The Karma of Doxa

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_Onshi_ is the Japanese word that best encapsulates the role that Professor Kashiwase has played in my life - though like any word, _onshi_ obscures as much as it discloses. I don’t mean to sound cryptic, but Professor Kashiwase is like that – he gets you to disclose aspects about your world, and then invites you to share your disclosures no matter how obscure you think their impact. Both in the presence of his warm-hearted, realistic appraisals and in the midst of his profound and heart-felt absence, my relationship with Professor Kashiwase has dramatically changed the course of my life in ways that are at once unconventional and paradoxical.

Sometime in 2002 I sent an e-mail to a professor at Utsunomiya University, to a man I had never met but whose name I found on a card given to me by an Accounting Professor when I was a English graduate student in the Ph.D. program at The University of North Dakota. We began trading e-mails and our discourse became more and more productive, culminating in an Exchange Agreement signed between our respective universities and a study tour to Utsunomiya University arranged for UND students during the summer of 2004. Until that summer, Professor Kashiwase and I had never met, nor had we ever spoken.

After meeting Professor Kashiwase during the study tour, my husband returned the next year to Utsunomiya University for a semester as a Visiting Professor. Two years later my husband and I were living in Paris when I received an e-mail from Professor Kashiwase telling me about a job opening in the International Studies Department. I arrived at Utsunomiya University in April of 2006 as an Assistant Professor of English.

So you see, because we had so rarely met, I think of Professor Kashiwase as _onshi_ in a rather unconventional sense. It was precisely because he was _not_ there, at least not in the physical sense, that his presence constituted such a profound impact on our students and myself, both at UND and at Utsunomiya University. Now that I am
teaching in the International Studies Department I am grateful for his presence, but I am always reminded that his profound impact on my life derived from the fact that he was not there (though profoundly present throughout his absence).

I am reminded of the Ancient Greeks and what they called *doxa* – a term they later used to refer to the highest form of knowledge available to humankind. Paradox(a)ical is the trajectory along which Professor Kashiwase operates, and this trajectory, in addition to revealing a presence/absence that is highly unconventional, is also ultimately and profoundly reassuring.