

Perception of Karuizawa and its Transformation in the Novels of Tatsuo Hori

Yoshie KIRA

Keywords: *Tatsuo Hori, Karuizawa, vision of nature, Western's perception, life and death*

1. Research background and objective:

Tatsuo Hori, an active writer of the Showa period, visited the village of Karuizawa for the first time in 1923 when he was only 19. The place became later the main scene of many of his novels. During the Meiji period, Karuizawa was firstly seen as a retreat place by a western missionary, it developed afterward into a place not entirely Japanese that felt more like overseas. It was the best place for Hori to write as he could also study the French symbolism movement and to treat his tuberculosis there. In this research, among the several books that took place at Karuizawa, three were selected: "The false image of Rubens" (1930), "Beautiful village" (1933) and "The wind has risen" (1937). The objective was therefore to make a comparison between the novels in order to understand the idea of Hori about Karuizawa and its characteristics as transcribed in his literature.

2. Method:

The method consists in a comparison between the three novels, as for the description of the nature, the characters, the vision of the world, the lights and shadows of Karuizawa as depicted in each book and so on.

3. Conclusion:

For Tatsuo Hori, Karuizawa was an inspiring world where he could flee away from his home town in the down town of Koume in Tokyo. In the novel "The false image of Rubens" (1930), one can feel the deep and genuine emotion felt by the author toward the village. The characters are from the upper-class and the western influence is clearly predominant over the local culture, moreover the villagers or the village are ignored in the storyline.

In "Beautiful village" (1933), the place is positively described like a retreat place. Not about the life of rich people in the villa, but it describes the lifestyle of commoners like, for instance, the story of the garbage removal in the back of the villa. The life and work in the reality of the community is described as it cannot be seen in the previous novel.

In the last studied novel "The wind has risen" (1937), the story narrates the "joie de vivre" of two lovers in a context where the death of one of them is omnipresent; the weight of the introspective and emotional values is tangible. No more foreigners or fashionable westerner's cultural assets appear in this novel.

To sum up, the vision of Hori about Karuizawa was loaded with his personal history. Since he escaped from his home town when he was young, the death of his fiancée, the rigor of life and so on, transcribed the evolution of his maturity, to put his intrinsic world into words.