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**Revisiting Takeuchi Yoshimi's "Asia as Method":
Ethics, Embodiment, and the Ends of Criticism**

This paper proposes a re-reading of the leading postwar Japanese intellectual Takeuchi Yoshimi's famous notion of "Asia as Method" alongside his early interest in the I – novel (*shishōsetsu*) form and his writings on Lu Xun. Specifically, I take as my point of departure Takeuchi's appreciation of Lu Xun as "a tenacious *seikatsusha* (participant in life)," a characterization that, I contend, lies at the foundation of Takeuchi's commitment to a form of positive and engaging criticism—criticism as action, as it were. Tracing Takeuchi's appreciation of Lu Xun the *seikatsusha* to an earlier interest in the I – novel, exemplified by his undergraduate thesis on the Chinese writer Yu Dafu's confessional writings, I explore how Takeuchi's understanding of Lu Xun as a quotidian subject who establishes and renews his integrity through daily struggles coalesces with—and indeed provides guidelines for—his own struggles during and after WWII, which in turn contribute to the envisioning of the project known as "Asia as Method." In so doing, I seek to rediscover a thread in Takeuchi's thinking by establishing connections between critical moments in his intellectual career that have heretofore only received attention on their own. Setting aside the conventional understanding of "Asia as Method" as a reconfiguration of referential frameworks (namely, from the East – West binary to intra – Asian comparison), this paper demonstrates instead that underlying Takeuchi's project is an ethics of reading—or, better, an attempt to reconceptualize criticism as an ethical undertaking. As such, I argue, Takeuchi's thesis sheds light on an alternative, embodied way of reading and to participate in current methodological dialogues in literary studies, such as Rita Felski's urge to go beyond the detached form of literary scholarship characterized by what Paul Ricoeur identifies as a "hermeneutics of suspicion," Joseph North's critique of the "historicist contextualist paradigm," and debates over modes of reading variously labelled "paranoid," "reparative," "surface," "historical materialist," etc.