiki-wrapped bundle. In it were saké-sweetened persimmons. Yojirō had advised him to bring something by on his next visit, so he'd bought these on the Oiwake thoroughfare. Suddenly, from the living room, came a loud thump. Some sort of scuffle had started. Sanshirō assumed it was a quarrel. Still holding his bundle, he thrust the shōji aside and peered in. A large man in a brown hakama had the professor pinned down. The professor managed to lift his face from the tatami a bit and look at Sanshirō.

“Welcome,” he said with a grin.

The man on top just turned his head slightly. “Now, try getting up.”

The professor's hands were behind his back, and the other man's knees were pressing his elbows to the floor. Without moving, the professor replied that there was no way he could possibly get up. The man on top released the professor's hands, lifted his knees, straightened the pleats of his hakama, and returned to a seated position. He cut an imposing figure.

The professor, too, quickly righted himself. “I see,” he said.

“It's a dangerous hold. You risk a broken arm if you struggle.”

From this exchange, Sanshirō finally understood what the two of them had been doing.

“I heard you weren't feeling well. Are you better?”

“Yes, much better.”

Sanshirō untied his bundle and spread its contents between the two men. “I bought some persimmons.”

Professor Hirota went to the study and returned with his penknife. Sanshirō got a carving knife from the kitchen. The three of them started in. As they ate, the professor and his visitor spoke in earnest on provincial middle school issues. How meager salaries and back stabbing made it impossible to stay put for long. How one taught jujutsu in addition to one's academic subject. How a certain instructor had re-used old straps on new sandal platforms to make ends meet. How having once resigned, there was little prospect of finding another position. How the visitor had had to send his wife back to the country for the time being. -- There seemed no end to it.

Sanshirō spit out persimmon seeds and observed the visitor's face. It was all so bleak. This man, he felt, in comparison to his present self, was hardly of the same species. As he spoke, the man expressed nostalgia

for his student days. He mentioned repeatedly how carefree he'd felt. Listening to him talk, Sanshirō mused that this life he knew would end in a few short years. Unlike his soba outings with Yojirō, there was no cheer in this encounter.

Professor Hirota rose again and went to his study. He returned with a book in his hand. Its cover was reddish brown, and the edges of the pages were caked in dust. "This is *Hydriotaphia*, the one I mentioned the other day. Give it a read to pass the time."

Sanshirō took the book and thanked him.

"But the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity." This line caught Sanshirō's eye.

The professor now felt at liberty to continue with the jujutsu scholar. -- "Anyone will agree that the plight of a middle school instructor is worthy of pity. However, the only ones who feel any sincere pity are the instructors themselves. The reason for this is that while modern man craves information, he strips it of its due sentiment. He has no choice - the world encroaches on him so. This is evident when you look in the paper. In the society pages, nine of ten articles touch on misfortune. But who has time to wallow in others' misfortune? We simply read it as statements of fact. Every day, when I open my paper, there's a tally of untimely deaths. Each gets a line of size six type, with age, affiliation, and cause of death. Nothing could be clearer or more concise. Then there's the burglary column. At a glance I know what was stolen, and from where. It's the ultimate in efficiency. We shouldn't assume that anything else is any different. A resignation is exactly the same. To the person involved, it may well border on tragedy. But bear in mind that others won't take it to heart. You have to act on this premise."

"But couldn't you, Professor, given the time on your hands, take it at least a little to heart?" the jujutsu man appealed with a serious expression. At this, Professor Hirota, Sanshirō, and the speaker himself all burst into laughter. It looked like this man would be here a while, so Sanshirō borrowed the book and let himself out through the kitchen door.

"To subsist in lasting monuments, to live in their productions, to exist in their names, and predicament of chimeras, was large satisfaction unto old expectations, and made one part of their Elysiums. But all this is nothing in the metaphysics of true belief. To live indeed is to be again ourselves, which being not only an hope, but an evidence in noble believers, 'tis all one to lie in St Innocent's church-yard, as in the sands of Egypt. Ready to be anything, in the ecstasy of being ever, and as content with six foot as the moles of Adrianus."

This was the final paragraph of *Hydriotaphia*. Sanshirō read it while making his way toward Hakusan. According to Professor Hirota, the writer was renowned for his exemplary prose, and this work in particular was considered his finest. When he'd explained this, he'd added with a grin that he himself was not necessarily of the same opinion. Sanshirō, too, struggled to see where this prose was exemplary. The phrasing was poor, the diction off-kilter, and the flow lethargic. In mood it resembled a temple weathered by time. To read this single paragraph, expressed in distance, had taken three or four blocks. Even at that, the meaning was still unclear.

What he'd gleaned was a sense of the ancient. It was as though the bell had tolled in Nara, next to the Great Buddha, and its reverberations had carried, just faintly, to reach his ears in Tōkyō. More than the meaning of the words, Sanshirō was taken with the shades of nuance that overlaid them. He had never dwelled on mortality. The blood of youth was too warm in him yet. Fire burned in his eyes, hot enough, almost, to singe his eyebrows. This was his true essence. He was off now to Akebono-chō, to call on Haraguchi.

A child's funeral procession approached. Only two men, dressed in haori, marched behind. A pure white cloth had been draped over the small casket, and a colorful pinwheel had been fastened to its side. The pinwheel spun. Its blades were of five colors. The spinning of the wheel blended them into one. The procession passed by Sanshirō, white-draped casket and spinning pinwheel. Sanshirō thought it a beautiful farewell.

Sanshirō looked on at the writing of another, at the funeral of a stranger, with an objective eye. If someone had approached him and suggested he view Mineko in the same manner, he would have been taken aback. When it came to Mineko, objectivity was out of the question. For one thing, he wasn't at all cognizant of his objectivity or lack thereof. He was simply aware that he sensed a beautiful calm in a stranger's death, while in the life that was Mineko he sensed a beautiful joy, underlaid with a certain anguish. He was off now to quell this anguish. He thought to face it head on. Sidestepping to parry, even in his dreams, was never an option. This same Sanshirō, as it was, viewed the passing funeral in a literal sense, detached from the sorrow of a life cut short. He even found pleasure, where should have been sadness, in the beauty of the moment.

On turning into Akebono-chō he saw a large pine. He'd been told to take this tree as a landmark. When he reached it, the house was not the right one. On up the street was another pine. And beyond that was another. There were lots of pines. Sanshirō thought what a nice area it was. Past numerous pines and off to the left was a hedge with a finely crafted gate. Sure enough, the placard read "Haraguchi." The placard was of a dark, intricately-grained wood, on which the name was stylishly painted in green. Each character was a work of art. From gate to entryway was clean and simple, with grass on either side.

Mineko's clogs were lined up in the entryway. The left and right straps were of differing colors. This made them easy to recognize. The young maid who received him said that Haraguchi was working, but he was welcome to come in. Sanshirō followed her to the studio. It was a spacious room, oblong and oriented north to south. The floor was cluttered in the manner of an artist. In one place, a rug was spread. It's size was entirely disproportionate to that of the room. More so than as a floor covering, it appeared to have been thrown down as a colorful, elegantly-pattered specimen. The same held true for the tiger skin further on, which couldn't be construed as purposeful seating. The long tail extended out at an oblique angle, incongruous with the rug. There was a large jar that seemed to be formed of hardened sand. Two arrows protruded from its mouth. Between their gray feathers was brightly shining gold foil. Next to them was a suit of armor. From the green and white cords securing its plates, Sanshirō reckoned it was unohana-odoshi. Something in the far corner caught his eye. It was a purple quilted kimono, embroidered with gold thread. In the usual manner of airing clothes, it was hung on a drapery cord passed from sleeve to sleeve. The sleeves were round and short. Sanshirō recognized it as a Genroku era garment. There were also numerous paintings of various sizes. Just the works that hung on the walls made a sizable collection. More unframed

pieces, presumably still in sketch form, were stacked and rolled together. Their rough edges, visible in the loose rolls, made an untidy sight.

Among this sea of dazzling colors was a portrait in process. The subject of this portrait in process stood on center at the far end of the room, holding up a fan. The artist, shoulders hunched and palette still in hand, turned round toward Sanshirō. He held a thick pipe in his mouth.

“Welcome,” he said, removing the pipe and laying it on a small round table. Matches and an ashtray were also on the table. There was a chair too.

“Have a seat. -- This is it.” He motioned in the direction of the canvas. It was close to two meters in length.

“It really is large,” Sanshirō remarked simply.

“Yes, quite,” Haraguchi replied, more to himself than to Sanshirō. He began on the area where hair met background.

At this point, Sanshirō finally directed his gaze toward Mineko. From beneath the shadow of the fan, he caught a faint flash of her white teeth.

For the next several minutes, everything was silent. The room was warm from the stove. Even outside, it was not so cold. The wind had calmed to nothing. Bare trees stood wrapped in winter’s light, making not a sound. Sanshirō, since entering the studio, was adrift in a haze. He propped his elbows on the round table and abandoned himself, without hesitation, to a space as still as the stillness of night. Within this stillness was Mineko. Her form was slowly taking shape. Only the brush of the heavy-set artist moved. It moved to the eye, but not to the ear. The heavy-set artist moved too, but his steps were soft.

Mineko, sealed in silence, was perfectly still. Her form, standing and holding the fan, was already there on the canvas. Haraguchi, it seemed, was not really painting Mineko. He was copying an image, miraculously endowed with depth, onto a flat canvas, exerting himself to strip away that depth. This second Mineko, though, through the space of silence, was moving toward the first. Between the two Minekos, Sanshirō sensed a prolonged silence, detached from the ticking of the clock. With the subtle passage of time, imperceptible even to the artist, the second Mineko was approaching the first. In a while, when they came together and merged into one, the flow of time would abruptly change course and spill into eternity. The work of Haraguchi’s brush would be finished.

At this point, Sanshirō came back to himself and turned his gaze toward Mineko. She stood motionless as before. Sanshirō’s mind, in this silent air, had raced ahead of itself. He felt intoxicated.

“You look like you need a break.”

Haraguchi broke the silence with a grin.

Without speaking, Mineko immediately broke her pose and dropped into the easy chair that was placed nearby. Her white teeth flashed again in this moment. As she turned, she glanced at Sanshirō over the top of her sleeve. Her glance hit his brow like a shooting star, piercing it clean through.

“What do you think?” Haraguchi asked as he approached the round table. He struck a match, relit his pipe, and placed it in his mouth. Holding the wooden bowl with his fingers, he expelled two puffs of thick smoke through his whiskers. Then he turned his rounded back and moved toward the painting. He added some color here and there.

The painting was by no means finished. However, its entire surface was covered in paint, and to Sanshirō’s untrained eye it was quite a sight. He had no way to judge the quality of the work. Unable to critique the style, he knew only his own reaction to the style. Even this, given his lack of experience, could well be misguided. He was sophisticated enough, though, not to allow himself utter indifference to art.

To Sanshirō’s eye, the painting as a whole was gorgeous. Its entire surface had a sugar-coated texture. It seemed as though sunlit from within. The shadows weren’t dark, but rather shone purple. Looking on it lightened his heart. It imparted a floating sensation, invoking ideas of sleek, Edo-era canal boats. At the same time, there was something soothing to it. It was secure and self-assured. There was nothing bitter, harsh, or garish. Sanshirō thought it befitting of Haraguchi.

At this point Haraguchi, wielding his brush deftly, began to speak.

“Ogawa-san, here’s an interesting story. Among my friends, there was one fellow got fed up with his wife. So he asked her for a divorce. The wife told him no. She’d put down roots and was comfortable where she was. Whether he liked her or not, she was staying.”

Haraguchi took a step back from the painting and surveyed the effects of his brushwork. Then he turned and addressed Mineko. “Satomi-san, this would be easier if you’d wear your summer kimono. I’m enhancing the color as best I can, but I’m afraid I’ve overdone it.”

“So sorry,” Mineko replied.

Haraguchi, without answering, stepped back to his painting. “Anyway, the wife was dead set on staying, so my friend tells her she can stay. She can stay if she wants, for as long as she wants, but he’s going to leave. -- Satomi-san, please stand for a bit. Don’t worry about the fan. Just stand. That’s good. Thanks. -- The wife asks how he expects her to manage without him. He tells her to do what she must - marry in a surrogate groom if need be.”

“What happened next?” Sanshirō asked.

Haraguchi seemed to think the rest not worth telling. “Nothing happened next. The point is this - think twice before you marry. Alliances, once formed, aren’t easily severed. Look at Professor Hirota, look at Nonomiya, look at Kyōsuke, look at me even. None of us are married. When women gain the upper hand, bachelors are

minted in droves. Society can only function when women know their place. There can only be so many bachelors.”

“My brother’s to be married soon.”

“Oh? I hadn’t heard. What will you do then?”

“I don’t know.”

Sanshirō looked at Mineko. Mineko looked back at Sanshirō and smiled. Haraguchi was busy with his painting. “You don’t know. If you don’t know, then ...” he mused as he worked his brush.

Sanshirō took this opportunity to get up from the table and approach Mineko. Her hair was uncoiled, and she was resting it lightly against the back of her chair. She was too tired to heed etiquette. Her throat was exposed where it arched from the collar of her undergarment. Her coat was draped over the back of the chair. Its colorful pattern formed a backdrop to the curves of her hair.

Sanshirō held the thirty yen in his pocket. There was something between the two of them, he couldn’t quite say what, that was embodied in these bank notes. -- Or so Sanshirō believed. This was why he had hesitated to return the money. This was also why, this time, he was resolved to return it. If he returned it, would they drift apart with no further pretext for engagement? Or, in absence of such pretext, would they draw even closer? -- Sanshirō, in comparison to most of his peers, had a somewhat whimsical bent.

“Satomi-san,” he started.

“What is it?” she answered. She looked up at him from below, her face still held in repose. Only her eyes were active. They fixed their gaze directly on him. Sanshirō could see she was tired.

“While I’m here, I thought I should probably settle things.” As he spoke, he undid a button and reached his hand into his inner pocket.

“What is it?” she asked again. Her tone was still relaxed.

Hand in pocket, Sanshirō thought for a moment. He finally resolved to act. “The money from the other day.”

“I can’t accept it here.”

She looked up at him as before. Her hands made no motion to accept. She didn’t stir in the least. Her expression remained subdued. He wasn’t quite sure what her answer had implied.

“Just a bit more. Shall we?” A voice sounded from behind. Haraguchi had turned and was looking their way. Brush between his fingers, he smiled as he tugged at the tip of his beard. Mineko, still seated, braced both arms on the armrests to force herself upright.

“Will it be much longer?” Sanshirō asked her in a quiet voice.

“About an hour,” Mineko answered him, also in a quiet voice.

Sanshirō went back to the round table. Mineko resumed her pose. Haraguchi, smoking his pipe again, began to work his brush.

“Ogawa-san, take a look at Satomi-san’s eyes,” Haraguchi said with his back turned.

Sanshirō looked as requested. Mineko lowered her fan and relaxed her pose. She turned sideways to look through the window at the garden.

“No, don’t turn sideways. Just when I’d started painting.”

“Then what’s the talk for?” She turned back to face them again.

Haraguchi explained himself. “I didn’t mean to throw you off. I want to consult with Ogawa-san.”

“On what?”

“Resume your pose, and I’ll explain. That’s it. Elbows a little more forward. Okay, Ogawa-san, look at the eyes I’ve drawn. Have I captured the expression of my model?”

“I’m not so sure I can tell. When you paint like this, day after day, do the eyes of your model project a consistent expression?”

“In fact they don’t, and it’s not just the model. My mood as an artist is also different each day. In all honesty, I should be producing myriad portraits. I can’t do so, of course. As it is, it’s amazing how well a single portrait sums up the whole. I’ll tell you why that is ...”

Haraguchi’s brush worked nonstop the whole while. His eyes were focused on Mineko. His simultaneous use of various faculties impressed Sanshirō greatly.

“As I paint each day, each day’s work adds to the whole. After a while, the painting acquires a mood of its own. So even if I come home wearing some other mood, once I step into the studio and face the painting, I’m pulled back immediately to the mood of the work. In effect, the mood of the work takes me over. It’s the same with Satomi. As a natural matter of course, her expression will shift with the flow of events that surround her. The actual effect on the painting, though, is minimal. The pose she assumes, the drum, the armor, the tiger skin, and other such clutter, these all induce that certain expression. The force of habit succeeds, gradually, in overriding all else. For the most part, I can draw her eyes as I see them. But back to the question of ‘expression’ ...”

Haraguchi suddenly fell silent. He seemed to have hit a difficult spot. He took a few steps back to compare his painting and model.

“Satomi-san, is something wrong?”

“No.”

It was hard to imagine that Mineko had uttered this word. She was perfectly steady in her pose.

“Then back to the question of ‘expression,’” Haraguchi continued. “The artist doesn’t draw his subject’s soul. He draws what the soul shows him. If he observes faithfully, then the soul’s richness will naturally show through. At any rate, let’s assume that’s so. Anything the soul hides, that’s not on display, is outside the artist’s realm. All we draw is flesh. Any flesh we draw, if it doesn’t showcase a soul, is dead flesh, and the work will move no one. Now back to Satomi-san’s eyes. I’m not out to reflect her feelings. I only need to draw her eyes. I draw them because I like how they look - their form, the shadows of their contoured lids, the depth of their pupils. All that I can observe, I capture on my canvas. As a fortuitous consequence, a certain kind of expression emerges. If it doesn’t emerge, then I’ve chosen the wrong colors or rendered the forms poorly. That’s because color and form themselves are, in fact, the essence of expression.”

At this point, Haraguchi again stepped back to compare painting and model. “Something’s not quite right today. You must be tired. If so then let’s stop. -- Are you tired?”

“No.”

Haraguchi approached his painting again.

“So the question, then, is what drew me to Satomi-san’s eyes. Let me explain. The female face in Western art, no matter who draws it, is always endowed with large eyes as a mark of beauty. More often than not preposterously large. The beauties of Japan though, from Kannon to Otafuku and Noh masks, and particularly in the ukiyo-e genre, have decidedly narrow eyes. They’re proportioned like elephant eyes. It seems curious that standards of beauty could differ so from East to West. On the other hand, perhaps it’s not so curious. Eyes in the West are large, so aesthetic selection occurs accordingly. Japanese are descended from whales -- A man named Pierre Loti wondered in jest how the Japanese eye even opens -- anyway, that’s our nature. In absence of relevant material, an aesthetic appreciation for large eyes never developed. From the multitude of slender eyes an ideal arose. The works of Utamaro and Sukenobu were widely praised. However iconic slender eyes may be in Japan, though, they’re out of place in Western painting. It looks like the subject is blind. On the other hand, there are no eyes here like those of Raphael’s Madonna. And if there were, they wouldn’t pass for Japanese. That’s why I’m imposing on Satomi-san.”

“Satomi-san, just a little longer.”

There was no answer. Mineko held her pose.

Sanshirō took great interest in the artist’s discourse. It would have been all the more interesting, he thought, if he’d come just to listen. Sanshirō’s attention, at present, was focused neither on Haraguchi’s discourse nor on Haraguchi’s painting. It was, of course, concentrated on Mineko at the other end of the room. He lent his ear to the artist, but his eyes were fixed squarely on Mineko. The female form reflected there was a snapshot taken from nature, captured in its utmost beauty and suspended motionless. In its constancy was an enduring solace. Haraguchi, however, suddenly inclined his head and asked her if something was wrong.

In that same moment, Sanshirō felt a tinge of fear. The artist was warning, it seemed, that this suspension of transient beauty was nearing its end.

Now that he thought about it, it did look like something was wrong. Mineko's face was lacking in color, and its radiance was gone. A heavy melancholy was pulling at her eyes. Sanshirō felt the solace he'd received from this living portrait slip away. At the same time, it occurred to him that perhaps he himself had effected the change. An intense thrill struck him to his very core. Sadness at passing beauty, that universal sentiment, was gone without a trace. -- He held influence over this woman. -- This realization stirred and expanded his self-awareness. Whether this influence would prove to his advantage or to his detriment, however, was still unclear.

Haraguchi finally laid down his brush. "It's no use - let's stop for today," he announced.

Mineko, still standing where she was, let her fan fall to the floor. She picked up her coat from the back of the chair and slipped it on as she approached them.

"You must be tired today."

"Me?" She adjusted the coat sleeves and fastened the ties in front.

"To tell the truth, I'm tired too. We'll resume tomorrow when the weather's cleared. Take your time and have a cup of tea."

It was a while yet till dusk. Mineko, however, said that she had some matters to attend to. Sanshirō was invited to stay, but he made a point of declining. Opportunities like this, in the current context of Japanese society, were hard to come by. He intended to make the most of it. He proposed to her that they stroll through Akebono-chō, where the streets were relatively quiet and passersby were few. Contrary to his expectations, though, she did not accept. She cut past the hedges and directly out to the main thoroughfare.

"Haraguchi seemed concerned. Are you really alright?" he asked as he walked by her side.

"Me?" Mineko answered again, just as she had to Haraguchi. Since making her acquaintance, Sanshirō had never known Mineko to be anything but concise. She rarely responded with more than a few phrases. And her words, at that, were decidedly simple. To Sanshirō's ears, though, they rang with a certain intensity. The tone of her voice was unlike that of others. He marveled at it. It commanded his admiration.

She'd turned her head as she'd spoken, glancing his way through her signature contoured eyes. They seemed as though framed in coronas. A new expression showed, somehow lukewarm. Her cheeks were a little pale.

"You look a bit pale."

"Do I?"

They walked on in silence for five or six paces. Sanshirō wanted to tear away the thin barrier that seemed to hold them apart. His judgment failed him, however, when it came to choosing the right words. Words of

indulgence, like those from a novel, were out of the question. They didn't suite his taste, and they weren't befitting of a young pair acquainted just socially. In all honesty, Sanshirō was wishing for the impossible. And he didn't stop at wishing. As they walked, he was racking his brain.

“Did you have some business with Haraguchi today?” Mineko spoke first.

“No, nothing of any importance.”

“Then it was just a social call.”

“No, it wasn't a social call.”

“Oh. What was it then?”

Sanshirō seized the moment. “I went to see you.” Sanshirō felt that, with this, he had said all there was to say.

Mineko was utterly unperturbed. Further, she responded back in her usual beguiling tone. “I couldn't accept the money there.”

Sanshirō was beside himself. They walked for a while in silence. Then he finally spoke. “The truth is, it wasn't about the money.”

Mineko didn't answer for a moment. Then she said quietly, “I don't care about the money either. You keep it.”

Sanshirō couldn't stand it any longer. “I just wanted to see you,” he suddenly confessed. He glanced sideways at her. She didn't look at him. He heard in that moment a faint sigh escape her lips.

“That money ...”

“At any rate ...”

They each left a half sentence dangling in the air. They walked for a bit with no further words.

“What did you think of Haraguchi's painting?” Mineko finally engaged him with a question.

There were myriad ways he could answer. Sanshirō walked for a spell without responding.

“Were you impressed with the pace of the work? At how much is done already?”

“Yes,” he said. He hadn't really noticed this till now. When he thought about it, it was less than a month since Haraguchi had called at Professor Hirota's and spoken of his intention to paint Mineko. And it was some time later, at the exhibition, that Haraguchi had engaged Mineko directly. Not knowing much about painting, Sanshirō had no sense of how long a work of that size should take, but now that Mineko had brought it to his attention, it did seem almost too fast.

“When did you start?”

“We started in earnest just a while ago, but we began earlier, working a bit at a time.”

“How much earlier?”

“My outfit gives it away.”

Sanshirō, all of a sudden, was drawn back to that sultry day when he’d first seen Mineko at the edge of the pond.

“Remember? You were crouched there under the oak tree.”

“And you were standing on the hilltop, holding up your fan.”

“Just like the painting.”

“The exact same scene.”

The two of them looked at each other. They had almost crested the Hakusan hill.

A cart approached from the opposite direction. Its passenger wore a black hat and sported gold-rimmed glasses. His complexion was discernibly healthy, even from a distance. As soon as the cart had come into view, it had seemed to Sanshirō that the young gentleman on board had his gaze fixed on Mineko. As it came closer, the young man had his driver pull to a stop. He pushed the apron deftly aside and jumped down from the kick board. He was a handsome man with a tall, straight back and a slender face. He was clean shaven, but masculine nonetheless.

He stopped in front of Mineko. “After waiting so long, I finally came to get you.” He looked down at her with a smile.

“Thank you.” Mineko looked at him and returned his smile. She immediately turned the same expression toward Sanshirō.

“I don’t believe we’ve met,” the man said.

“This is Ogawa-san, from the university,” Mineko responded on Sanshirō’s behalf.

The man tipped his hat lightly by way of introduction.

“We’d best be going. Your brother is waiting too.”

Sanshirō, conveniently, was left at the corner of the lane that led to Oiwake. In the end, he parted from Mineko with money still in hand.