Teaching Punctuality: Inside and Outside the Primary School

NISHIMOTO Ikuko

We not only studied English, but were taught about the whole range of life. We thus became accustomed to carrying out all our daily conversations in English. . . . At times some of us would be too noisy, and we would be smacked on our “bottoms,” but gradually we acquired the habit of being punctual, and taking care of our things by ourselves.1

Evoking a boyhood in which English was spoken in everyday life, and children were disciplined in punctuality, these recollections of a Japanese born and educated in the Meiji era are apt to surprise us. But then this was the privileged education of Shimazu Yasuhisa (1895-1971), the fifth son of the Shimazu family, the former lord of the Satsuma clan. His eldest brother Tadashige (1886-1968) served as a naval attaché to the Japanese Embassy in Britain. The brothers studied for seven years from 1901 under Ethel Howard (1865-1931), a British tutor, who had taught the sons of German Emperor Wilhelm II.

The situation was quite different in the population at large. There, noted Ernest Satow (1843-1929), a British diplomatic attaché who observed Japanese society before and after the Meiji Restoration, “neither clocks nor punctuality were common.”2 Yet the fact of the matter is that within a quarter of a century, habits of punctuality would have spread well beyond a narrow elite, and begun to form the lives of even ordinary children. This essay is an inquiry into this broader transformation.

What exactly is punctuality? The word “punctual” derives from the Latin root punctum, or “point,” sharing this root with verbs such as “to punctuate” and “to puncture.” Punctuality thus has to do with actions performed not over a certain period, but at a single point in time; it refers, as it were, to being on the dot. In societies that don’t require punctuality, it suffices that people act within a loosely defined “zone” of time. The breadth of this zone will vary with the society and the era, and within each community every activity will have its own tacitly fixed zone. In societies that insist on punctuality and strict time discipline, however, the breadth of this zone gradually narrows, and ultimately shrinks to a point.

When did Japan start to become a punctual society? In 1873, the Meiji government enacted a calendrical reform and adopted the Western time system. Through novel terms
such as “minute” and “second,” even ordinary Japanese became familiar with very fine divisions of time. With new institutions operating under a new temporal order, people were compelled to change their attitudes toward time, and to learn to be punctual.

It is hard, of course, to understand a new concept such as doing things on time, and harder still actually to make it a habit. Children, however, absorb novelty relatively easily. Training them requires patience, but the results are more enduring. In what follows, I propose to examine the period from the beginning of the Meiji era up to just before the beginning of the Pacific War, and to explore how elementary schools impressed upon children the importance of punctuality and the value of time. I shall focus mainly on regulations and textbooks in public schools, but I shall consider as well some influences from outside the classroom.

But let us glance first at the situation before the great push toward time discipline, and review briefly the nature of traditional education. Children in the Edo period attended hankō (schools run by domainal governments under the bakuhansystem), kangakujuku (schools where shogunate-approved Confucian orthodoxy was taught) or terakoya (popular schools), depending on the class to which they belonged. In terakoya, where the children of the merchant class studied reading, writing (calligraphy) and arithmetic, lessons started at the hour of the dragon (eight in the morning) and ended at the hour of sheep (two in the afternoon); in summer, school began at the hour of the rabbit (six in the morning) and ended earlier at the hour of horse (noon). These were rough guidelines, and there were usually no specific regulations regarding what time to start. Even when such regulations existed, without clocks at hand, children could only guess the hour by rudimentary methods such as consulting the sunlight (which of course was of no avail on cloudy and rainy days), or listening for the crowing of the cock. Instruction was personalized. Children of different ages and levels studied together in one room, but the teacher gave individual lessons. Pupils, singly or in pairs, took turns reading aloud from their textbooks, and the teacher would explain how to read difficult Chinese characters. In the case of calligraphy, pupils would be given sample models and sent back to practice; the teacher would then circulate and correct each pupil’s work, while the others worked on their own assignments. Children, therefore, received their lessons in the order that they came, and went home when they finished their day’s task. They arrived in twos and threes, and returned likewise. Terakoya had holidays on five seasonal festival days, New Year’s Day and Bon (the Buddhist All Souls’ Day); there were also no lessons on the first and the fifteenth days of each month. Lesson hours were often changed to suit the teacher’s convenience. Although the education system underwent radical change in the Meiji era, such individualized instruction did not completely disappear; calligraphy schools, for instance, still basically follow the same style of instruction even now.

The educational system instituted by the new Meiji government was based on Western models, and especially that of the United States. Between 1871 and 1873 the Education Minister Tanaka Fujimaro and others went on an extended observation tour
to study education in Europe and America. Upon their return, they invited an American educator, David Murray, to teach in the new teacher's school, and for the first textbooks they relied heavily on translations of teaching materials used in the United States. But it wasn't just the contents that changed; the new education system also radically transformed the method of instruction. One such fundamental change was the replacement of consecutive individualized teaching by simultaneous group instruction. Groups of children now came to study the same curriculum at the same moment. With this change, temporal discipline for the first time became critical to education.

1 TEACHING TIME DISCIPLINE: SCHOOL REGULATIONS AND TIMETABLES

Like many Meiji institutions, the Ministry of Education and the modern elementary school system were inaugurated in 1872. From the outset it was marked by an insistence on time discipline. In 1873, the Ministry of Education issued the *Seito kokoroe* (Directions to Elementary School Children), outlining precepts for a disciplined life both at school and home:

1. Get up early in the morning; wash your face and hands, and rinse your mouth; brush your hair; bow to your parents; and prepare to leave for school after breakfast.

2. Make sure that you are at school ten minutes before the start of class every day.

6. Be seated and wait for your teacher's instructions in the waiting room until it is time for school to begin.

7. If you are late for school, do not enter the classroom without permission; explain the reason for your tardiness and wait for your teacher's instructions.

Especially noteworthy here is the phrase "ten minutes before" in the second clause. The Meiji government had introduced the new calendar only that year. Clocks had yet to make their way into ordinary households. It is not clear how children were supposed to know when to set off for school.

One also wonders about the purpose of requiring pupils to arrive ten minutes before the start of class. Was this intended simply as a buffer against tardiness? The sixth clause offers a hint. Schools in those days were provided with a waiting room. The classroom was conceived quite literally as a place uniquely for classes, i.e., for giving lessons. No one, therefore, was allowed to stay there when there was no teaching going on. When pupils arrived at school they thus did not go directly to a classroom, but gathered instead in a waiting room. When it was time for class to begin, pupils entered the classroom...
upon the teacher’s signal. Likewise, they followed the teacher out of the classroom when class was over.

The shift from the loose schedules of the Edo period to a regimen of such precise distinctions as “ten minutes before” seems, again, to have been inspired by Western models. Riji kötei, the report of the above-mentioned observation tour, cites school regulations in Copenhagen, which include the precepts: “Be on the school grounds ten or fifteen minutes before class starts... Do not enter the classroom without permission.” The similarity to the Directions to Elementary School Children is obvious.

How did one tell time at school? Sounds played a major role. A thwacking board was one of the oldest ways to announce time in schools. Drums were also used. Some school buildings, like the Kaichi School in Matsumoto, and others with unique combinations of Western and Japanese architectural features, had drum towers in the spire. As the sounds of a drum or a thwacking board, however, were not always loud enough, they were eventually superseded by bells and hand bells. Some schools utilized all of these to give different signals. The janitor was in charge of sounding the start and end of class. He too had to observe time discipline, and schools laid down detailed instructions prescribing the times at which he was to perform each of his duties throughout the day.

Teachers who were assigned the task of inculcating time discipline had of course to obey the rules themselves. Were they, as grown-ups, able immediately adjust to the new temporal system? Just as it set rules for children, the Ministry of Education also issued a fourteen-clause Directions to Primary School Teachers (Shōgaku kyōshi kokoroe) in 1873. Still, it must have been hard for adults accustomed to traditional seasonal time to transform the rhythm of their lives overnight. In the first years of the new education system, there were schools where a room in the teacher’s own house served as the classroom. Just as educational and private spaces thus intermingled, so did educational and private time, and teachers often left the classroom for personal business. Reflecting such realities, we find a whole series of teachers’ manuals not only urging teachers to observe time discipline, but also admonishing those who abandoned their students in the middle of class.

Despite all the formal regulations, the first ten to fifteen years were, for officials at the Education Ministry, a period of trial and error. Deep skepticism about the new education system persisted among the people, and the concept of “school time” was slow to take hold. Many in fishing villages such as Ōjimacho, Nakajimacho and Hamaguricho in Tokyo, for instance, saw no need for schooling, so that, “Once news of a good catch arrived and villagers were called, pupils dropped their pencils, knocked over their desks, and dashed out of the classroom.” Teachers were unable to control them, and were the objects of scorn and even violence.

Discipline often requires punishment, and the punishments themselves were often defined by time. Unruly speech and behavior, disobedience to the teacher, and destruction of implements are cases in point. The Ushigome and Yotsuya wards in Tokyo, for instance, laid down Regulations Concerning the Disciplinary Punishment of Pupils (Saito chōkai kisoku), which detailed fifteen disciplinary actions including “standing at atten-
"direction" and "after school detention." Thus those who chatted or quarreled during class had to stand at attention for twenty minutes. Those who bothered other pupils by rude speech or behavior had to stand at attention for twenty-five minutes; those who accidentally damaged or stained the belongings of others, and yet did not immediately admit the fact, had to stand at attention for thirty minutes; those who, with rude and arrogant conduct, were disrespectful toward their superiors were to be kept after school for more than an hour. It is striking that the severity of the punishment of standing at attention was calibrated by increments of five minutes. According to the seventh clause of Directions to Elementary School Children, recall, pupils who were late for school could take their seats only with the teacher's permission. Repeated tardiness was subject to punishment. Some schools, such as the primary school affiliated with the Hiroshima Normal School, counted being late or going home early five times as one absence.

Nonetheless, the punishments imposed were presumably left largely to the teacher's discretion, and time discipline in primary schools was probably still a far cry from that found in the military or in factories. As we shall see later, the launching of a movement in the 1920s to promote punctuality suggests that time discipline at the level of primary education remained fairly lax.

Another aspect of time vital to schools was the curricular timetable. The curriculum for primary schools fixed by the Ministry of Education in 1872 was based on the hour as the standard time unit. Regulations thus stipulated that lessons be given "five hours a day and thirty hours a week, except on Sundays." Instruction in each subject was similarly organized; thus, writing was to be taught "six hours a week, namely, an hour a day." Tokyo Normal School, on the other hand, set its own curriculum (1873) for higher and lower elementary schools independently of the Ministry. Its program involved time for "physical exercise" between the subjects (the concept of "recess" had yet to be born), whose standard duration was "five or six minutes." This, again, seems to have followed the American system. A clause on lesson hours in the Regulations for Public Schools in Washington, cited in the Riji kōtei reads, "Allow time for a short break of no more than five minutes after every class is over."

Starting times for classes varied, depending on the school. Nor were they constant throughout the year, even at the same school. Although the schedule was based on the hours defined by the mechanical clock, due account was also taken of the sun's movements. The 1876 regulations for primary schools in Tokyo had four sets of seasonal school hours.

Such, then, was the temporal framework within which students attended school. Let us now consider their textbooks to see what they learned about time in class.

2 TEACHING THE PRECIOUSNESS OF TIME

Samuel Smiles' Self-Help (1859), translated as Saikoku risshihen (1870-71) by
Nakamura Masanao, was the first work of English literature rendered into Japanese. It enjoyed immense popularity at the time of publication, and well over a million copies are said to have been sold. This work, along with Outlines of World Geography (Yochishiryaku, 1870-76) by Uchida Masao, and Conditions in the West (Seiyo jijô, 1866-70) by Fukuzawa Yukichi, comprised the three best-selling works of the Meiji era. Along with Fukuzawa’s influential Encouragement of Learning (Gakumon nosusume, 1872-76), Saikoku risshihen was also renowned as one of the period’s two great books of enlightenment. In the initial stages of the new education system, it was widely read as a textbook in schools. Many key expressions and ideas about time, including the well-known maxim “Time is money,” were most likely introduced to Japan through this work. At the time of its publication, Japan still relied on the seasonal time system, whose smallest unit was equivalent to today’s thirty minutes. The translator must have struggled to render English words like “punctuality.”

The immense readership of Saikoku risshihen, to be sure, did not necessarily mean that its precepts were readily understood, much less immediately put into action. Nonetheless, its enduring influence is certain: stories and teachings from this work were told and retold on countless occasions.

The Education Ministry compiled its first readers mainly by translating American schoolbooks. The new word jikan (time/hour) appeared in the very first lesson of the first volume (1873), in a passage about school life:

> ... for those who study at school, there is always a time for play; during this time you should go out to the playground and play, run around to your heart’s content, and enjoy yourself. Play is fun because you are studying. If you think play is fun, study hard during the time for lessons (Shôgaku dokuhon [Elementary Reader], volume 1).

Charts were also popular teaching aids, and they, too, followed American models. The word tokei (clock) appeared in the Fifth Chart of Words (Dai-go tango zu) drawn up in 1874. For its part, the Second Chart of Phrases (Dai-ni rengo zu) contained such basic temporal vocabulary as “morning” and “evening,” and also expressions such as, “Class begins at seven in the morning,” “Class ends at three in the afternoon,” thus inculcating school hours in sentence form. Another chart of phrases concerned daily life. “We get up at five in the morning,” children intoned, “we go to bed at ten at night.”

Basic to instilling a new sense of time was instruction on reading clocks, and an 1887 reader for second graders devoted two consecutive chapters to this topic. But teaching about time also took subtler forms, such as music lessons. The words to the song Diamond, for example, were taken from a thirty-one syllable poem composed by the Meiji Empress Shôken. But this poem itself translated precepts on “industry” in Benjamin Franklin’s Poor Richard’s Almanac. First selected for a songbook in 1896, Diamond continued to appear in music textbooks until the end of the Pacific War.
The use of state-compiled texts became mandatory in 1904, and pupils throughout Japan came to read the same textbooks and to study the same contents. It was in classes on ethics that children learned manners and ideas related to time. Interestingly, ethics readers were not compiled for lower grades, because ethics was thought to be something learned not just from words but from example. Children were expected to acquire proper behavior, including time discipline, by imitating the model embodied by their teachers. Instead of textbooks, teachers taught with the aid of charts. The lesson entitled “Be Punctual” highlighted “the importance of punctuality.” While pupils contemplated the picture, the teacher was supposed to read them the following story:

Look at this picture. A group of pupils are walking together. Where are they going? To school, of course. The school is over there. A few pupils, seeing a butterfly fluttering near the road, are trying to catch it. But another, pointing at the school, says, “If we play here, we will be late for school.” The whole group then heads for school together. If they had played there, they would have been late for school. To be late for school is very bad. Not to be late for school is an important duty for school children. Never be late for school because you played on the way (Teacher’s manual, Elementary Ethics Book [Jinjō shōgaku shūshinsho], the first grade, the first national compilation)

Habits of punctuality were eventually tied to the notion of an orderly life, and in fourth grade pupils learned about the preciousness of time.

A Frenchman called Daguessseau, a punctual man, used to go to the dining room immediately after it struck twelve. Since lunch was sometimes not ready and he was made to wait, he kept a pen and paper in the dining room so that he could jot down ideas that came into his mind while he waited. After ten years his accumulated thoughts turned into a fine book. This was all because he did not waste time. Time is money (Elementary Ethics Book [Jinjō shōgaku shūshinsho], the fourth grade, Lesson 10 the first national compilation).

The anecdote is taken from the Saikoku rishihen. Later textbooks used between 1910 and 1917 (the second national compilation) would cite Benjamin Franklin and Charles Darwin as men who attained great achievements by their disciplined lives, and urged pupils to follow their example.

Two principles framed the presentation of subject matter in textbooks. The first was an emphasis on personal stories. Each lesson, that is, had to involve a story about the behavior of a character, preferably a child. For educators, pupils would more easily understand the moral by observing concrete models, rather than by being lectured on abstract principles. Such models would also facilitate emulation. The second principle was not to mention living persons—the only exceptions being the Emperor, Empress,
and other members of the Imperial Family. This combination of principles presented textbooks with a dilemma. In teaching modern society and organization, they had to show contemporary examples, but to avoid characters who were still alive. Foreign models were thus chosen. Since the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education in 1890, the Education Ministry had striven to expel all foreign ideas, such as Christianity and socialism, which might lead to criticism of the government. The first state textbooks seemingly diverged from this policy. One of the editors recalled that they adopted foreign models not because they ignored the Ministry’s policy, but out of an objective judgment that “foreign stories were concrete, easy to understand and imitate, and educational for children, while very few anecdotes of this kind could be found in Japanese biographies.” Such impressions notwithstanding, later editions included more Japanese characters. In the revised version of the anecdote above, for instance, the Frenchman Daguesseau was replaced by a boy named Noboru.

Noboru was steadily promoted to positions of greater responsibility, but every day he fixed a schedule for the tasks that needed to be done, and carried them out exactly as planned. Because of his disciplined life, he also became skilled in painting and deeply learned, and eventually became a celebrated personnage. (Jinjō shōgaku shūshinsho, volume 3, Lesson 6, “Discipline,” the second national compilation).

This tale is actually modeled on the boyhood of Watanabe Kazan (1793-1841), a scholar and painter of the late Edo period. Although the story clearly touts the value of an industrious and disciplined life, it is notably less instructive than the Frenchman’s anecdote in one regard: describing a life in the age of seasonal time, it cannot give concrete indications, in terms of the new temporal system adopted by the Meiji government, of the “schedule for the tasks that needed to be done.”

Textbook lessons on time display certain features. In the lower grades, they emphasize punctuality; in the upper grades, they stress the importance of a regular life, and admonish against wasting time. The presentation of “Time is money” is interesting. The tale of Daguesseau, we have noted, derives from the Saikoku risshihen. Curiously, however, neither Smiles’ original account of the French chancellor’s labors, nor Nakamura Masanao’s translation, included any mention of the adage. Concluding the account with “Time is money” was a textbook modification. And while this conclusion might be defensible as an addition faithful to the overall spirit of Smiles’ work, we are still left to wonder about how to interpret this change. Might we not read here a reflection of how Meiji educators conceived the dictum?

Needless to say, a school ethics text preaching the importance of time was hardly going to promote Benjamin Franklin’s original call to accumulate money. Schools sought to teach neither the rudiments of capitalism nor the imperative of efficiency. Although they did try to instill a sense of punctuality through regulations and textbooks, they were
not necessarily very strict about time discipline. The textbooks could, after all, have adopted the story of Cinderella, which taught how one could lose everything because of a mere minute’s tardiness. But they didn’t. What did they intend, then, by “Time is money”? Textbooks exhorted pupils to utilize every spare moment for study and self-improvement; accumulated over years, they urged, such efforts can make a person a great scholar, or artist, or soldier. It was above all the idea of industry that Meiji educators tried to inculcate. The textbooks repeatedly intoned that “Time is money,” but in a vague, figurative sense. Just as small change, however trifling, can accumulate into a significant sum over the course of years, bits of daily effort can add up eventually to a great achievement. So the teaching went.

If the main purpose was to encourage strenuous effort, however, textbooks could have invoked instead the old Buddhist saying that “Little and often make a heap in time.” And in fact, texts do cite this proverb on occasion. But the frequent preference for the fresh and vivid association of time and money likely reflected the changing consciousness of people in a society where the role of industry loomed ever larger.

Having examined teachings on time through school regulations and textbooks, we may ask: Just how effective were they in instilling habits of punctuality? A novella written almost a generation after the institution of the new systems of time and education, offers a suggestive glimpse. Kumo wa tensai de aru (Cloud is Genius, 1906) by Ishikawa Takuboku (1886-1912) was based on the author’s personal experiences as a substitute primary school teacher in the village of Shibutami, in Iwate prefecture. This work is often cited as a testament to the sad state of elementary school education in the latter half of the Meiji period. But it also offers insights into the progress—or lack thereof—of the push to instill time discipline. The laxity of this discipline is symbolized by the clock in the teachers’ room, described at the very beginning of the novel. It had, we are told, never shown the same time as the clock in the train station. Typically it ran at least thirty minutes slower than the station clock; occasionally it was as much as an hour and twenty-three minutes behind. The principal shrugged: “Since many of the pupils here are the children of farmers, if the clock was made accurate, they might not be able to come to school in time for the beginning of class.” Although he remains silent, Takuboku is contemptuous of this rationalization, knowing that “in fact, the industrious farmers in this area eat breakfast much earlier than other ordinary families do.” Nor were the inexact clock and punctuality problems just for the pupils. Teachers were likewise supposed to be punctual. “Yet none of them,” Takuboku observed, “in spite of their positions as role models, took any measures to correct the lazy clock. No one, it seems, was eager to go to work earlier in the morning, be it even by a minute.” Takuboku himself was not above the same backsliding: “Years of habit have made it my second nature to be a sleepyhead.” For all the various school regulations and the admonitions in textbooks, without accurate clocks and punctual teachers to guide them, children were unlikely still to make punctuality a habit.

Such a situation, it should be said, was not peculiar to a remote Tohoku village. Even
in large cities, punctuality in schools often remained an abstract ideal. And so the Ministry of Education tried another approach: it organized an extracurricular campaign.

3 BE PUNCTUAL: THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF DOMESTIC LIFE AND "TIME DAY"

Although elementary school education was central to the activities of the Ministry of Education, it was not the Ministry's sole concern. Another kind of educational activity existed outside of school. This was the area of so-called "popular education" (tsūzoku kyōiku), later renamed "social education." One of its chief agents was an extra-governmental organization known as The Association for the Improvement of Domestic Life (Seikatsu Kaizen Dōmeikai). The group's aim of improving the quality of daily life included a call for punctuality, and it designated 10 June as Time Day (Toki no kinenbi). (On that day in 671, according to the traditional calendar, the Emperor Tenji [reign 668-671] reportedly first announced the time to the people, measuring hours with a clepsydra.) Elementary school pupils were drawn into the group's program. What these pupils did not learn about time in school, they often absorbed through the Association's extracurricular initiatives. Its main activities on 10 June included correcting the watches of passers-by, by synchronizing them with a chronometer taken to streets downtown; the Association also sought the cooperation of temples, shrines, churches, and factories simultaneously to ring bells and gongs and sound drums and whistles at twelve. Lectures on time were delivered in schools and factories. The first Time Day was held in 1920 in conjunction with an exhibition on time sponsored by the Ministry of Education. School children were mobilized for the opening ceremony of the exhibition, in which they released balloons with the words jikan reikō (punctuality) written on a strip of paper in front of the Tokyo Educational Museum (the precursor of the present National Science Museum). In order to preach punctuality and admonish against its waste, the Association also took advantage of rhythmic language such as poetry, slogans, maxims, and counting rhymes, as well as ABC songs, and musical parodies. Included among the many contributions from the public were also works by elementary school children. The organization's periodical thus introduced slogans created by the pupils of a primary school in Kobe: "The clock advances, the idler falls behind" (a sixth grader); "Ten thousand seconds begin from a second" (a fifth grader); "As a clock ticks, toil and moil"(a fourth grader); "Time past is of no avail" (a third grader); "Learn how to read a clock" (a second grader).19

Time Day programs were carried out not only in large cities such as Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, Kobe, and Fukuoka, but also in local cities and towns, as well as villages such as Takasaki, Ōtsu, Hikone, Fukui, and Tokushima. Moreover, "Japan" in this period also included such cities as Taipei, Seoul, Inchon, and Dalian, and in these areas, too, punctuality was encouraged. But in these areas time carried special implications.
Some of these implications can be glimpsed in Bōken Dankichi (Dankichi the Adventurer), a serial cartoon which appeared in the monthly magazine Shōnen kurabu for seven years between 1933 and 1939, and which was famed for the unique development of its plot. Bōken Dankichi was, along with Norakuro by Tagawa Suihō, one of the most popular serial strips of its period. The story of the April 1934 issue centered around an institution very familiar to young readers. Bringing a southern island under his control and becoming its king, Dankichi one day hit upon an idea of building a primary school for "the barbarians." He thought he could do something good for the ignorant natives whose "knowledge fell behind that of children in the civilized nations."

Rat-a-tat-tat...
The bell, made of a coconut shell with pebbles inside, rung by Karikō [a black mouse who goes along with Dankichi] signals the beginning of class.

The shape of the bell is different, but the same ethics of punctuality is reiterated. Being late for class is punished by having one's marks lowered one notch. The similarity between the school life depicted in the cartoon and their own daily experiences must have been exciting to the young readers.

What distinguishes Dankichi from the local people? Insofar as he is half-naked, his clothes hardly set him apart. He is marked to some extent by the color of his skin and by his crown. But there is a more essential difference: he wears a wristwatch. Throughout the serial, Dankichi is almost invariably depicted with this watch, even in the smallest frames. The message is not subtle: he who controls time controls others. The wristwatch is the prime symbol of his status as ruler.

The Meiji government introduced various new institutions into its colonies, including the educational and temporal systems, which Japan had acquired by imitation from the West. The clock and punctuality were civilization itself, as it were. But now the Japanese, who had been learning from the West, were in the position to proselytize among the people in its colonies. The first modern institutions that Dankichi brings in, it is worth remarking, are first the military, followed by the above-mentioned elementary school, the railroad, and the clinic. This precisely reflected the process of "modernization" that Japan underwent in the Meiji era. The comic recapitulated that process in
Dankichi’s colony.

Tsunoyama Sakae has observed that the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5) was a crucial turning point in the spread of wristwatches in Japan. T he wristwatch, that is, was a tool closely related to warfare. And so perhaps it is not surprising that in these adventure stories that so fascinated children, loomed the shadow of the Japanese military presence.

NOTES

5 Asaoka, p. 39.
8 Shōgakkō ji, part 12, pp. 33-37.
12 Ibid., pp. 527-528.
13 Shōgakkō ji, part 5, pp. 357-358.
14 Riji kōtei, p. 38.
18 Ishikawa Takuboku, Kumo wa tensai de aru, unpublished during his lifetime; the original manuscript written in July 1906, the supplementary manuscript in November the same year. Following quotations are taken from Ishikawa Takuboku zenshu, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1978), p.3.
21 Tsunoyama Sakae, Jikan kakumei (Tokyo: Shinshokan, 1988), pp. 142-153. Nagase Yui, who analyzed the history of wearing a wristwatch from the iconographical point of view, confirmed the existence of a photograph of a wristwatch worn by a unit commander in charge of a suppression operation in Taiwan (1895) conducted soon after the Sino-Japanese War. Nagase also suggests that the use of the wristwatch itself was from the beginning closely connected with warfare. In 1880 a Swiss watchmaker produced, upon the order of the German Navy, a number of wristwatches designed for officers. (Nagase Yui, Udedokei no tanjō (Tokyo: Kōsai dō Shuppan, 2001), pp. 14-15.)