

Foreword

My fiftieth birthday occurred in January last year;¹ on that day I had lived just half a century.

The path I had taken was not a difficult one, measured by the usual standards. I was born in a scientist's family and grew up with brothers who each became a scientist in one or another area; my education was broadly liberal; I did not toil in worldly ways. I had a fortunate environment.

But my academic life is not so easy to analyze. While I was lucky in some ways, it cannot be denied that I experienced greater hardships than some others. Physics is a science that has made rapid progress in the twentieth century. It could be said that I simply rode with the incoming tide of a new science doing what I liked to do as I liked to do it. Nothing certain can be said except that I desire, as I did in the past, to be a traveler in a strange land and a colonist of a new country.

Sometimes a colony that once yielded a rich harvest is cast aside. Today's truths may tomorrow be disproved, and that is

¹January 23, 1957

why, from time to time, we must look backwards in order to find the path that we must take tomorrow.

I have spoken of two paths, but in actuality there is but one. For the path I took as a scientist is the same one I took as a person. During the past twenty years, I have written about my past in several brief essays. Others have written various things about me; there are several biographies. The public already has a certain image of me as a person, and I want to offer some material that can be used in judging that image.

When a person looks in the mirror, he sees the face that is seen by others. Yet a listener may be surprised when he reveals the inner self that is not seen by others. The two different views may be hard to reconcile; especially so in my case, because I have always had trouble expressing myself. Also, I tend to view matters subjectively, and if I try to be objective I may betray myself.

In any case, not even I can perceive clearly what is about to take shape. The publisher (Asahi Shinbun) has given me a chance to fulfill the desire that came to me near my fiftieth birthday. During the past year, I have worked on this book in my spare time; two months ago I had my fifty-first birthday.

I plan to write about my relatives, within limits; my friends and teachers will also take part. A large part of this memoir should be called *Hideki Ogawa and his surroundings*, rather than *The autobiography of Hideki Yukawa*, for Ogawa is the name of my father's house.²

Hideki Ogawa was born in 1907 at old Tokyo's Ichibei-cho Azabu. The house smelled of plum blossoms each spring.

²Hideki Ogawa assumed his wife's family name upon his marriage.