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*MEIAN CONTINUED* By Minae Mizumura  
Chikuma Shobo; 373 pages; \$14.40

Few novelists have won the devotion and acclaim that still cascade on the late Soseki Natsume. His face appears on the 1,000-yen bill. His brain is preserved at the prestigious University of Tokyo. Almost everywhere in Japan, he is known by his given name alone. Soseki bequeathed some 22 novels to his faithful readers, including the melancholy *Meian*, which was left unfinished at his death in 1916. Now a young expatriate Japanese woman has written a continuation of *Meian* -- and stirred up a nationwide debate over her literary impertinence.

Educated at Yale and currently teaching Japanese literature at the University of Michigan, Minae Mizumura followed Soseki's use of a traditional and difficult vernacular to extend *Meian's* depressing love triangle. Traditionalists have denounced the new novel as "sacrilegious." But some younger critics have come to Mizumura's defense. Says Yoichi Komori of Tokyo's Seijo University: "She has successfully followed the antiquated and idiosyncratic Japanese of Soseki to every small detail." She also ends her novel on a note of ambivalence. *Meian Continued* could be continued.

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