More publicity for the College in the Japanese media. The attached piece, translated by Lindsay Amthor, was written by our first Kafu lecturer, Prof. Takeda. My sources indicate that Sekai Nippo has a small circulation and a conservative readership. What happens if we become famous in Japan?
Even college students have a deep interest in Kafu's literature

Especially in the case of small colleges and universities, there seems to be a fear that international exchange and other similar activities are difficult to achieve. This may be true when quantity is considered to be more important than quality, but even in small colleges, occasions arise which offer the chance for fruitful international exchange. As an example, I would like to briefly introduce "Japan Week," which made its debut this year at Kalamazoo College.

In honor of the achievements of Nagai Kafu, the College has established an annual "Nagai Kafu Memorial Lecture." Japan Week has been set up with this lecture as its focal point, on a trial basis, in order to promote cultural exchange.

The fact that many Japanese companies have been settling in the state of Michigan recently became the most heated economic problem in discussions held between Japan and the United States. While these discussions were taking place, at an art gallery located on the K College campus, Japanese paintings were displayed as the focus of an Asian art exhibit. Moreover, in the field of visual arts, a NO actor from Japan provided commentary about a NO performance.

Even before this, I visited K College to research Kafu's scholastic subjects, his activities, the surroundings, and so forth. When I announced these, I was invited at the same time to talk about Kafu's literature. I was most impressed by the many questions I received outside of the meeting place from students deeply interested in the subject. Japanese in many other fields who live in Kalamazoo have had similar questions. I felt that this positive attitude on the students' part must be due to guidance from professors.

Each student seemed to be trying to revive his or her field during Japan Week. Indeed, since it is held at the College, this becomes possible. Although the lecture began after school hours, however, not many students were present, and there were few others as well. Consequently, those students who did attend
and enjoy the lecture were those for whom this was an area of interest. If this were to take place at a state university with a larger student population, it would be physically impossible for everyone to attend even if they wanted to, so such a Japan Week would not become an all-school event.

The standard of university education has a grip on reality

We (Japanese) are apt to be prisoners of numbers. We only worry about such figures as the percentage of viewer interest, number of copies sold, and so on; in fact, these completely obscure reality. The merit of a college should be based on the respect paid to quality, rather than quantity. We advise students in such a way as to make economic activities, literary works, and so on appear to have a grip on reality, but it is the standard of university education. In the end, I was unable to understand whether what I saw was merely a phenomenon or really an exchange of culture. The issue is not how many thousands of people gathered for Kalamazoo College's Japan Week. Nor is it a matter of the news being spread by radio. However, both college students and faculty, people living on the outskirts of town, the principal of the Japanese language school -- everyone participating gained something from the experience. Actually, I believe the total number of people involved will grow to be quite large. The professors who promoted Japan Week are developing a plan to put together and publish an English anthology of the stories Kafu wrote when he lived in Kalamazoo. If this were to happen, Kalamazoo's Japan Week could become even more influential.


(translated by Lindsay Amthor, Kalamazoo College)