FOREWORD:

On the Occasion of the Publication of the English Edition of Makiko's Diary

Nakano Takashi

When I published my mother's old diary, *Meiji yonjūsannen Kyōto: Aru shōka no wakazuma no nikki* (Kyoto in 1910: The diary of the young wife of a merchant house), along with my editorial comments and annotations in April 1981, I was primarily targeting the younger generation of Japanese. My hope was to give them an opportunity to free themselves from their preconceptions about the life and culture of the Japanese people during the Meiji and Taishō periods and to further their understanding of those times. Now that the English edition is about to be published for a Western readership, it will mean that her diary will also promote increased understanding of Japan in the wider world.

My mother knew that in my doctoral dissertation, which was published in 1964, I had quoted from her diary as well as from the diaries of my great-grandfather. She understood that I thought it important to use personal documents in my research and had been a supporter of my studies from early on, so that when I asked her about the idea of publishing her diary she was not surprised. She was not totally convinced, however, and asked, "Why would a diary of a twenty-year-old woman be of interest to anybody else?" In her characteristically mischievous way, she also said, "Wouldn't our relatives of my generation be surprised and shocked if they found out about this!"—and gave me her permission. She was looking forward to its publication but, sad to say, died at the age of 88, three years short of its appearance. Had she known that her diary was also going to be published in the United States, she would truly have been surprised.

When Kazuko Smith approached me with the idea of translating

the diary, I was more than happy to give her my consent. She was born in Japan and taught in the Japanese language program at Cornell University for more than twenty years. She and her husband, Professor Robert J. Smith, an internationally known cultural anthropologist who studies Japan, are old friends of mine. Who could be better qualified to do the translation? I had an opportunity to read a draft of her Introduction, and, struck by her deep understanding of the subject as a Japanese woman herself, I realized how fortunate it was for my mother and myself that she had undertaken the translation. The detailed questions she has raised with me, not only in the course of doing the translation of the diary, but also in writing the extensive Introduction, the description of my mother's social world, and the Epilogue, have required some rethinking of many issues on my part and made me realize that further explanation of some points would have been very helpful to my Japanese readers.

I wish to take this occasion to express my deepest gratitude to Kazuko Smith, from the standpoint of a researcher of modern Japanese social history and life histories—and as Makiko's son.