

Time Capsule

I love the course face of the desert. There is something that totally captivates me about the vast plains of scattered stones and the enormous waves of sand gliding stealthily through their endless transformations. That is the whole reason that I brought my wind-glider here, just to hang up in the air above the desert where nothing exists except me and the untouched wilderness. And not a thing is moving except for me and the winds who accompany me on my journey across this expanse that gives no hint of limits or boundaries. And maybe I will capture it, the mystery behind all of this. I mean, something is going on with me, and it is only here in the purity of the desert that I feel that I come close to the essence of it, to recognizing that imperceptible voice that whispers in my ear from beyond the physical world, because I know in my heart that I can't continue to live with this relentless schism lodged deep inside me.

Gliding above the desert is how it happened. I was sailing above the open desert in my wind-glider—its huge sails like the wings of a giant bird cast their shadow on the desert's floor. I was staring at my shadow drifting across the barren landscape when I spotted a bright reflection. The sun must have reflected off of its surface in just right way so that the glint of its metallic surface caught my eye. If I had held any kind goal or agenda while hanging up there in the sky, I might have simply flown onwards, but I was lost in my aimless contemplation, and this was something unusual—I had never seen anything reflect light off the sands of the desert. And maybe my friend, the wind, was especially cooperative because we slowed my wind-glider and turned it around for a landing before I had really organized my thoughts. The wind guided me to land the glider at the top of a dune near to the mysterious something. I exited my cockpit and headed toward it. I struggled through the loose sand to reach this thing that was protruding out in a way that was certainly not natural. It obviously wasn't a part of the natural landscape.

I picked it up. It was very light, cool to my touch, and totally symmetric all around like a ball with a dozen or so flat surfaces, each in the shape of a triangle. One side revealed a hatch that could be opened with the turn of a small knob. I didn't wait. I opened it up. Inside was a rectangular, black device with buttons and geometric symbols. Ah, this was becoming an even more interesting mystery. And there was also a small, printed booklet. I pulled out the booklet which on the front read "The Devolution of Light" and under that "The Masterpiece for Solo Piano by Tasaki Ono." There was text printed inside of the booklet, but it's small print was difficult to read here in the glare of the desert sun. This was certainly not an object produced on the New Earth. And consequently, it must be something that had originated on the old Earth. Had it *arrived* on the New Earth like so many of us had? Why? An object instead of a person? And how did it end up here in the desert where the likelihood of someone finding it was so infinitesimally small?

I didn't wait. I took the container with its contents over to the wind-glider, slipped it into a carrying bag, and secured the bag in the passenger seat. I would take my discovery back with me to where I could study it, probe its mysteries, and ponder this seeming miracle. Yes, and I could share this with Maureen who was waiting for me back at our beach house. I would amaze her with my story.

The desert had only one edge, one boundary on its limitless expanse. This was where the desert met the ocean, and the one limitless expanse yielded its dominion to another. The meeting place between these two worlds was unique in itself. Numerous marine mammals made their homes along the shore. Fish thrived in the shallow waters. The skeletons of mammoth sea creatures protruded from out of the sandy beach. The shore was a place of

abundant life, present and ancient. And I now sailed my wind-glider in the direction of the sun setting out over the ocean.

Maureen and I had flown here to this isolated shore in the hopes of truly being alone in the natural world. We had heard from friends in the north that there were empty houses here along the beach, all part of a settlement that had been abandoned by its creators long ago. The story was that they had envisioned this as a retreat center for people who wanted to experience swimming in the perfect waters here. Their minds were fixated only on the beach and the ocean. They didn't recognize the attraction of the desert. But for Maureen this place was a fulfillment of her recurrent dreams of swimming in the ocean surrounded by exotic fish and intricate coral. Here she could fulfill her dreams. The place was a perfect solution for us. She was as totally fulfilled by the ocean as I was fulfilled by the desert.

I got more and more excited as I brought the wind-glider down for a landing by the house. I grabbed the bag from the passenger seat and ran toward the house calling for Maureen.

The walls of our beach house must have been manifested from the sand. They were crystalline, so smooth and transparent that you saw the surrounding landscape right through them. It created the unusual impression that the house was barely there. During the day the house would absorb the sunlight, and at night its walls glowed with a radiance borrowed from the previous day's sun. It was such an unbelievably beautiful design, and it hadn't taken us much time for us to figure out that the house responded to our psychic commands. 'Lights off.' 'Warmer, please.' It seemed so relaxed and natural, but I had never experienced a house like this before.

I could immediately see that Maureen was not in the house, but she must have heard me because she came walking up from the beach. She had obviously been swimming in the calm waters of the protected inlet that lay directly in front of our house. She was brown and beautiful against the pure colors of the sky, the waters, and the beach.

'Welcome back,' she psychically greeted me as she wrapped herself around me, the wetness on her skin penetrating through my thin desert clothes. We kissed. Then looking at what I held, 'What did you bring me?'

'I found something amazing to show you!'

We walked toward the doorway of the house and issued the psychic command for the door to open. We entered the house and moved to the table that stood in the middle of the central space. I took the mental container from out of the bag and set it on the table. 'I found this in the desert.'

'What is it?'

'Watch.' I turned the container over until the side with the hatch was at the top. Then I opened the hatch and took out the black device which I set on the table.

'I don't have a good feeling about this,' Maureen communicated as she stepped back from the table. 'What sort of a thing is that?'

'I don't know yet. But look at this.' I took out the booklet and showed Maureen the cover. 'We need to read this.'

We moved over to our soft chairs and sat side-by-side reading the text.

The Devolution of Light The Masterpiece for Solo Piano by Tasaki Ono

This work of unfathomable brilliance can be described as the closing statement of music for the piano. Like a last will and testament written for an entire genre, it bequeaths

gifts to all of its ancestors, the entire body of music created for the piano. And it leaves no possibility that another note could ever be added.

The tradition of piano music was the perfection of the composer's self-expression to be felt and experienced by the listener—the very concept that someone felt something themselves that could be expressed in their music and then experienced by another who listened and felt those same things. This recording is the last gasp, the last possible gasp, of a tradition of keyboard music that was begun in the 1600s even before Ono's instrument, the acoustic piano, was invented.

Ono's performance captured here is executed on an original acoustic instrument without any use of any electronics. It is a recording made without edits. The entire length of 12 hours was achieved in a single, continuous recording session with Ono at the keyboard. The recording engineers have verified that Ono took no breaks during the recording process. These 12 hours captured here are 12 hours in the life of one extraordinary musician.

What we know about the life of Tasaki Ono is minimal. A person named Tasaki Ono appears to have begun giving live performances only in his late 20s. His previous training is unknown, which has led to the supposition that Ono had changed his name in an effort to obscure the details of his early life. Despite those efforts, research suggests that Ono was likely born in Peru and that he migrated to Egypt in his teens. Little else about Ono's life is known to us until he emerged on the Tokyo music scene.

Tasaki Ono disappeared immediately after making this recording. Did he hide away with the intention of returning to obscurity? Is he another of the people who have recently vanished from the earth? We do not know.

'The Devolution of Light' is the last gasp of personal expression, and we invite you to listen to this work without expectations. It has been said that in the span of 12 hours Ono had sought to include every emotion and feeling that could ever be expressed. From exuberant joy to the tiniest moments of sorrow, everything that could be expressed was expressed. It is complete and leaves the listener with no place to go. It is one human being's summation of human feeling with no hint of where we listeners can go afterwards.

After a pause, Maureen said aloud, "That doesn't sound so good."

"What do you mean? This is unique, something fabulous."

"Nowhere to go? The devolution of light? What does that mean exactly? It sounds like some kind of dark dead-end to me."

"Well, this is most likely an artifact left over from the old Earth, and it contains old Earth kinds of ideas and feelings, light and dark. Maybe this guy, Tasaki Ono, sent it here, or maybe he too arrived on the New Earth and brought it with him. However it got here, I think that someone intended for it to be found here on the New Earth so that someone could listen to the music. I mean, wow, what an improbable thing!" I had the black device now in my hands. I looked at the buttons and decided that they did indeed make some sense. "These are controls for playing the music. Want to listen?"

Maureen was quick, "No way! If this is a time capsule or something from the old Earth, I want nothing to do with it. We have no responsibility to honor it, and we certainly don't have to listen to it."

“But this is a gift, a chance for us to experience something preserved from the old Earth. A time capsule, yes. Would you have considered that even possible before? I certainly didn’t.” I could tell that I wasn’t convincing Maureen of anything. “And maybe it is meant for us to listen. I mean, what other sense is there in my finding this in the desert?”

“I don’t know. Maybe it is meant for you. All I know is that I want to keep my distance from it.”

I was really stunned by Maureen’s strong emotional reaction, but that didn’t matter. I knew that I had to listen. It felt like nothing else mattered. “Maureen, I need to listen.”

“Then take this thing to one of the other houses where I won’t hear it.” She tilted her head forward with clear determination in her eyes.

“Yes, I can do that. But maybe first we eat.”

We did eat. Pretty much in total silence. We were each in a different world of thoughts, sensing each other without comment. Maybe I had just caught Maureen at the wrong moment. I knew that she had spent the day swimming in the ocean. Psychically she was flowing with images of life in the sea. Maybe she just couldn’t turn the corner so quickly on the strange thing that I had brought home.

By the end of the meal, Maureen said to me psychically, ‘Do what you have to do. I understand.’

Yes, I felt compelled. I had to do this however it turned out. All I could focus on was that I needed to experience this thing, Tasaki Ono’s strange masterpiece. It felt as if there was a hunger inside of me that needed to be fed right now. I put the black device and the booklet back inside of the metallic container. I picked it up, nodded to Maureen, and headed out through the doorway.

The sun had just set, but there was still some light lingering in the sky. I headed down the beach toward where I knew another house stood. Given its transparency, it was difficult to see it in the faint light, but I walked up to the doorway and gave the psychic command, ‘Open.’ The doorway opened to reveal utter and total darkness inside. ‘Light,’ I commanded, and the walls of the house lit up with a reassuring glow. On the inside, this house was exactly like ours. There was a large table in the middle of the central room and there were several soft chairs and side-tables set up around the periphery. It was strange; I felt as if I had just walked back inside of our own house, only there was no Maureen here.

I placed the metallic container on the table, opened it, and set its contents on the table’s surface. I was very nervous now. I pulled a chair closer to the table where I thought that I could sit while I listened. *12 hours* is what the booklet had said. If I could manage it, I would be sitting here and listening all night. I sat on the edge of the chair. I reached up to the table and I touched the button on the device that I thought meant to begin.

The first few sounds were simple notes played very slowly. I sat back in the chair and adjusted myself to the sound. So, this was the sound of an actual piano. I had never heard a real one before. Its presence and personality seemed to fill the space around me, and I could almost feel the sensitivity of Tasaki Ono’s fingers touching the keyboard. The beginning notes gave way to more notes as the music seemed to spread out. At first the music made no sense to me at all. I couldn’t figure out how I was supposed to be listening. Then I closed my eyes and began to just concentrate on how the sound was affecting me. I went inward searching for the essence of this primeval artifact, to experience something that belonged in the world of the old Earth.

The music carried me along very gently at first. I felt as if I was searching my way through a dark forest that was full of unfamiliar sights. Eventually the music guided me into a most beautiful meadow. And then, I recognized the canopy of a clear, blue sky opening above me,

and the sun directed its brilliant rays to the droplets of dew that dampened my bare feet. I was overwhelmed in the enormity of how beautifully everything fit together—the natural order of the world. Without thinking I took in a deep breath as my body responded to the shock of feeling something that it had never experienced before. I was on the outside of another world experiencing it as an observer. I was gazing at my being in nature from a place beyond it. I realized that I had never felt anything like this before because I had been part of that world. I had simply moved along inside of it, without truly witnessing it. This music was outside of the world of my experience.

Tasaki Ono! Was that you? What could this mean? Was this overwhelming wave of emotion that I felt part of the universe of the old Earth? Or was this you? Your personal experience of the world?

I leaned forward in my chair and reached over to stop the device, and after some inelegant fumbling it went silent. I was breathing hard. The room felt so very, very empty. I felt so profoundly alone. This was insane. The room was perfectly fine a few moments ago. I needed to restore my normal mode of feeling. I stood up and walked over to the doorway. ‘Open!’ In the thinnest of light, my eyes made out the line of the ocean laying just beyond the beach. The span of the sky traversed through darkest shades of blue, and a few stars were poking through the weight of the night. It was all so familiar, but I was looking at it as if it were some new discovery. I was looking at it. It was something distinct and far away from me.

I stood outside and looked up the beach. There was a faint radiance coming from the beach house where Maureen now sat alone. She seemed secure and self-absorbed. I wanted to reach out psychically to her, but then I held back. I knew that she would not want to feel what I was feeling. She wouldn’t want this in her life. And I felt a strange kind of ownership over my experience. I was experiencing something new, and I wanted to keep it to myself. Maybe I would share it after I had acquired more of it, mastered it.

I looked behind me at the house I had just left. Inside was the rest of it, the rest of what Tasaki Ono had put into that recording. I had barely begun to ingest in. I realized now what a huge commitment it was to listen to the complete 12 hours. What might it do to me? It might change everything. And maybe I was being foolhardy, but I had to dive into it completely and totally. To me it was like a dark lake containing countless mysterious monsters, but I had to dive in to find the bottom of it.

Back inside the house, I took my place in the chair. If I had been nervous before, now I was absolutely frightened. I now had an idea that I might be giving up something of myself to do this. I reached up and I restarted the device.

It seemed like a new beginning to the music. Lots of notes running around in streams of sound, both beautiful and jarring. My body responded with chills in my arms and legs, while at the same time an unpleasantness developed in my stomach. The running notes gave way to a repetitive pounding like my body was engaged in physical labor or vigorous dancing. It was gradually calming down, and then I experienced something like a breeze of soft air gently stroking my body. I thought of Maureen whispering in my ear. No more. She was suddenly gone, and I was left grieving for the loss of love in my life. That caused a hardening inside of my chest. I became angry because what I wanted in my life had been taken away from me. I took a sword and struck out against being oppressed, but I was overwhelmed and collapsed in a feeble heap. I didn’t have the energy to resist the powerful beings who stood there intent on controlling me. I simply waited on the floor in a state of depression for something to change. And when the morning light shown down through the window of my room, I felt that a change in my situation was coming. My chains were loosened, and I rose up a free man. Life could be good.

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I became somewhat aware of myself sitting in the chair. I had a feeling of exhaustion, like I just couldn't take any more emotional ups and downs. I thought that I was already empty, but Ono's performance was continuing on, and I was being dragged through a world of feelings that I had never experienced before, but I could not stop the device. I choose to stay in Ono's world.

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I stood on a high mountain top surveying the world around me. I felt as if I were the master of all I surveyed. I was beloved of the Divine Creator. I had fulfilled myself completely. And then I began to climb down. Climbing down was not as easy as climbing up. I had miscalculated, and my foot got stuck causing me to fall awkwardly against some jagged rocks. This was ironic I realized, and I accepted myself as being really clownish. I was ridiculous. The whole world was like this. It was fake. Nothing was what it purported to be. Even with my injured foot, I decided to run down the slope of the mountain, and I was rushing down from the mountain like a cool breeze and into the valley below. And there I found myself in a meadow where I lay down and fell asleep.

When I awoke, I was back in my desert. It was clean, simple, beautiful. There was nothing here other than mountains of sand. I walked. It took so much energy, but nothing changed. I seemed not to have gotten anywhere. There was nothing. Nothing. I sat down in the sand in a state of hopelessness. What was I doing here?

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I was standing by myself on the edge of a huge lake. Its surface was totally calm and dark. And out before me on the lake appeared a huge ring of fire, a perfect circle formed on the surface of the water. These flames had a strange phosphorescent color and seemed to be simmering in the water. Then another smaller ring appeared, and then a third ring even smaller than the other two. They burned there on the surface of the lake with no apparent explanation or reason for being there. I looked out in a state of puzzlement. This didn't make any sense. There was no one around in any direction with whom to share my amazement. So, as I thought about it, it struck me that the water and fire were cooperating with each other. The Earth itself must be motivating this to happen. This was the consciousness of the Earth and its fundamental energies engaged in a process that they had willed to happen. And it seemed to me that the world around me was far more complex and conscious than I had ever imagined. The world was a miracle beyond my comprehension.

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I was in a place of total security and love. It was the most beautiful feeling I ever had experienced. I was home. This was my true home. I wanted to stay there forever. And then I had a feeling of being pulled away. I felt the separation tearing me away thread by thread. I was becoming more aware of my predicament, and I had the feeling of falling, falling further and further down. And as I fell, I could sense that I was feeling less and less. I was becoming something inert and hard. Then I passed a clear boundary where I knew for sure that I had lost it. God was present in the place that I had left and missing from the place that I had entered. I was crashing down into a place that was crude and rough. I was desperate, and I felt profoundly alone. So alone. I didn't belong in this world. The ground was not a part of me, nor was I part of it. And I became angry. This was the most profoundly terrible thing that I had ever experienced. Why had God abandoned me? Punished me? I was trapped. When I tried to

stand up, my body felt terrible. I was such a miserable thing. No wonder that God had sent me to this horrible place.

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I needed to get away. I wanted to escape, but there was nothing to see anywhere around me other than an arid plain. I had been stuck back in the desert exactly where I had always been. I cried out for anyone to come and find me, but there was no one here but me. So, I set out on foot to get as far away as I could. I recognized now that it was night. The air was cooler, and the sky was a river filled with stars. After some time, the moon rose up above the horizon—a full moon with an energy that was a great relief to my feelings of anguish.

Ahead I could make out something that stood up from the desert floor. It was a tree rich with leaves and branches that stretched out in all directions. It made no logical sense. What was a tree doing here? I walked directly to it. Could this be real? It seemed to be a very old tree with large roots that spread out everywhere. It may seem crazy, but I went over and hugged that tree for everything that I was worth. It was the only thing of comfort that I could touch. I collapsed down at its base and cried with my back against the tree.

My anguish and pain were being weighed on a scale. And I thought about the millions and millions of people on the old Earth who must have lived with this feeling. It was almost too much to focus on. I felt such compassion for those people. Why had I never thought about it before? I used to think that stepping up to the New Earth was such an obvious thing. Why had humanity delayed its evolution for so long? I hadn't any idea of what being on the old Earth really meant. And I was ashamed for my arrogance. God, Diviner Creator, forgive me!

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I was awakened by Maureen gently touching my face. "You must have fallen asleep during the music. Seems to be over now. Are you ok?" She straightened herself up and stood beside my chair. "The sun is up, and a beautiful day awaits you."

I looked up into Maureen's face trying to understand what I was seeing. Part of me was still in an empty void. I recognized Maureen, but I couldn't piece everything together. She lived in a different world from me, but I appreciated her kind intent in being here with me now. I reached up and took her hand.

"I need to stay quiet and just absorb what has happened."

She looked at me with uncertainty in her eyes. She was loving and cautious at the same time. To her way of thinking I had been quite foolish. "Why don't you come over to our house where you can lie in the bed until you feel ready to talk about it."

Maureen took my arm to pull me up out of the chair where I had slumbered. She guided me to stand and led me toward the door. The time capsule and the black music device sat on the table. I was so very aware of the power of their presence and ready to open up some distance between myself and them. I squinted my eyes nearly closed as Maureen led me down the beach toward our house. I wasn't ready to face the real world quite yet. When Maureen got me to the bed, I let go of myself completely and curled up in the covers.

Maureen offered me some juice which I accepted gratefully. It tasted so sweet, so rich and exotic. My senses were being jarred awake, but my body wanted to do nothing but sleep. Sometime later Maureen came in to tell me that we were low on supplies and that she was going to take the wind-glider by herself down to the village where the river emptied into the sea. Maybe by the time she was back I would be up on my feet.

The impact of her words didn't really register on me until later when the silence reminded me that I was alone. I sat up and got to my feet. My body was shaky, but I made my way out

of the house and back down the beach to the house where it all had happened. I stuck my head through the doorway and stared at the black device sitting on the table. No, I still wasn't ready to deal with it. I walked back along the water's edge, dabbling my feet in the waves as they rushed back and forth.

What have you done to me, Tasaki Ono? Whose realms of pain and joy, loss and fulfillment have you taken me into? How do I live my life now that I am totally taken apart? I am drained of every feeling and emotion that I could ever possessed or could possess. There is nothing left inside of me. Nothing is mine.

Returning back to our house, I sat in one of the outdoor chairs and stared out into the ocean. I had no idea of what to do next. I just sat and watched the play of the waves and the wind. They were like two children playing in my yard and I was watching them like an affectionate mother.

After a while I had the feeling that Maureen would be arriving soon. I asked the wind where she was, and I saw an image of her gliding high above the coast. She was thinking ahead to her landing and wondering what she would face when she tried to communicate with me. She felt disconnected from me. I had been so restless and tense, always pushing the boundaries. I was really not a part of her sacred communion with the ocean. We weren't making it as a couple. And now this business with the time capsule. None of this registered on me as being about me. The person she was thinking about was a shadow, somebody else.

Maureen found me still sitting in the chair. I got up and helped her to bring supplies into the house. It seemed so important to her. And it was important for us to talk. She asked me what had happened when I listened to the music.

I tried to be honest. 'It changed me. It emptied me. I don't really understand it, but I feel like a whisper of wind or a flicker of light. Maybe I am still processing this. Time seems to pass so effortlessly. I don't feel anything or maybe it's everything.' I didn't know what else to say.

She turned my words over in her mind. She thought that they were a symptom of what was really going on with me. She wanted to find the right word to classify my condition or to connect this to other people who she knew. That was understandable. She was trying to contain the energy of it.

'It is too early to know for sure,' I whispered into her mind. 'The genie is out of the bottle, and I don't know what a genie wants to do.'

She furrowed her brow. It was such a direct physical expression of her thoughts. She wished that this business with the time capsule had never happened, and she wanted the whole thing to be over. She fantasized that everything would be back to normal in the morning. Why not? She could manage putting this behind her.

We went through the steps of a normal evening. When it was time to sleep, I lay in the bed next to Maureen while my awareness was in the stars. Out there in the Cosmos in the space around the Earth was a door. It was simply floating in space. I went to the door, and I passed through it. I had arrived to nowhere. This was what I was meant to do.

In the morning, I felt such deep appreciation for Maureen and our life by the ocean. I think that Maureen was surprised by the soft, cheerful person she met for breakfast. She clung to her routines and prepared to spend the day in the ocean. She recognized that I wasn't preparing to take the wind-glider out for a ride.

"What will you do? Take a day off?"

"I don't know, but I have no need to go anywhere."

Maureen walked out across the beach as if she was indeed a creature of the sea returning to her natural habitat. She was the perfect embodiment of a well-grounded human being. She

was totally secure in herself. In my mind I said goodbye to her. She turned back to glance at me, but only for a moment before she donned her mask and snorkel and plunged into the water.

I waited to feel ready before I walked over to the other house. From inside the doorway, I could see the things laying on the table just where I had left them: the metallic time capsule, the black music player, and the booklet. I felt such love for them. What a miracle they were. Something so profound having crossed time and space to change my life. I sat in the chair once again. I lifted up the music player and studied it. There were no markings or signs other than the ones on the buttons, nothing I hadn't seen before. I picked up the booklet and read through it again. Only this time I turned the last page. There was indeed another page with a reproduction of an image. Above it was written:

The final words written by Tasaki Ono
at the conclusion of this recording session.

And then a copy of a hand-written note.

*This path is called "emptying the well of feeling."
This path leads you to the doorway to nothingness.
To pass through that doorway is to leave everything behind,
and to embrace everything that is.*

I was filled with such a great and powerful love for Tasaki Ono. This love was greater than anything I had ever felt. I understood completely and thoroughly that I had never really known love before. What I had thought was normal human emotion and feeling for me was only a hint of the feeling I experienced in this moment. My chest was bursting with love for the man who had brought me to this new place in myself.

In my mind's eye, I saw now that he was a timeless presence, a master from ancient times inviting us to step beyond our limited selves—yes, to become what we were truly meant to be. He understood that to evolve we had to empty ourselves of everything. He had done this to me.

I placed the booklet back inside of the Time Capsule. The music playing device too. I closed the hatch and pushed it all into the middle of the table.

And I knew what I had to do. I had to go to him. Wherever he was, on whatever plane of existence, I had to go there. And so, I left in search of Tasaki Ono.