

THE 2010 TETSUO NAJITA DISTINGUISHED LECTURE
IN JAPANESE STUDIES

SPONSORED BY THE JAPAN STUDIES COMMITTEE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

NOBEL LAUREATE IN LITERATURE

Kenzaburō
Ōe

A NOVELIST RE-READS
'KAITOKUDŌ'

THURSDAY, MARCH 4 AT 4:00 P.M.
INTERNATIONAL HOUSE ASSEMBLY HALL

A Novelist Re-Reads *Kaitokudō*

In this lecture, Kenzaburō Ōe, recipient of the 1994 Nobel Prize in Literature, will discuss the contemporary relevance of Tetsuo Najita's approach to intellectual history, including Najita's *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan: The Kaitokudō Merchant Academy of Osaka* (1997), a landmark study of the rise of an independent school of economic and moral philosophy in eighteenth-century Japan.

Mr. Ōe will speak in Japanese, with English translation provided.

The Tetsuo Najita Distinguished Lecture series was launched in 2007 by the Japan Studies Committee to honor the legacy of Tetsuo Najita, Robert S. Ingersoll Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of History and of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, and his contribution to the university during his long career.

The lecture will be filmed and made available online at the Center for East Asian Studies' website, <http://ceas.uchicago.edu>. Visit the website to view videos of the past Najita Distinguished Lectures and find out more about East Asia programs and events at the University of Chicago.

Excerpts from *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan: The Kaitokudō Merchant Academy of Osaka* by Tetsuo Najita

p. 1: "On the side of an imposing modern building in the center of downtown Osaka – the *Higashi-ku* or East district – a small, odd-shaped, stone slab inscribed with archaic Chinese characters marks the site where the Osaka Merchant Academy once stood. The Kaitokudō flourished during the eighteenth century of the Tokugawa era (1600-1868). With the demise of the Tokugawa bakufu in 1868, the academy, chartered by that regime, also closed its gates to further instruction."

p. 309-310: "What is most intriguing about this painful moment is not that the new government, hard-pressed for capital itself, should take this adamant position [refusing to pay the debts owed to Osaka merchant houses by the Tokugawa regime], nor that Masuya and [merchant] houses like it lost in their appeal, but rather that Masuya, in one of its last acts before bankruptcy, would invest the residual resources it had at its disposal to help establish a small elementary school near the Kaitokudō. Still located in a little corridor in downtown Osaka and incorporated within the public school system, it was named by the Masuyas as 'the school that loves the light of day'—*Aijitsu shōgakkō*....

As mentioned at the beginning, the Kaitokudō would be renovated in the 1910s as the industrial revolution was firmly underway. It would be destroyed during the Pacific War and its library relocated in the postwar era as an important archive at Osaka University. It is absolutely consistent with the history of the Kaitokudō, however, that Yamagata [Bantō]'s own personal library still remains housed in the little elementary school near the Masuya household. Despite the absurdity of this situation at first glance, since young students in Japan are no longer trained to read the complex books that Yamagata had used as references to write his treatise against dreams, this library, located specifically where it is, in a school dedicated to young minds embracing the light of dawn, serves as a quiet metaphoric reminder of the link between the intellectual world of Yamagata's Kaitokudō and the continuing discourse of reason in modern Japanese history."

About Kenzaburō Ōe

Born in 1935 in rural Shikoku, Ōe is one of modern Japan's most respected novelists and public intellectuals. He began publishing fiction while still a university student and in 1958 was awarded the Akutagawa Prize, Japan's most prestigious literary award. Since then, he has published many celebrated novels and stories, including *A Personal Matter* (1964), *The Silent Cry* (1967), *Teach Us to Outgrow Our Madness* (1969), *The Pinch Runner Memorandum* (1976), and *Somerset* (1999). His most recent novel, *Suishi* (*Death by Drowning*), was published in Japan to great acclaim in late 2009. His works have been translated into many languages, and in 1994 he became the second Japanese writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

In addition to his fiction, Ōe has throughout his career provided a model for the engaged intellectual. He has written widely on the dangers of nuclear proliferation, on Japan's history of military aggression, and in defense of Article 9, the peace clause of Japan's postwar constitution.



photo: hpschaefer

About Tetsuo Najita

Educated at Grinnell College and Harvard University, Tetsuo Najita joined the faculty of the University of Chicago in 1969. His many publications on Japan's early modern and modern intellectual history include *Hara Kei and the Politics of Compromise* (1967), which was awarded the John King Fairbank Prize in East Asian History, and *Visions of Virtue: The Kaitokudō Merchant Academy of Osaka* (1987), which won the Yamagata Bantō Prize. Since his retirement in 2002, Tetsuo Najita has continued his work. In 2008, he published a new work in Japanese on the topic of "doing intellectual history," and in 2009 the University of California Press published his most recent monograph in English, *Ordinary Economies in Japan: A Historical Perspective, 1759-1950*. This impressive body of scholarship, which combined theoretical rigor with rock-solid research, and which was ordered by the assertion that historians must always engage with the moral and political issues of our time, served as an inspiration to the many undergraduate and graduate students whom he trained.

In addition to this distinguished record of scholarship and teaching, during his thirty-three year tenure at the university, Tetsuo Najita dedicated much energy to building the Japan Studies program, while playing a leading role within the History Department and the Social Science Division. He served as Director of the Center for East Asian Studies from 1974-1980, Master of the Social Science Collegiate Division from 1984-1987 and Chair of the History Department for 1994-1997 and in spring 2001.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

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The Center for East Asian Studies works to enhance opportunities available to scholars both in the United States and abroad, and to foster communication and inter-disciplinary collaboration among the community of professors and students at the University of Chicago and throughout the wider East Asian Studies community.

To these ends CEAS and its Committees sponsor a variety of activities including colloquia, workshops, conferences, public lectures, film series, cultural events, and other programs that promote understanding of the cultures and societies of China, Japan, and Korea.

Japan Studies Committee

The Committee on Japanese Studies is comprised of all University of Chicago faculty with a scholarly interest in Japanese subjects. The committee coordinates and supports Japan-related programs throughout the university and presents a wide variety of Japan-related outreach activities both on and off campus. It also seeks to partner with other entities locally, regionally, nationally and globally to build Japan awareness and strengthen Japan studies.



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