Akira Uesugi is a writer of a purely Japanese character. His works are all self-analytical novels, a type in which he is unique in Japan and which is rarely found in foreign literature.

They are novels which have the author himself as their hero, and in which he ruthlessly analyzes and criticizes his feelings and actions. Indeed, Akira Uesugi seems to strip off his very flesh to disclose his soul with the pitilessness of a self-castigating monk. The cry of the soul whipped by such relentless analysis reveals the true shapes of life's joy and sorrow found in the innermost recesses of the human soul. To find something similar to this in foreign literature we would have to turn to Rousseau's Confessions or to the autobiographical novels of Strindberg.

Akira Uesugi has now published a collection of short stories under the title of Elegy. The longest of them is entitled "Friendship Between Two Men of Leisure," and depicts the companionship between the author and a translator specializing in German literature. Both are bachelors, and this fact was the main cause of the kinship of their souls. They sometimes met to play chess or to go to a public bath together; sometimes they would make an overnight trip into the countryside with fishing rods on their shoulders; sometimes they drank together at a little wine shop; and sometimes they would help each other out financially. The relationship between them might be called a friendship of the soul. The author describes an intimacy so tender and beautiful as to make the reader feel almost envious. Although "Friendship Between Two Men of Leisure" gives us an approaching sense of happiness mingled with sorrow, it is written in an unaffected style.

The story which gives the book its title, "Elegy," submerges the reader in melancholy with the painful reality of the author's past life. There are scenes such as that of his wife, who is recovering from her long mental disease, sending some woollen article she has knitted to her child at home; or that of the husband calling on his wife at the hospital with a guitar. Behind the pathetic sentiment of these descriptions there is a faint light that strikes the reader's heart with a sense of genuineness. With such a subject the story might easily indulge in sentimentality and lamentations, but the author has successfully avoided this pitfall. On the whole it can be said that this collection of short stories possesses much that is essentially Japanese.

Voice of the Current, a novel by Tatsuo Ogata, was written by a man who has spent eight years of his life in the Navy. It takes life on a submarine in wartime as its subject and describes the hardships the men must undergo in fulfilling their important mission. The submarine sails out for blockade and patrol duty in the rough waters along the China coast, now and again stopping to examine enemy vessels.

As almost all the war novels written hitherto dealt with the Army, this novel is worthy of notice. But it includes no dramatic scenes or grand sea-battles, concerning itself only with the daily life of the submarine crew who silently do their duty. Although for that reason it is a little monotonous, it is obviously written by a man who has had personal experience of this unusual life.

Life and Opinions of Tokuno Goro, by Tadashi Ito, is a new type of self-analytical novel. It deserves attention because in purpose and form it goes beyond the self-analytical novel as hitherto known in Japan. Although the form of inner soliloquy is borrowed from parts of James Joyce's Ulysses, Tadashi Ito has skilfully adapted it for his own purposes.

The hero of the book, Tokuno Goro, is a novelist and lecturer at a private art college. He describes the seemingly endless flow of events in his daily life and his relations with his friends and family. Into this he inserts in news-form the trends of the rapidly moving world and in this way gives a cross section of present-day Japan. He expresses his views, those of a modern Japanese intellectual, on the happenings of the day. Seen from this point of view, the novel can also be classified as a description of customs and manners or even as a sociological novel. Indeed, Life and Opinions of Tokuno Goro might just as well be entitled "Life and Opinions of a Japanese Intellectual."

It can be said in favor of the book that the author has described the life of the intelligentsia with cool detachment and shrewd, nute observation. On the other hand, this work lacks emotion, and the author is almost too objective and intellectual in his criticisms. In describing our surroundings it is sometimes necessary to stop and look at even a

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tiny violet. We also sometimes wish to relax in a grassy field and enjoy the good things of life with unrestrained emotion. No such tender sentiment is contained in the Life and Opinions of Tokuno Goro. This lack of emotion is perceptible throughout the works of Tadashi Ito.

**Fighting Cock,** by Minpo Sato, is a collection of nine short stories. Except for two of them, they are all “rural” stories, with farmers of northeastern Japan for their principal characters. Every one of the stories is well constructed, and I recommend them as examples of almost flawless short-story writing.

The title story deals with the monetary quarrels arising in a family in connection with a disputed inheritance. It is written in the form of a court case, with plaintiff, defendant, and witness stating their case before the judge. Through the presentation of their contentions, the author describes the mixture of obstinacy, craftiness, and simplicity characteristic of the farmers of northeastern Japan. This excellent work also reveals the author’s fine sense of humor.

“Charcoal Hut” and “The Age” depict the life of charcoal-burners who, owing to the great changes in the world, face growing difficulties in their occupation. Some of them even have to move as far away as Manchukuo. The sadness these charcoal-burners feel at parting with their ancestral land is touchingly brought out.

“Remote Village” is a vivid picture of the life of the unsophisticated people of northeastern Japan, with a village youth and a provincial newspaper-man as its central characters. Their acquaintance arises in a bus which runs from village to village through the mountains. The story is done in pastel shades, as it were, but the life of the farmers appears vividly before us in all its robust heartiness.

**Various Races,** by Jun Takami, is another volume of short stories, almost all of which are set in Java, which gives them special interest at the present moment. The author published these works after having made a six-months’ tour of the Dutch East Indies shortly before the outbreak of the Greater East Asia War. According to the newspapers, he is again active in that region as a member of the Army press section.

The title story depicts the attitude of various races, such as Javanese, Hindus, Chinese, and Dutch, whom he had a chance of observing in a bus on Bali. He stresses the racial contempt the various races feel for each other and the contradictions and conflicts arising from such contempt. Although we must admit that his observations are factual, it is a pity that he does not express his own opinion on them. This work is really more of a travel account of his stay in Bali than a story.

“Dog of Bali Island” is another fine description of what is called “the paradise of the Dutch East Indies.” To give a short synopsis of the story: Upon his arrival in Bali the author is struck by the large number of dogs. An artist traveling with him decides to paint a picture of a jungle dancer, a girl with a body full of sinuous energy. The author falls slightly in love with the model. One day, when he is visiting a temple square in order to watch a dance, he finds a dog squatting right in the center of the stage. The dog does not budge, while the dancers take care to avoid the dog in their performance. The writer is astonished by this queer relationship between the people and dogs of Bali. He leaves the island paradise haunted by the memory of the dancer model. One night after his return home, his house dog, whose name was Taro, and who had long given up barking, started to do so persistently. The family was afraid of disturbing the neighbors, but the author encouraged the dog from the window, saying, “Taro! You may bark, you mustn’t be a coward!”

Although it might appear that the author is just scribbling away in his favorite unrestrained style, this is where the unique character of his novels actually lies. The Weltanschauung of the author as a Japanese is revealed in the contrast he depicts between dog and man, between the weak and oppressed races which are just managing to survive and the dominant Dutch.

As these works deal with the Dutch East Indies as they were before the outbreak of the Greater East Asia War, it is interesting to speculate on what sort of work this author will produce when he next sees the East Indies in their changed condition.—N.