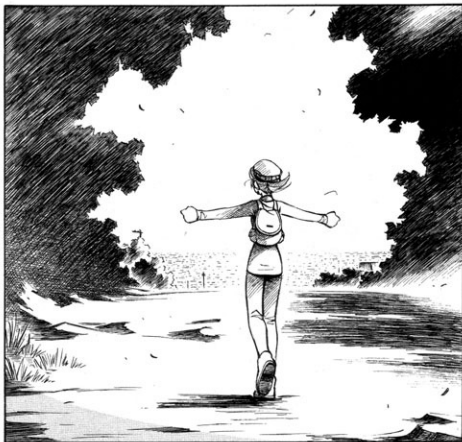
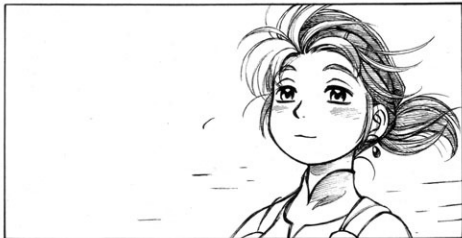
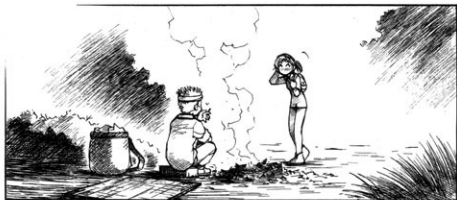




More than
you can eat.



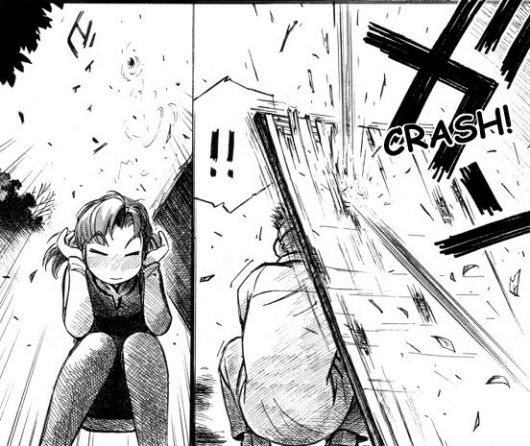






THUD!









You're
in luck.

I was just
on my way
back from
picking
them.



Here.

How about
this one?

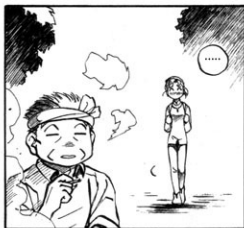


Ah...
just one...

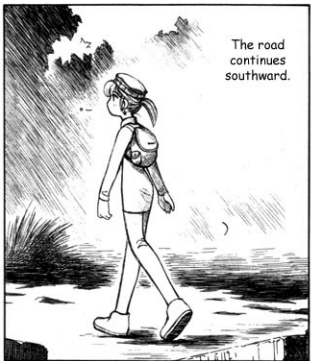
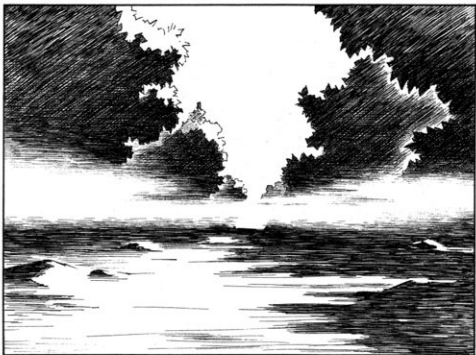
How
many do
you want?

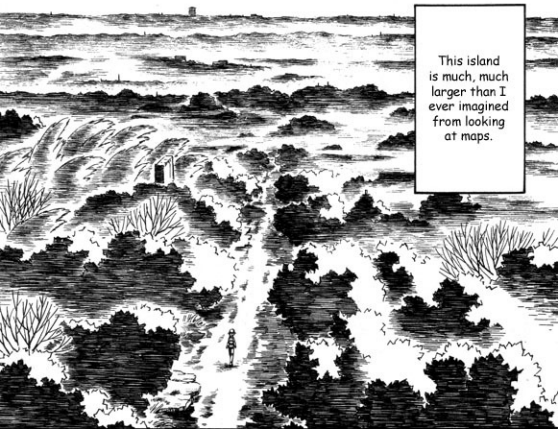




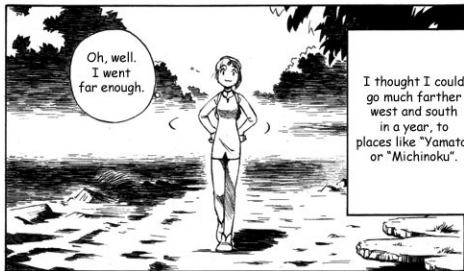








This island
is much, much
larger than I
ever imagined
from looking
at maps.



Oh, well.
I went
far enough.

I thought I could
go much farther
west and south
in a year, to
places like "Yamato"
or "Michinoku".

No matter
which way
I face, I'm
surrounded
by mountains.



Have I really
been gone for
a whole year?

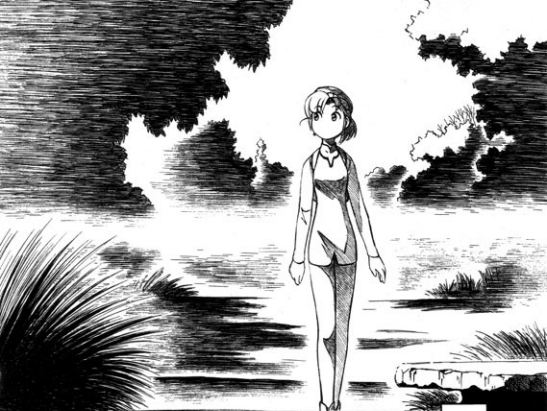


But from time
to time, I can smell
theocean.

It says,
"I'm coming home."

す sniff





This road runs
in a straight
line to the
south.

I've seen
nothing but the
same scenery
since setting
foot on it.

Aside from
the scent
of campfires,
there is no
sign of
people.

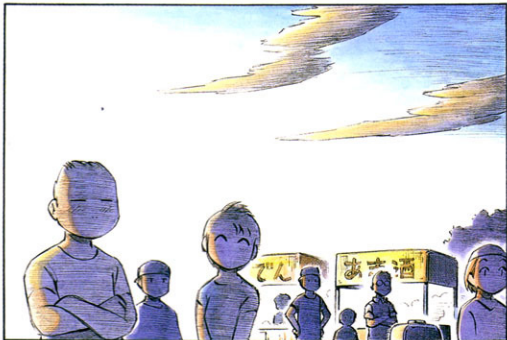
Chapter 76 Chestnut
第76話 栗





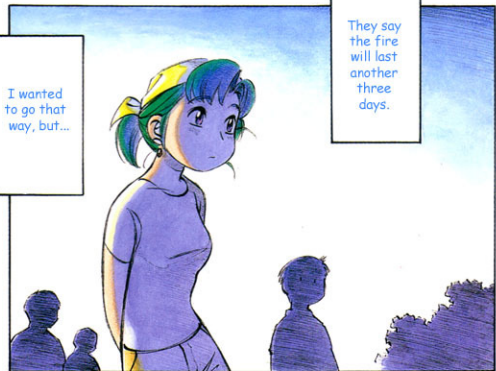
Today,
I think
I'll stay
here and
watch the
fire.

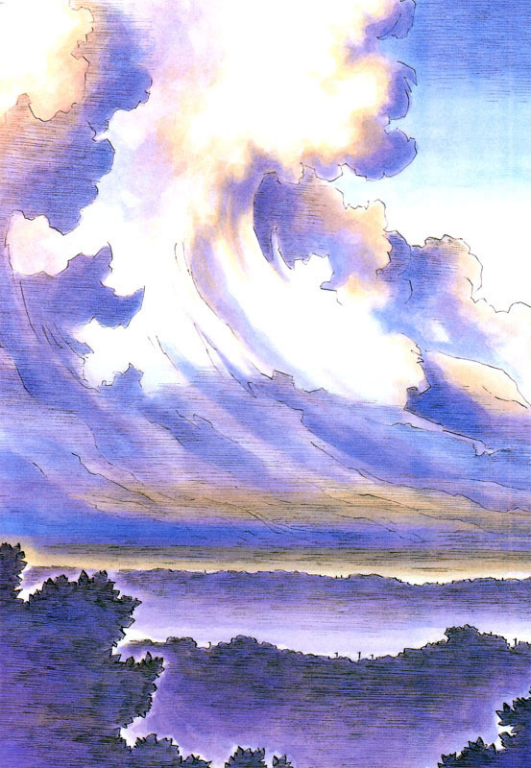
Tomorrow,
I'll head
south.



I wanted
to go that
way, but...

They say
the fire
will last
another
three
days.





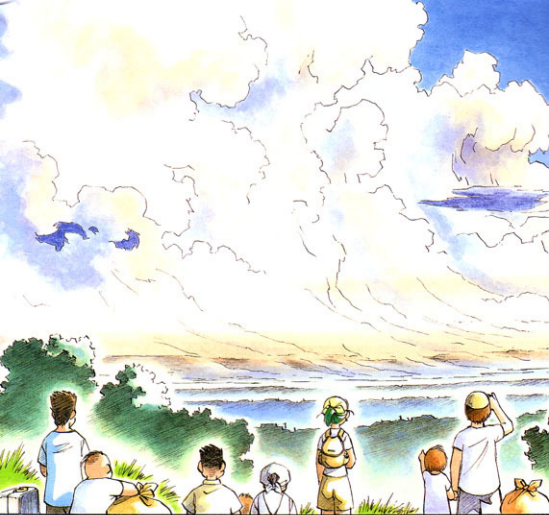
It's smoke.

Musashino's
fields of susuki
are burning.

It seems that
a fire like this
happens once
in a great while.

Until then,
there is no
way to
continue east
of here.

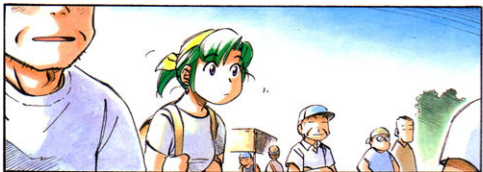
Nothing can
be done but
wait until the
fire burns
itself out.



Atop Hino Plateau,
I come across a
lively scene.



People are
lined up along
the cliff at the
edge of the
plateau.

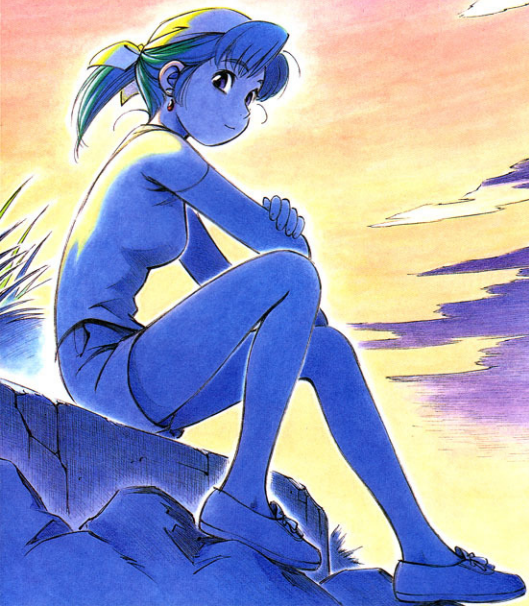


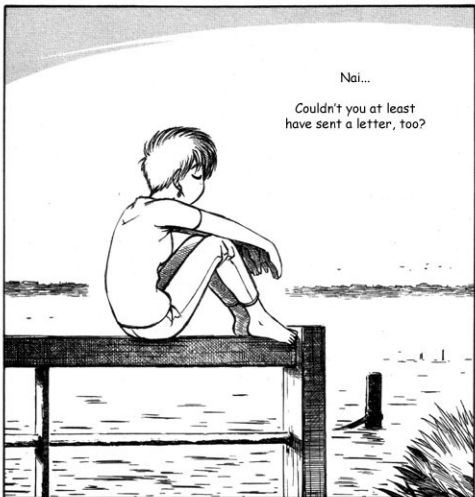
A young woman with short green hair tied in a ponytail with a yellow headband is walking towards the right. She is wearing a white short-sleeved shirt, yellow shorts, white socks, and white sneakers with blue laces. She has a yellow backpack. Her right hand is raised to her forehead, and she has a thoughtful or slightly worried expression. The background features a mountainous landscape with green trees and a blue sky. A rope barrier with a wooden post and a spherical ornament is visible on the left.

I have crossed
Outarumi Pass
and entered
the country of
Musashino.

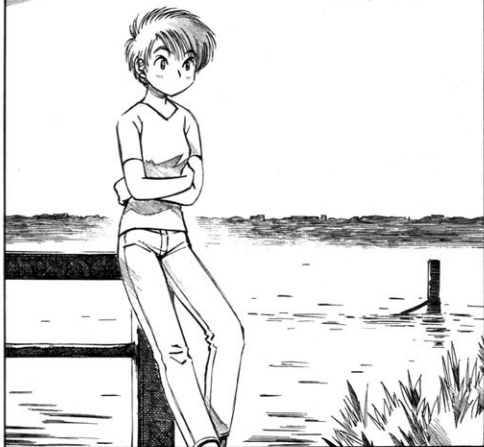
Now that I
think about it,
it's been a
while since
I've left the
mountains.

第75話 野火
Chapter 75 Brushfire





Suddenly, I feel like...



...two friends have been
stolen from me.

But...



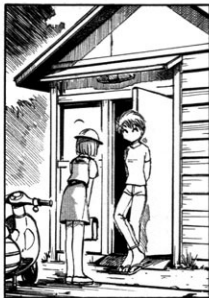


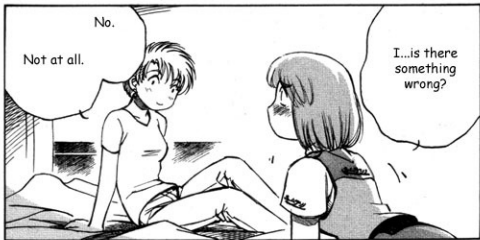
Alpha?



Somehow, the second
I saw her, I knew.

I hear that she's
travelling now.





A woman
with eyes the
color of azuki
stands before
the plane,
watching me.

It's been
ages since
I last saw
my friend's
plane.

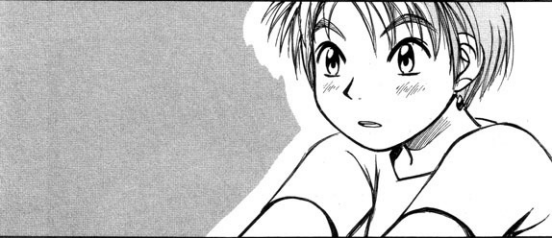
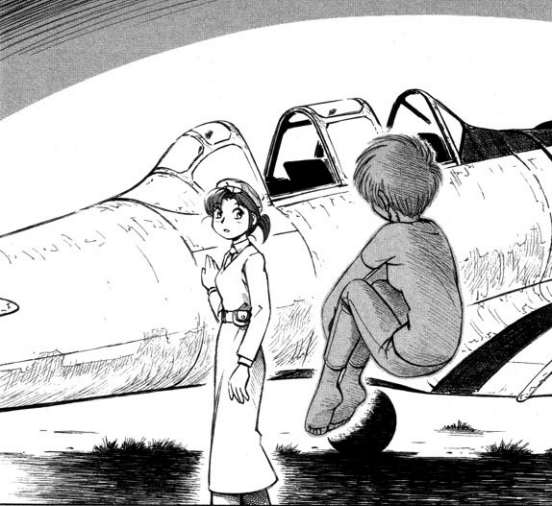


Her hair
is green.



The surrounding
scenery is real enough,
but she leaps out from
it, many times more
present than
anything else.







I haven't received images from this far-off friend in some time.

Well, let me just check the transfer.

Okay.



I was amazed the first time Kokone transferred images to me.

The sense of reality in them is stunning.

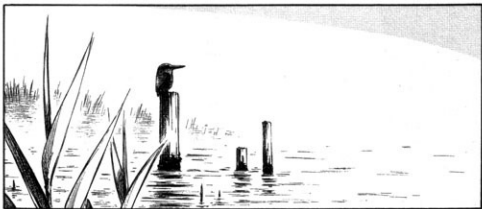


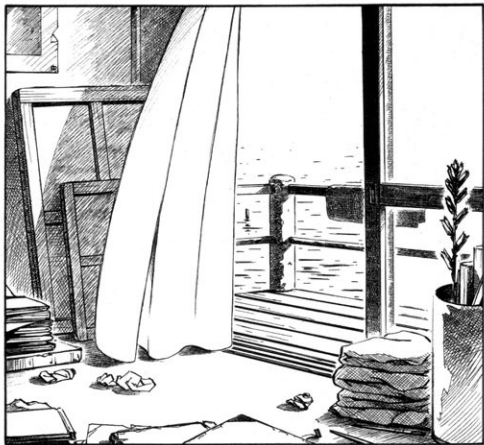
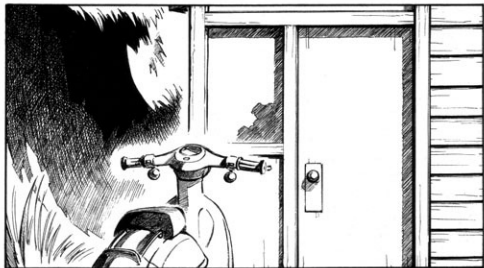
I like them.

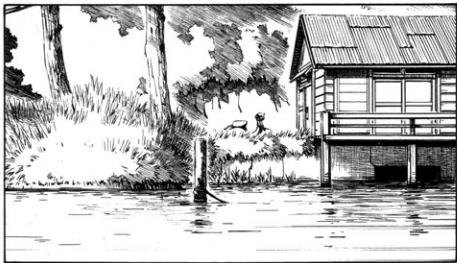
The images are filled with the contrasts in light and shadow that my friend likes so well.







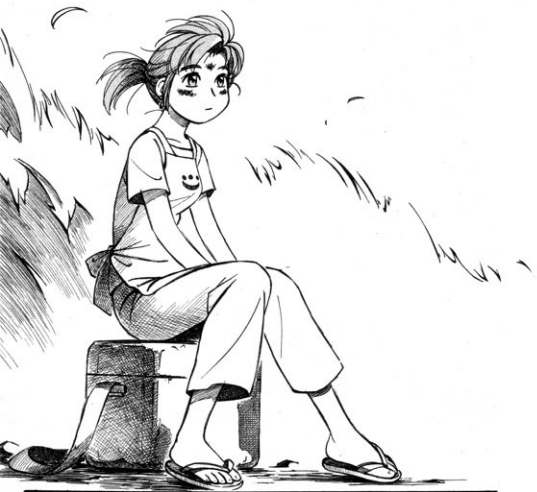


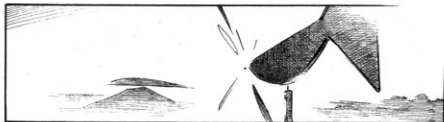


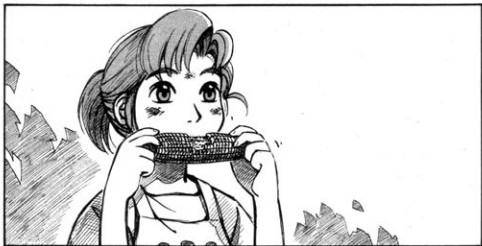
Chapter 74 Retina
第74話 網膜



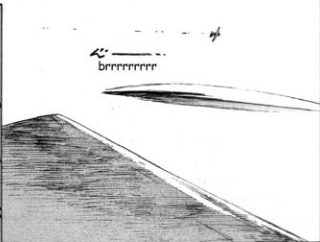












Heeeey!!
Heeeey!!



Yellow...
One propeller...



Since Mt. Fuji's
south face can't
be driven upon,
there are many
cars on this
narrow road.



Oh.....
Thanks.



Ah.....
There
doesn't seem
to be.



Excuse me.
Is there any
road that goes
closer to
Mt Fuji?

.....
Good business
here.





Somehow,
seeing
Mt. Fuji
up close
confuses my
sense of
distance.

Even though
it's too large
for the eye
to encompass,
it feels as if
I could reach
out and take
it in the palm
of my hand.



It looks
delicious....

It looks
somehow soft.
Its color is
just as if it
were covered
in cocoa
powder...





I've always seen
Mt. Fuji floating
over the ocean, like
a paper cutout.
Now, however,
it stands right
before me.



Sure.

Say, do
you have
anything
to drink?



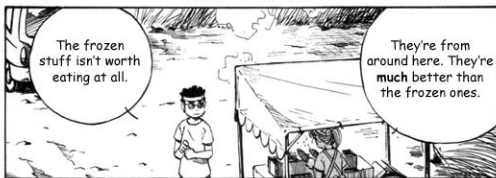
Okay.

It's
ready!



It really
stands out,
doesn't it?

It really
does!





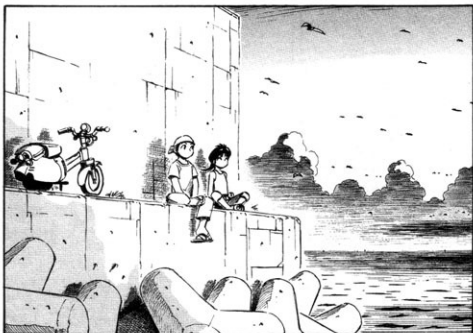


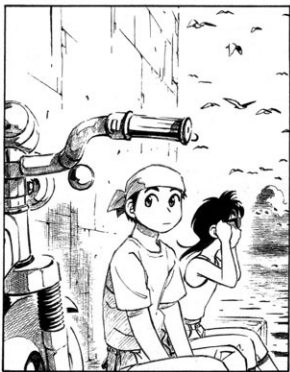
第73話

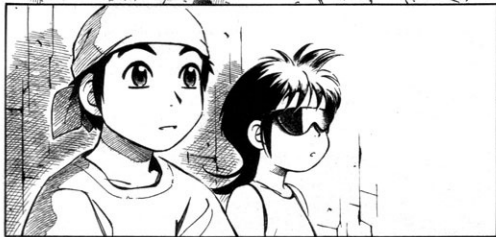
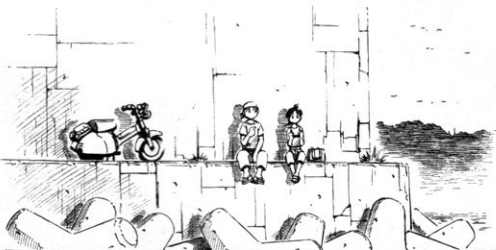
Chapter 73

チョコレートケーキ

Chocolate Cake











The tide has
already risen,
and waves
are rolling in.

We haven't
been to the
beach in
a while.





Okay.

It's gettin' a bit
late for swimming,
though.



Hey.

Let's go to
the beach.



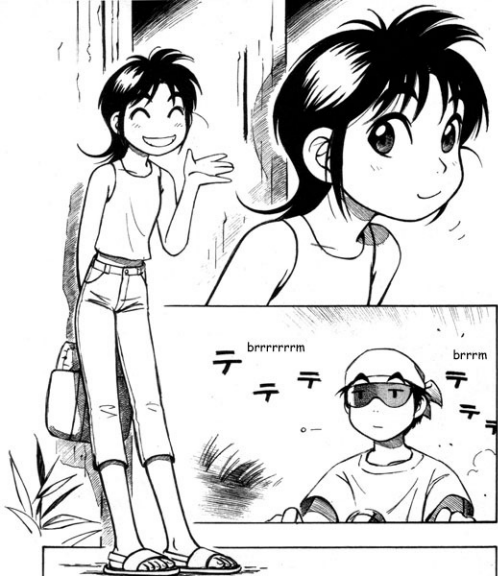
Okay.

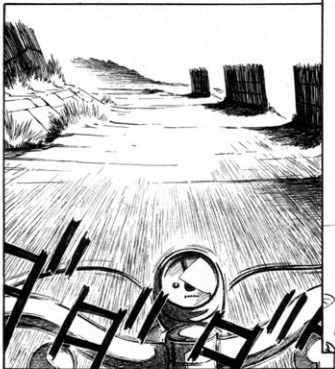
That's
okay.
I just want
to go there.



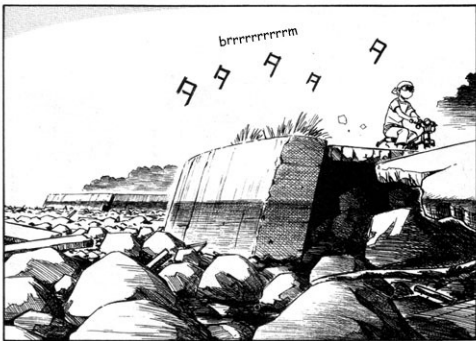








berrrrrrm

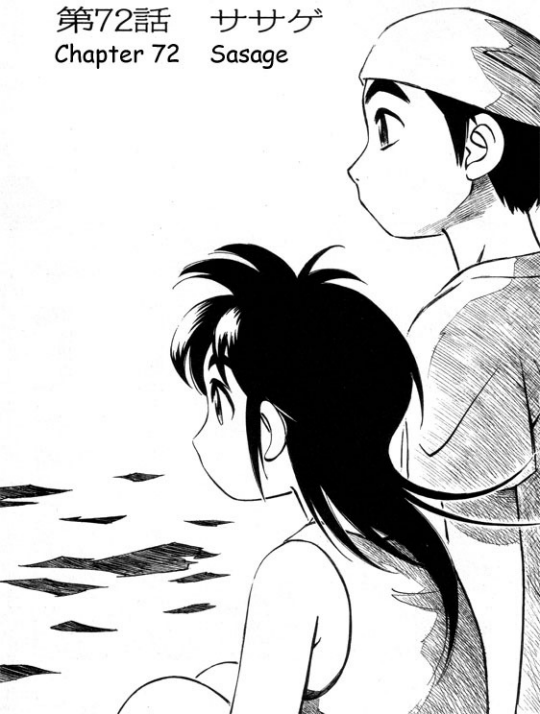


berrrrrrrrrrm





第72話 ササゲ
Chapter 72 Sasage





The light of the trees traces the path of the town that once stood here.

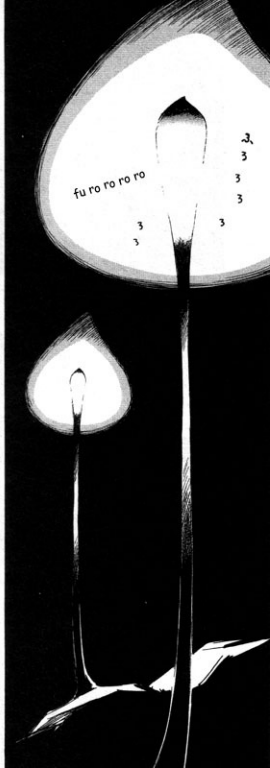
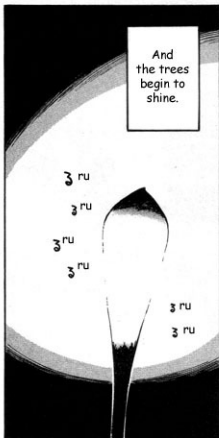


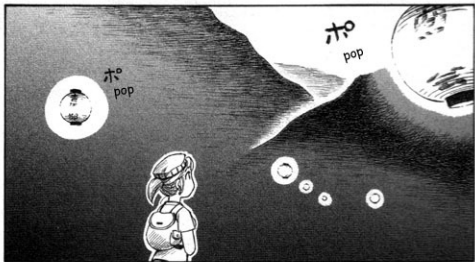
The memory of a road that people have forgotten.

The light of the
trees ignores the
path of the
roadside lanterns,
and forms its
own line.



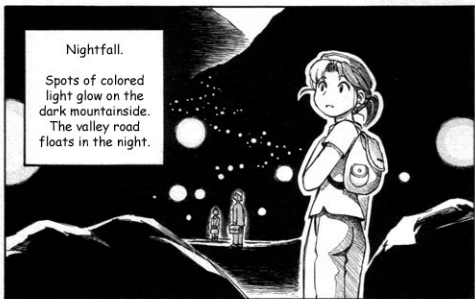
The travellers
told me about this.

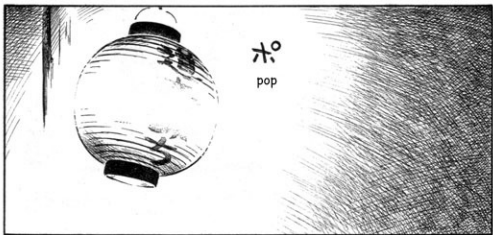




Nightfall.

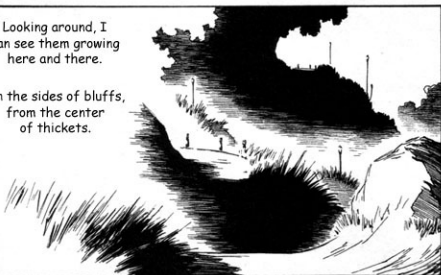
Spots of colored
light glow on the
dark mountainside.
The valley road
floats in the night.





Looking around, I
can see them growing
here and there.

On the sides of bluffs,
from the center
of thickets.



The people walking
along the road
pay no attention
to these trees.

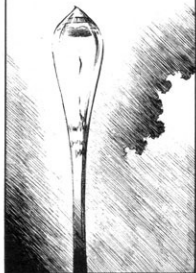


The road is narrow
and twisted.

This is the most direct
route to Mt. Fuji, so
a fair number of
people use it.



There's no
question about it.
It looks exactly
like a lamppost.



They're
definitely
natural.



But they're all
different sizes.
They seem to
have roots.



The narrow
path winds
its way
about the
old road.



This tree
is one of the
plants that
travellers
told me
about.



I've heard
stories
about
strange
plants that
grow by
this road.



I left the
main roads,
and set forth
on this valley
road.

This mountain
road, covered
in boulders and
fallen trees,
was once the
main street of
a town.

Moss covers
the asphalt
that cars
no longer
pass over.

After then,
I spent a while
helping out at
a place on
route 16.



Every day, there
were new stories
to hear.

There are many
travellers on
route 16.



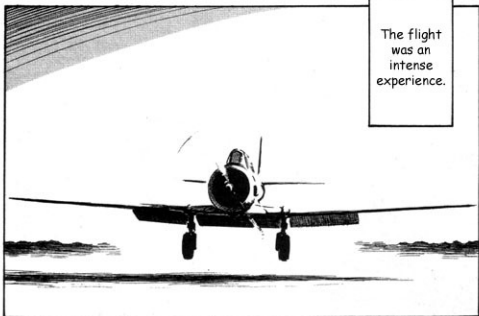
But one story stuck in
my mind, so I decided
to check it out.

When the weather
turned warm, I
set out again.

My original plan was to
look for work somewhere
around Hachiuji.



The flight
was an
intense
experience.



I might never have met
Obachan and Nai.

If I hadn't become
lost that day and
found the airport....



第71話

Chapter 71

谷の道

Valley Road



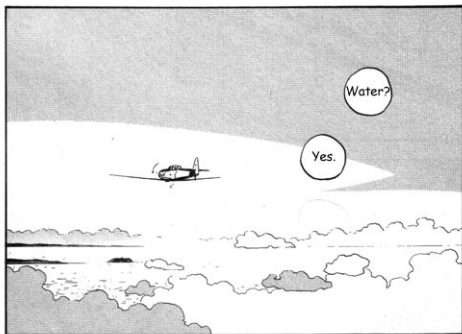




A North American
AT-6 "Texan".

These are a common
sight in the sky above
towns with military bases.

This one is Nai's
KN-021 "Atsugi #2".





I thought I
had been
suddenly
thrown naked
from the plane.

Power filled
my body.

But somehow,
for a little
while, we
shared a
common
understanding.

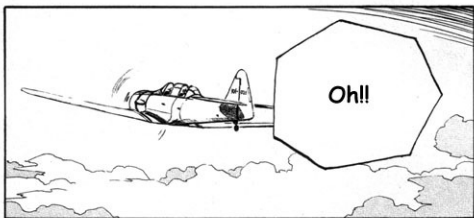
Neither
Nai nor I
understood
how or why...

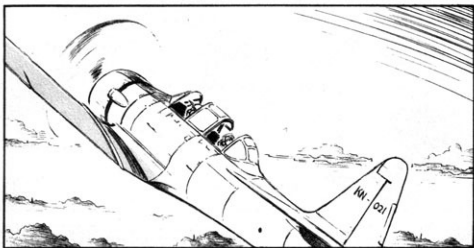
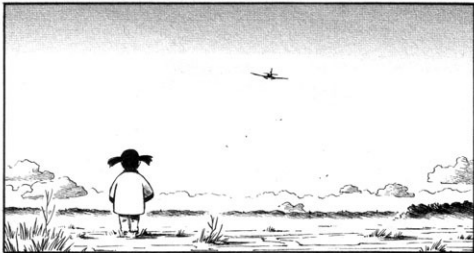
Eh?

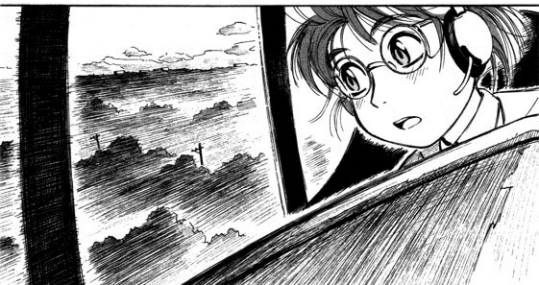
There's no
airplane!

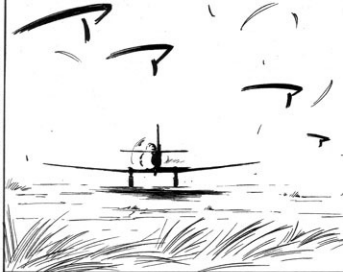


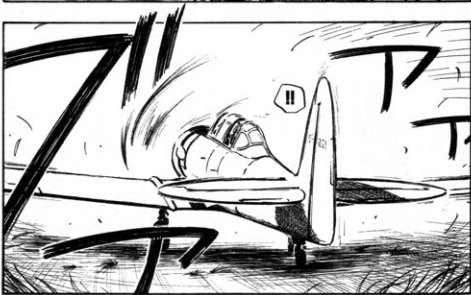
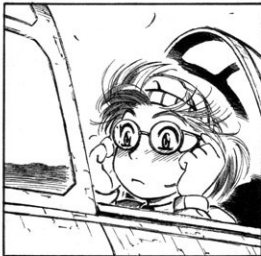


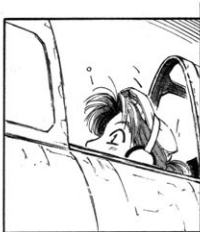














Really?

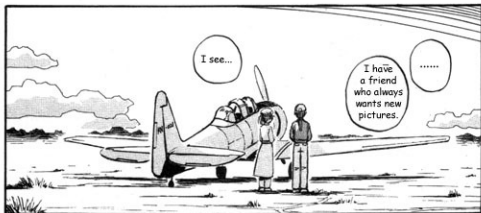
It was given to me.

Hmmmm.

That's a pretty
nice present.



Yes.



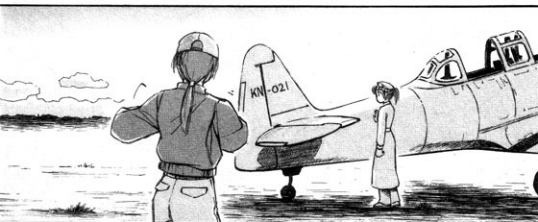
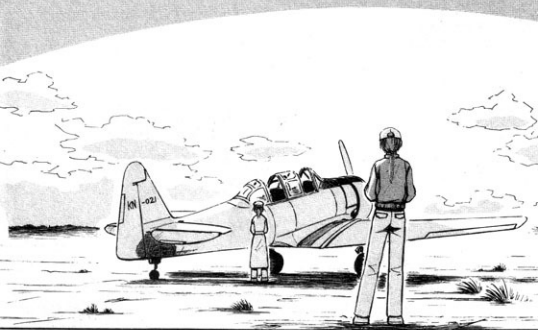
I see...

I have
a friend
who always
wants new
pictures.

.....







Chapter 70 Water
第70話 水





I don't
think so.

Do you
have any
work
available?







I'd love it if you
could show me more
of the airplane later...
if you don't mind.

.....
Say...

Sure.



Oh, that's right.

I have a delivery tomorrow.
It's just a quick run with a
small package.

Want to come
with me?



Yes!!
You really
don't mind!?
Yaaaaaaay!



WHAT!?
REALLY!?
I'LL GO!!!



I was sure
I was going to
be camping out
tonight.

You guys
really saved
me today.



Thank
you.

There really
aren't any
inns around
here?

You'll have
to share a bed
with the two
of us, though.



.....
I came from
there today.

The closest is
way off that way,
at an eel restaurant.

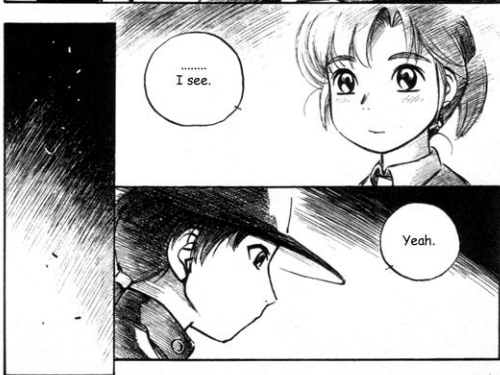




I don't
know why I'm
different.

From what I
hear, they all
died young.

It seems....
male robots are
weak.



.....
I see.

Yeah.



Ah! Ahaha!
I'm sorry!

.....
To tell the truth,
a little.....

You're
wondering,
aren't you?

Ah....okay....

I see...

I'm as much a "man" as
you are a "woman".

I look normal,
I think.





But I still
haven't met
another man.



I know
a number of
robots too.



.....
Hmmm.

I'm unusual,
wherever
I go.

It seems
to be the same
for everyone
else.



I guess
you are.

Then I'm
really lucky,
I guess.







Eh?



Nai*.



Eh?



I said: Nai.
My name.



Ah...

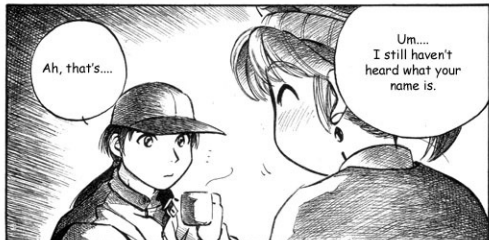


.....well.
Anyway...
What to
call you....



Ah.....
I see.....
That's...huh?
Some kind
of policy?

* "Nai" - "none" or "nothing".





Yeah.

We're
lucky there's
no wind.



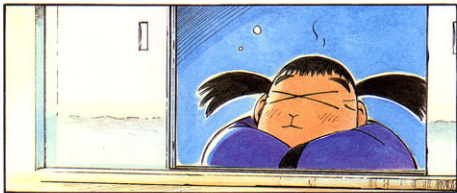
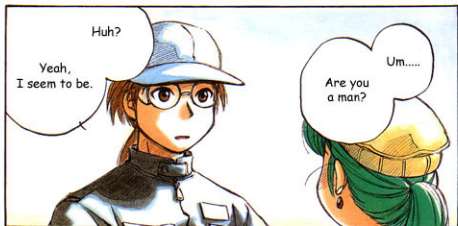
Thank
you.

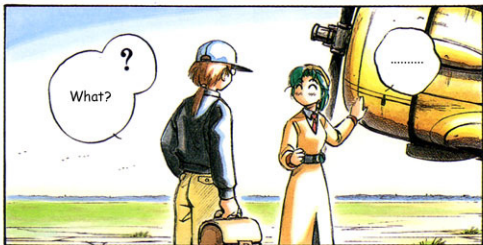
Ah!

Here.
It's dokudami
tea.

Chapter 69 Open Fire
第69話 焚火







?

What?

Um...

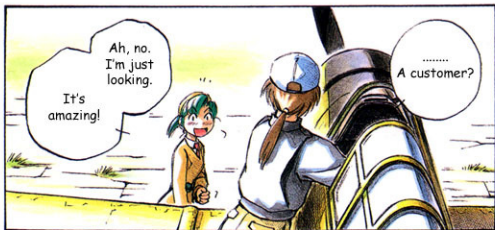
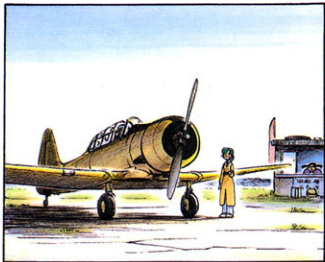
Are you
a robot?

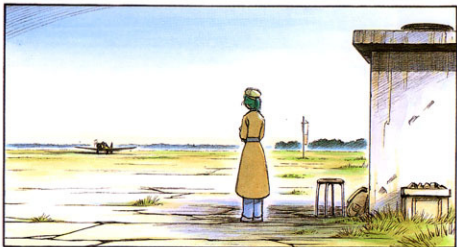


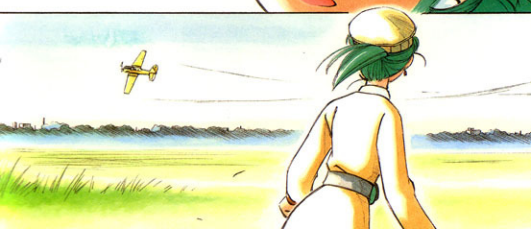
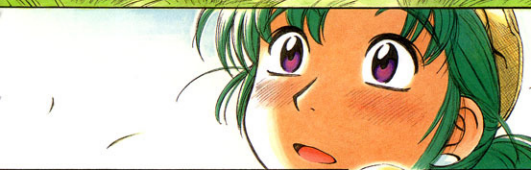
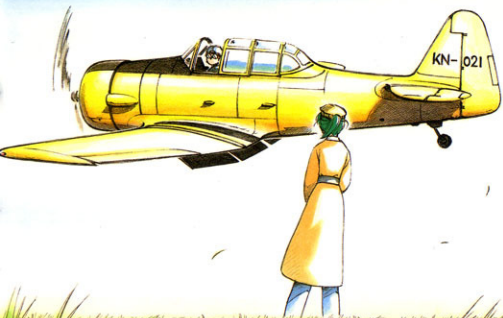
I guess.

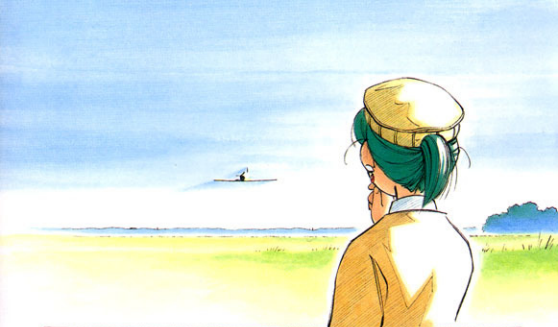
I guess.

You look
like you are
too.







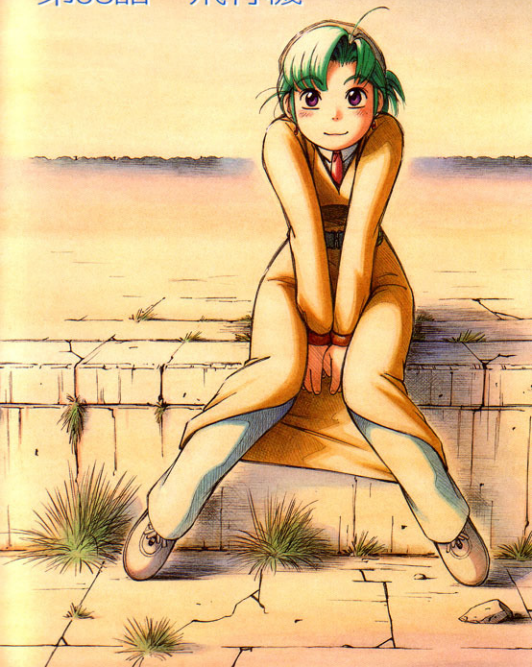


At first sight,
the airplane
looked like
the morning star.

As it slowly
approached, the
shining spot
darkened and
grew larger.



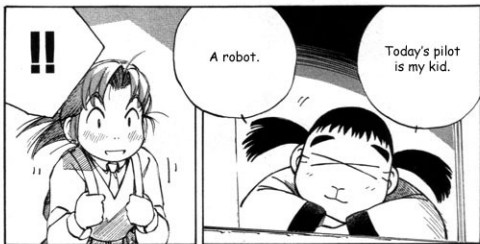
Chapter 68 Airplane
第68話 飛行機









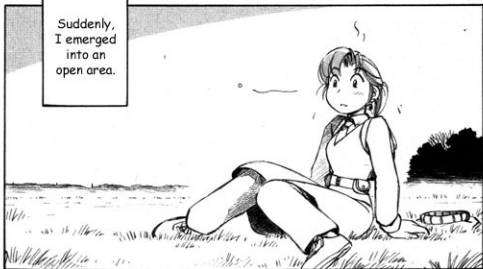


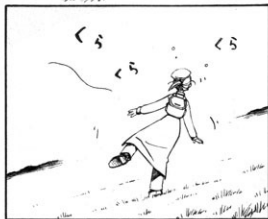






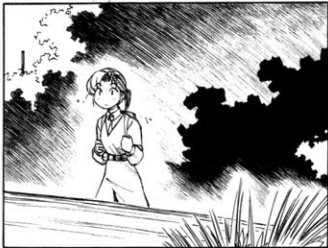
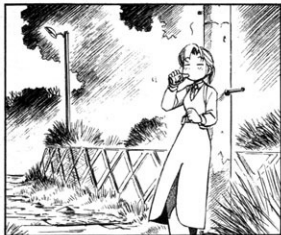
Suddenly,
I emerged
into an
open area.





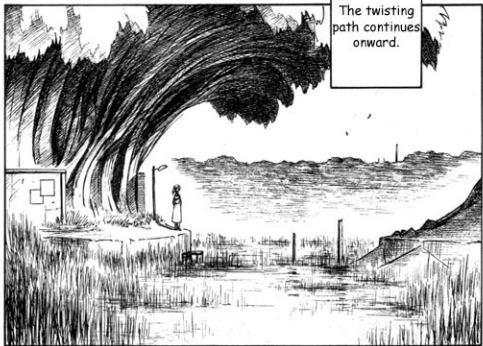
!?







Although
there aren't
very many
roads my
bike could
cross.



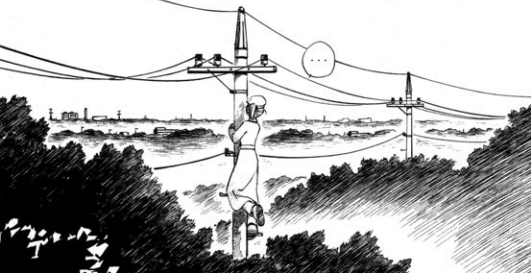
The twisting
path continues
onward.

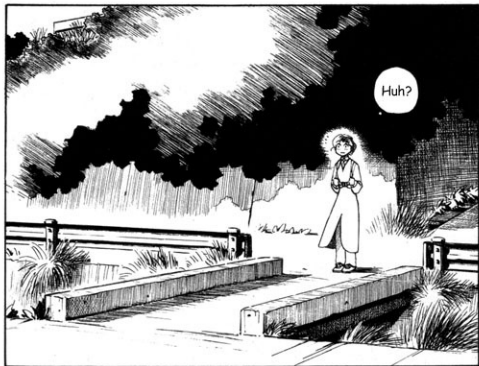
It seems...

Travel by foot
isn't as easy as
I expected.




A whole day's progress
would take only an hour
on my bike.





A black and white illustration of a person standing in a forest clearing, looking out at the ocean. The forest is dense with trees and foliage. The person is standing in the center of the clearing, looking out towards the horizon where the ocean meets the sky.

Ever since
leaving the
shore, there's
only one thing
that I've been
certain of....

A black and white illustration of a person standing on a path in a forest. The path is winding and surrounded by dense trees and foliage. The person is standing in the middle of the path, looking out towards the horizon.

I seem to be
accustomed to
locating myself
by the position
of the mountains
and the ocean.

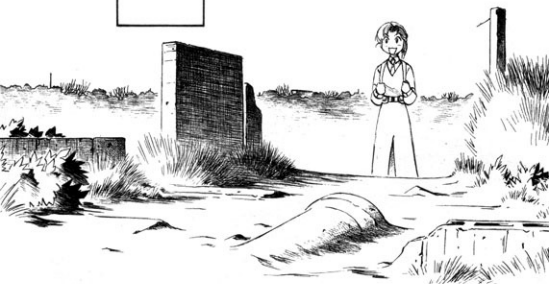
A black and white illustration of a person standing on a path in a forest. The path is winding and surrounded by dense trees and foliage. The person is standing in the middle of the path, looking out towards the horizon.

These twisting
forest roads
completely
confound my
sense of
direction.



Headed
north, with
my sights
set on
route 16.

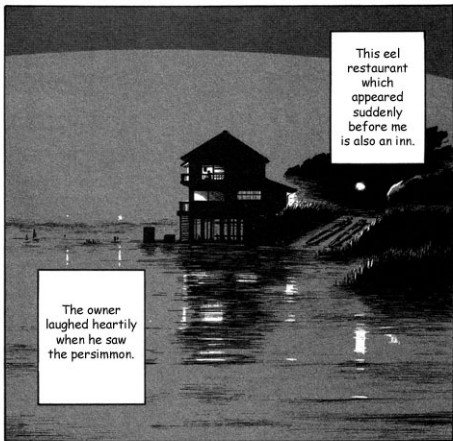
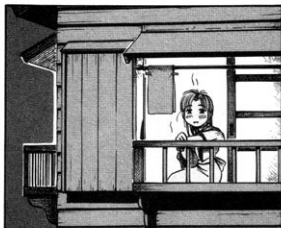
Ah!



I'm lost.

Chapter 67 Port
第67話 港





This eel restaurant which appeared suddenly before me is also an inn.

The owner laughed heartily when he saw the persimmon.



.....
Keep walking
until morning?

What should I do?



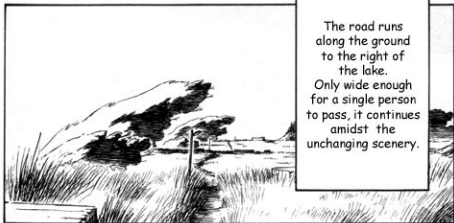


The persimmon is heavy.

There is no inn.

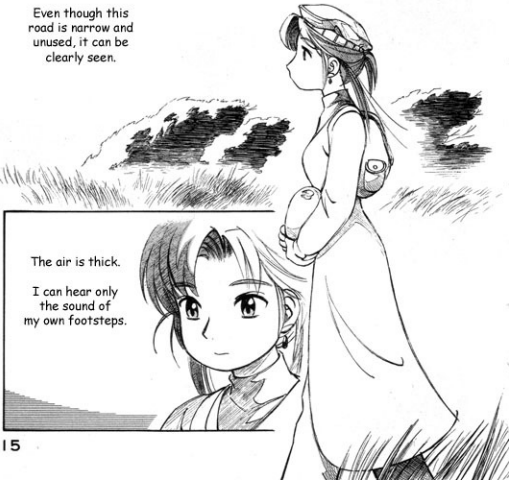


The chill of night
comes soon after
the sun sets.



The road runs
along the ground
to the right of
the lake.
Only wide enough
for a single person
to pass, it continues
amidst the
unchanging scenery.

Even though this
road is narrow and
unused, it can be
clearly seen.



The air is thick.

I can hear only
the sound of
my own footsteps.



Shounanko.

What was once the Sagami Plain
has now become a wide, shallow
lake of brackish water.



This is
delicious.

Ah!





But there's
no water
around here,
so I'm
grateful
for it.

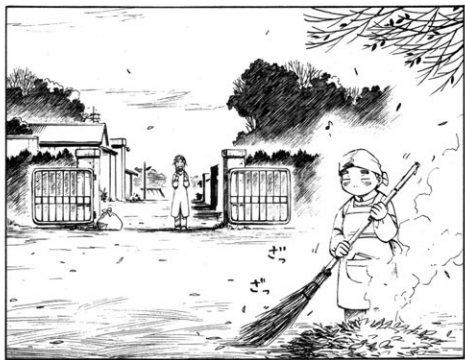


The
persi-
mmon
is
heavy.



sigh





I thought
I would go
and see the
"capital".

...!



The road
is winding,
and long.

.....
It's a pretty
long walk.
.....

I'd like to
get there before
the sun sets,
but...

The capital
of the
country of
Kanagawa
is nestled
amid the
mountains of
"Chigasaki",
near
Shounanko.





There is
no sign
of people
around
here.



Since
Enoshima
separated
from the
mainland,
it has become
desolate.



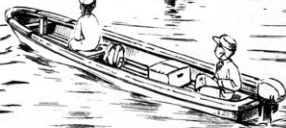


I lived and
worked at
a little
restaurant.



Still, it was
my first job,
so I felt
truly blessed.

It was just
a temporary
job filling in
while they
rebuilt after
the typhoon.





I've spent
two months
in Kamakura.



Thank you
for everything.

Chapter 66
第66話

Persimmon
柿





第66話

柿……3

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網膜……119

第75話

野火……133

第76話

栗……141

ヨコハマ 買い出し紀行

あし　な　の
芦奈野ひとし

