

at the court had been restricted almost exclusively to the appreciation of the seasons or the remembrances of unhappy love affairs. The waka could evoke such emotions poignantly; the subject and the form of the poetry were perfectly matched. But when the poets of the Southern Court were faced with the necessity of expressing unfamiliar and powerful themes, they became tongue-tied.

Munenaga's case is striking because he was a talented poet, though critics have also singled out for praise Munenaga's disciple, the Buddhist monk Kōun (also known by his lay name, Kazan'in Nagachika, (1347–1429)).¹⁰² Kōun, more fortunate than Munenaga, lived to see the reunification of the country in 1392 and moved back to the capital, where he frequented poetry gatherings attended by the shoguns. His poetry, in the Nijō tradition, is pleasant but unmemorable:

<i>shigeriau</i>	Beneath the new green
<i>sakura ga shita no</i>	in the shade of a cherry tree,
<i>yūsuzumi</i>	I take the evening cool—
<i>haru wa ukarishi</i>	waiting for the breezes
<i>kaze no mataruru</i>	that upset me last spring. ¹⁰³

The poem probably means exactly what it says. One might have wished for an allegorical meaning, but apparently there is none.

Of the other *Shin'yōshū* poets the most impressive are three emperors who lived in Yoshino—Godaigo, Gomurakami, and Chōkei. The collection as a whole is a disappointment for most modern readers, but in times of war and crisis Japanese have found inspiration in poems—and especially in the prefaces—that evoke the heroism of the Southern Court and its defenders.¹⁰⁴

SHŌTETSU (1381–1459)

The priest Shōtetsu was the last important waka poet of the Muromachi period. It might even be argued that he was the last major poet before the twentieth century who chose to express himself in the waka. In Shōtetsu's time the waka had been displaced by renga as the poetic medium of the most important poets, and during the Tokugawa period the haiku would be the dominant poetic form mainly because of Bashō, the greatest poet of the era. Shōtetsu belonged to the tradition of the court poets of the past, and he wrote his poems on the customary themes, but exceptional skill enabled him to create individual poetry. He was

unusually prolific: he lost twenty thousand poems when his hermitage was destroyed by fire in 1432, but managed to write another eleven thousand waka that are preserved in his *Sōkonshū* (Grass Roots Collection), probably the largest collection of waka by any recognized poet.

Shōtetsu came originally from a military family in the province of Bitchū, but was taken while still a boy to Kyoto. In *Shōtetsu Monogatari* (Tales of Shōtetsu, c. 1450),¹⁰⁵ a work that mixes autobiography and criticism, he related that he showed aptitude for composing poetry even as a small child, and that his first poem was written on a leaf offered to the gods as part of the celebration of the Tanabata Festival.¹⁰⁶ When he was fourteen another priest, discovering that Shōtetsu enjoyed writing poetry, suggested that they visit an elderly magistrate (*bugyō*) called Jibu,¹⁰⁷ or Civil Administrator, who lived nearby in Kyoto and was known as a lover of poetry. After some hesitation (he was embarrassed to be seen because his forelock had been shaved),¹⁰⁸ Shōtetsu allowed himself to be taken to the magistrate's house. Here is his account of what happened:

The Lay Priest and Civil Administrator,¹⁰⁹ at the time a venerable, white-haired gentleman more than eighty years old, came out to meet us. He told me, "These days one never hears of children composing poetry, but when I was young it used to be quite common. How charming of you! I have a poetry gathering every month on the twenty-fifth. Please do attend. Here are the subjects for this month." So saying, he himself wrote down the topics for me. There were three, each written with four Chinese characters: idle moon¹¹⁰ late at night, distant geese over twilight mountains, and a love affair not followed by a next-morning letter. This happened at the beginning of the eighth month.

On the twenty-fifth I went to attend the meeting. Inside, Reizei no Tamemasa [the great-great-grandson of Teika and the head of the Reizei school] and Reizei no Tamekuni¹¹¹ sat in one place of honor, and the former governor of Kyūshū in the other. Behind them were their close retainers and my host's family, over twenty persons in all, seated impressively in order of rank. I had arrived late, so I was shown to the central place of honor.¹¹² Embarrassing though it was, that is where I took my place. The governor was at the time a lay priest, over eighty years of age, and he sat there wearing a robe without the usual black hems and a sash with a long tassel.

My poem on the topic "idle moon late at night" was:

itazura ni How light the sky is
fukeyuku sora no This night as to no avail,
kage nare ya It grows ever later—
hitori nagamuru All alone, I stare up at
aki no yo no tsuki The moon of an autumn night.

My poem on the wild geese concluded, as I recall:

yama no ha ni At the mountain edge
hitotsura miyuru A whole chain is visible—
hatsukari no koe The voices of the first wild geese.

I have forgotten the first part of the poem. I do not remember my poem on love either.

I learned how to compose poetry, thanks to my frequent appearances at such sessions from then on. I was fourteen years old at the time.¹¹³ Afterwards, when I was in the service of the resident prince at Nara, I was the senior page at a memorial service conducted in the Lecture Hall on Mount Hiei.¹¹⁴ I was so busy with this and other duties that I stopped writing poetry for a time. Later, after my father died,¹¹⁵ I again ventured to appear at poetry gatherings and resumed writing poetry. I filled thirty-six notebooks with poems composed from the time of the meeting at the Jibu's place. There must have been over twenty thousand poems. They all went up in flames at Imakumano. I have completed somewhat under ten thousand poems since then.¹¹⁶

If we can believe this account, written nearly sixty years after some of the events described, Shōtetsu even as a boy of fourteen was able to compose poetry with sufficient skill to be a welcome visitor at gatherings attended by the outstanding poets of the day. Perhaps his youthful encounter with Reizei Tamemasa decided Shōtetsu to compose poetry in the manner of the Reizei school. However, a much more important influence was exerted by Imagawa Ryōshun (1326–1414?), a daimyo and poet whose essays on poetry defended the liberal tradition of the Reizei school against the Nijō poets.

Only about one hundred poems by Ryōshun survive,¹¹⁷ none of great interest though they have been praised for their honest, *Man'yōshū* simplicity. His writings on poetry, most of them composed when he was in his eighties,¹¹⁸ suggest the kind of influence he had over Shōtetsu. *Ryōshun Isshi Den* (Biography of Ryōshun for His Son), written in 1409,

when he was eighty-three, contains a mixture of autobiography and poetic criticism that may have served as a model for *Tales of Shōtetsu*. Near the beginning we find these recollections:

When I was twelve or thirteen my grandmother Kōun'in said to me, "It is disgraceful for a boy like you not to compose poetry. Put your mind to it, and regardless of whether it is good or bad, keep composing . . . I began to teach your father how to write poetry from the time when he was seven or eight. Any son who does not continue the accomplishment of his father is not worth talking about."¹¹⁹

Ryōshun elsewhere recorded two other experiences that led him to compose poetry. The first occurred in 1341:

I must have been sixteen when I saw in a vision Lord Tsunenobu.¹²⁰ He told me that people must definitely compose poetry. I watched and listened, not knowing if this was a dream or reality, and it stirred in me an even greater desire to write poetry.¹²¹

In 1345 another experience helped to shape his course as a poet: he read a poem by Reizei Tamehide that profoundly moved him.

nasake aru In this world of ours
tomo koso kataki Friends who are sympathetic
yo narikere Are truly hard to find:
hitori ame kiku Alone, I listen to the rain
*aki no yosugara*¹²² All through the long autumn night.

Ryōshun was so impressed that he decided to become a disciple of the Reizei school. He was struck, first of all, by the word *nasake* with which the poem begins. This word was always avoided by Nijō poets because it could refer to sexual relations. Ryōshun was also moved by the unspoken implication of the poem: if the speaker had had a kind friend, the friend would surely have invited him to go somewhere, and he would not have had to spend the night listening to the dreary rain.¹²³

Ryōshun's most interesting opinions concern language. Like other Reizei poets, he insisted on the poet's freedom to choose whatever words he preferred, in contrast to the strict observance of poetic diction required of members of the Nijō school. "What do the teachings mean that command us to use only old words? 'Forbidden words' should refer only to those that seem peculiar in the context in which they are placed.

Why should we avoid using a word, even if it has never before appeared in poetry, providing it is not unpleasant to the ears?"¹²⁴ He favored straightforward expression: "The essence of poetry is to describe things as they are, without decoration." He believed that the simple language of the *Man'yōshū* should be the inspiration for poets of his own time, and that it was only in the centuries after the *Man'yōshū* that poets first fell into the error of decorating their works.¹²⁵ His special esteem for the *Man'yōshū* was what one might expect of a military man; but his preference for unadorned simplicity seems not to have affected his devotion to Teika and the *Shin Kokinshū*.

Perhaps Ryōshun's most famous statement on poetry was:

Man cannot exist without thoughts and words. Why then should it be difficult for him to express his thoughts with his mouth? If, for example, he thinks, "Brrr—how cold it is!" he will say, "I wish I had a jacket" or "I wish I could warm myself by a fire" and each of these is poetry.¹²⁶

Ryōshun believed that the emotion (*kokoro*) that gave rise to a poem was more important than words (*kotoba*), and if the emotion was strong enough (even the emotion induced by a chilly room), the words became poetry of themselves. This conviction led him to attack the Nijō poets, especially Ton'a, who always emphasized the importance of the words. Sometimes he became quite intemperate, and he did not hesitate to declare that among the poems of Ton'a "seven or eight out of ten poems borrow more than half their words from old poems."¹²⁷ His main reason for writing his various works of criticism in old age seems to have been to protect and encourage Reizei Tamemasa, the young head of the Reizei school. No doubt he also communicated these views to Shōtetsu, who revered Ryōshun as his teacher.

Shōtetsu, though an important poet, is remembered most of all for his work of criticism and autobiography, *Tales of Shōtetsu*. The typical manner adopted by Shōtetsu in this work is to present a waka and follow it with a close analysis of its components. The following is the first part of what is perhaps the best-known passage:

FALLING BLOSSOMS

<i>sakura chiru</i>	They blossomed only
<i>yo no ma no hana no</i>	To fall in the space of a night,
<i>yume no uchi ni</i>	In the space of a dream;

<i>yagate magirenu</i>	All that remains as before
<i>mine no shirakumo</i>	Are white clouds over the peak.

This is a poem in the *yūgen* style. What we call *yūgen* is something within the mind that cannot be expressed in words. The quality of *yūgen* may be suggested by the sight of thin clouds veiling the moon or autumn fog hanging over the crimson leaves on a mountainside. If one is asked where in these sights is the *yūgen*, one cannot answer. It is not surprising that a person who fails to understand this is likely to prefer the sight of the moon shining brightly in a cloudless sky. It is quite impossible to explain wherein lies the interest or the wonder of *yūgen*.

The words "in the space of a dream; all that remains as before" were derived from a poem composed by Genji. Genji, when he meets Fujitsubo, says

<i>mite mo mata</i>	We meet now, but rare
<i>au yo mare naru</i>	Will be the nights we meet again.
<i>yume no uchi ni</i>	Would that this poor frame
<i>yagate magiruru</i>	Might dissolve, just as it is,
<i>ukimi to mo gana</i>	Into the world of the dream.

This, too, was in the *yūgen* style.¹²⁸

Shōtetsu's conception of *yūgen* was the key to his poetry and to his criticism of poetry. He likened the effect of *yūgen* in poetry to mist that partly conceals the bare meanings of words, lending them mysterious ambiguity. To achieve this effect, words were sometimes omitted from poems, even words necessary for ready comprehension, and the difficulty of the poem that resulted was justified in terms of the elusive depths hinted at by the ambiguity. Shōtetsu gave, as an example of a poem whose meaning was not immediately apparent because one line had been deliberately omitted, the celebrated waka by Ariwara no Narihira from the *Kokinshū* (already quoted above):

<i>tsuki ya aranu</i>	Is that not the moon,
<i>haru ya mukashi no</i>	And is the spring not the spring
<i>haru naranu</i>	Of a year ago?

wa ga mi hitotsu wa This body of mine alone,
moto no mi shite Remains as it was before.¹²⁹

He commented: "Unless one understands the implications, there is nothing interesting about the poem. The poem was composed when, remembering how in the spring of the previous year he had met the Nijō empress, he went to the western pavilion. What he meant to say was, 'Is that not the moon, and is not the spring the same as before: I am unchanged, but the person I met then is not here tonight.'" ¹³⁰

Shōtetsu's poetry is difficult because he deliberately defied normal syntax in order to achieve a richness of meaning. He gave an elaborate exegesis of one of his poems:

watarikane Even clouds hesitate.
kumo mo yūbe wo They still struggle this evening
nao tadoru To cross over the bridge:
ato naki yuki no A path to the peak in snow
mine no kakehashi Without a single footprint.

It is most improbable that clouds would have trouble passing over trackless snow. However, it is the general practice in waka composition to impart feelings to insentient things. The fact is, clouds are constantly crossing the sky, morning and night. But when I looked out as evening came to the mountains covered in snow, the drifts of fallen snow were so white that I thought the clouds might not even realize evening had come, and they might hesitate to cross trackless paths, but in fact they went by serenely. If one examines a scene carefully in this way, there really is something about the clouds that suggests they might have trouble crossing. It also occurred to me that the clouds might hesitate to cross when there were no human footprints in the snow along a mountain path as dangerous as a hanging bridge.¹³¹

Shōtetsu went on to defend the unnatural syntax of the poem in terms of the greater force it gave. His exegesis of the poem concluded, "A poem that does not spell out everything is a good poem."

Tales of Shōtetsu opens with the flat statement "Anyone who follows the way of poetry and criticizes Teika will not enjoy the blessings of the gods but will incur their punishment."¹³² His reverence for Teika cannot be questioned, but his poems do not much resemble those of his avowed master. One senses instead that Shōtetsu fretted over the lim-

itations of the waka. His disciples included renga poets, and Shōtetsu himself might have found renga a more congenial medium. He attempted to compensate for the brevity of the waka by resorting to suggestion, and he managed to cram into thirty-one syllables a surprising number of images or ideas. Teika had also composed dense poems, but he never was as arcane in his images as Shōtetsu in his poem on clouds over the snow. Shōtetsu, like Poe, would probably have been satisfied to convey "a suggestive indefiniteness of vague and therefore of spiritual effect."

Shōtetsu's yūgen was closer to that of Shunzei than of Teika, for whom the word seems to have meant surpassing charm above all. It differed also (as we shall see) from the yūgen of Zeami, as employed in his essays on Nō, where the primary meaning seems to have been elegance. Shōtetsu meant a kind of symbolism, achieved by using ambiguous but suggestive language, affording the reader the possibility of an experience that transcends words. In this respect Shōtetsu may be said to have gone beyond his avowed master Teika, and to have enunciated one of the most important ideals of the medieval aesthetic. The same preference for suggestion and mystery could be found in the monochrome paintings of the Muromachi period, the tea ceremony, and the gardens of stone and pebbles that are closer to ink sketches than to natural vegetation.

These different arts were all influenced by aesthetic beliefs associated with Zen Buddhism which, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries especially, acquired dominant importance among writers and artists. Shōtetsu, a Zen monk, wrote many religious poems whose inspiration came from Zen Buddhism, such as:

tera wa aredo There is a temple,
mukashi no mama no But, unaltered from the past,
kazari naki The mountain becomes
hotoke to narite A Buddha without trappings,
yama zo aseyuku And its color fades away.

This poem, composed in 1452, when Shōtetsu was seventy-one, is a difficult but characteristic expression of Zen belief: the temple exists and Shōtetsu has often sat there in meditation, but the temple is not itself of importance; the achievement of Buddhahood is the reason for the temple's existence. On the other hand, the mountain on which the temple stands has attained the eternal essence of Buddha, though (unlike the temple) it is bare of adornment.¹³³ Shōtetsu's Buddhist poem is unlike

any in the *Kokinshū* and later court anthologies. It comes dangerously close to bursting the seams of the waka, and suggests also the kanshi being written by the Zen monks of the Five Mountains at about the same time.

There were waka poets after Shōtetsu, but their names are hardly remembered. A few late Tokugawa waka poets are still of interest,¹³⁴ but it was not until the twentieth century that the waka was reborn as a vital medium for the communication of genuinely felt joys and griefs.

Notes

1. I have decided, following Japanese usage, to omit the particle *no* between the surnames and personal names of persons of the Kamakura period and later; there are, however, exceptions. One commonly encounters names of Kamakura figures with the *no*, e.g., Minamoto no Sanetomo; and the names of some Japanese, even as late as the Tokugawa period, usually include the *no*, e.g., Kamo no Mabuchi and Ki no Kaion.
2. The Hōjō family, to which Yoritomo's wife Masako belonged, soon acquired the same kind of control over the shogun that the Fujiwara family exercised over the emperor. This was especially true when the shogun was a minor. The official name of the position occupied by the Hōjō "regents" was *shikōken*, or "administrator." For a fuller account of the Hōjō, see George Sansom, *A History of Japan to 1334*, pp. 371-437.
3. Among the many works written about Sanetomo, one might cite the novel *Udaijin Sanetomo* (1943) by Dazai Osamu (see *Dawn to the West*, I, pp. 1051-52, for an account of this work); the modern Nō play *Sanetomo* (1943) by Toki Zemmaro; and the wartime essays of Kobayashi Hideo. *Sanetomo Shuppan* (1973) by Yamazaki Masakazu is a more recent play based on Sanetomo's life.
4. See Saitō Mokichi, *Kinkai Waka Shū*, p. 113.
5. This collection was translated and commented on by Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner in their *Fujiwara Teika's Superior Poems of Our Time*.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 44. The era name Kampei is more commonly read as Kamyō. The era itself lasted from 888 to 897.
8. This is poem 144 in Sanetomo's collection *Kinkaishū*. See Higuchi Yoshimaro, *Kinkai Waka Shū*, p. 50, for this poem and two honka. Saitō (*Kinkai*, p. 117) gives five possible honka.
9. *Shūishū* 124.
10. Saitō, *Kinkai*, pp. 117-18.

11. The title means literally "Collection of Golden Locust Waka," locust being the tree (*enju* in Japanese) sometimes translated as "pagoda tree" or "Chinese scholar tree." Sasaki Nobutsuna, the celebrated scholar of Japanese poetry, interpreted "golden" as referring to Kamakura (because the word *kama* is written with the metal radical), and *kai* or *kaimon*, "locust tree," a word used in ancient China for the three highest ranks of minister. *Kinkai* would therefore mean "the Kamakura great minister" or the shogun. However, the title *Kinkai Waka Shū* was not given to the collection until long afterward, perhaps not until the Muromachi period. See Kojima Yoshio, "Kaisetsu" to *Kinkai Waka Shū* in Kazamaki Keijirō and Kojima Yoshio, *San'kashū, Kinkai Waka Shū*, p. 297. *Kinkai Waka Shū* contains from 663 to 749 waka, depending on the text.
12. Other volumes devoted to waka poetry are collections by many poets such as the *Kokinshū* and *Shin Kokinshū*.
13. Sasaki Yukitsuna, *Chūsei no Kajintachi*, p. 114. Sasaki estimated that about 60 of the 663 poems in *Kinkai Waka Shū* show the influence of the *Man'yōshū*. Sasaki did not take into account the additional 56 poems by Sanetomo, not included in *Kinkai Waka Shū* but later collected by someone who used the pseudonym Ryūei Akai. The identity of this person is unknown, but it has been suggested that he was Ashikaga Yoshimasa who from 1450 to 1458 held the position of *ryūei akai*, *ryūei* meaning "shogun" and *akai* being a Chinese name for the office of *dainagon*. Some of Sanetomo's most highly rated poems are found in the collection of Ryūei Akai. In addition, 40 other poems by Sanetomo are found in various sources such as *Mirror of the East*. See Higuchi, *Kinkai*, pp. 258-61.
14. What he actually gave was a circle, rather than a star, but I have used a more familiar sign of approbation. Mabuchi gave one circle to about 150 poems and a double circle, his highest mark of approbation, to 22.
15. *Kinkai Waka Shū* 210. Higuchi, *Kinkai*, p. 68. For Mabuchi's comment see Matsumura Eiichi, *Minamoto Sanetomo Meika Hyōshaku*, p. 115.
16. *Kokinshū* 406. Abe no Nakamaro, in China, yearned to be back amid familiar scenery in Japan.
17. *Shin Kokinshū* 1499. Although the poem seems to be no more than an expression of impatience over the slowness of the moon to appear, it has been interpreted as an indirect expression over slowness of promotion.
18. *Kinkai Waka Shū* 244. Higuchi, *Kinkai*, p. 77.
19. See above, p. 125, for another translation of the poem.
20. *Kinkai Waka Shū* 639. See Higuchi, *Kinkai*, p. 183, also Matsumura, *Minamoto*, pp. 191-92. Kojima (in Kazamaki and Kojima, *San'kashū*, p. 441) gives an account of the reputation of this particular poem. Despite Kamo no Mabuchi's praise, Itō Sachio (more recently) criticized it. Still later men, notably Kawada Jun, praised it so enthusiastically that it is now generally recognized as one of Sanetomo's finest poems.
21. Matsumura, *Minamoto*, p. 191. The quoted poem is *Man'yōshū*, XIII:3238.

- imperial collections of the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, leaving the *Shin Kokinshū* out of consideration for the moment, it is fully worthy to represent these periods, along with the *Gyokuyō* and *Fūgashū*. It is not like the rest of the collections, most of which did nothing more than imitate the *Kokinshū*."
105. The complete translation of this work by Robert H. Brower was published under the title *Conversations with Shōtetsu*. This immaculate work of scholarship is further enhanced by an extensive introduction and notes by Steven D. Carter.
106. Tanabata was the Japanese name given to the Chinese festival that celebrated the meeting of two stars (the Herd Boy and the Weaver Girl) on the seventh night of the seventh moon. Today poems are written on paper slips that are attached to stalks of bamboo.
107. The identity of this man has not been determined. Hisamatsu Sen'ichi and Nishio Minoru, *Karon Shū, Nōgakuron Shū*, p. 197, suggested that Jibu might have been a way of referring to Imagawa Ryōshun, noting that Shōtetsu said of both that they were over eighty, but more recent research has shown that Ryōshun was probably not there on the occasion Shōtetsu described. Jibu, though an official title, seems to be used here as a personal name. Shōtetsu, writing many years after the event, seems to have confused memories. See Inada Toshinori, *Shōtetsu no Kenkyū*, pp. 34-35 and 163-64, for a careful examination of the evidence.
108. Perhaps this means that he had recently become a Buddhist priest. The date of Shōtetsu's entering orders is not known.
109. Jibu was a general appellation of officers of the *jibushō*, which was rendered by R. K. Reischauer as "Ministry of Civil Administration."
110. *Kangetsu* was a technical term for the moon at a time of year when the farmers are idle, as opposed, say, to "harvest moon." In the poem that he composed on this subject Shōtetsu used the image to suggest the moon on a night that brought no meeting, no matter how late it might become—an "idle" moon of another kind.
111. Reizei Tamemasa's name is usually read as Tametada, but I have followed the pronunciation given by Fukuda Hideichi in *Chūsei Wakashi no Kenkyū*, p. 853. Tamemasa (1361-1417) was actually the son of Tamekuni, but because Tamekuni entered Buddhist orders in 1371, he was ineligible to succeed as head of the school. Shortly before Tamekuni's father (Tamemasa's grandfather) Tamehide (1306?-1372) died, Tamemasa was adopted as his heir, making Tamemasa and Tamekuni brothers. See Hisamatsu and Nishio, *Karon Shū*, pp. 171, 197. For Tamemasa, see Inoue, *Chūsei*, II, pp. 47-48.
112. Presumably, the other guests had modestly declined to sit in the *yokoza*, the place at the head of the table.
113. By Japanese count; only thirteen by Western reckoning.

114. The Lecture Hall (*kōdō*) was one of the buildings of the monastery Enryaku-ji on Mount Hiei, called here Muroyama.
115. In 1403, when Shōtetsu was twenty-one.
116. Translation from my *Some Japanese Portraits*, pp. 44-45. Original text in Hisamatsu and Nishio, *Karon Shū*, p. 197.
117. Araki Hisashi in *Imagawa Ryōshun no Kenkyū*, pp. 393-404 gives 113 poems, of which 5 appeared in *chokusenshū*, 8 in *uta-awase*, and the rest in essays on poetry, diaries, and so on. Some poems are incomplete in their quoted form. Hisamatsu (in *Chūsei*, p. 298), citing Araki among other authorities, seems to favor 98 poems.
118. Araki Hisashi (*Imagawa*, pp. 33-34) gives the names of eleven works. The earliest was written when Ryōshun was sixty-six, but eight were written in his eighties.
119. Sasaki Nobutsuna (ed.), *Nihon Kagaku Taikei*, V, p. 177.
120. Minamoto no Tsunenobu, a late Heian poet whose original style undoubtedly impressed Ryōshun. In his own day he was unpopular because he departed from the conventions, but in later times his poems were much praised.
121. Quoted by Araki Hisashi, *Imagawa*, p. 13. Ryōshun says he was sixteen, but he was fifteen by Western calculation.
122. The poem is found in Ryōshun's book of criticism *Rakusho Rōken*. I have used the text prepared by Mizukami Kashizō in *Gengo to Bungei*, Sept. 1959, p. 68. See also Sasaki Nobutsuna, *Nihon Kagaku Taikei*, V, p. 202. For another translation see Carter, *Waiting*, p. 230.
123. This is the explanation given by Shōtetsu in *Tales of Shōtetsu*. See Hisamatsu and Nishio, *Karon Shū* p. 181.
124. Imagawa Ryōshun, "Wakadokoro e Fushin Jōjō," quoted in Sasaki Nobutsuna, *Nihon Kagaku Shi*, p. 166.
125. Quoted in Sasaki, *Nihon Kagaku Shi*, p. 158.
126. From Ryōshun's "Gonjinshū," quoted by Sasaki Nobutsuna in *Nihon Kagaku Shi*, p. 158.
127. From his "Wakadokoro e Fushin Jōjō." See Sasaki Nobutsuna, *Nihon Kagaku Taikei*, V, p. 172.
128. This is part II, section 77 of *Tales of Shōtetsu*. Text in Hisamatsu and Nishio, *Karon Shū*, p. 224. Translation, slightly modified, from my *Some Japanese Portraits*, pp. 48-49. The poem from *The Tale of Genji* is in the "Waka Murasaki" chapter. See the translation by Edward Seidensticker, *The Tale of Genji*, I, p. 98.
129. *Kokinshū* 747. For a discussion of the poem, see above, p. 226.
130. Hisamatsu and Nishio, *Karon Shū*, p. 173.
131. *Ibid.*, p. 172. Not only is the poem difficult to understand but the explanation compounds the difficulties. The modern explanation of Shōtetsu's poem, given by Fujihira Hideo (in Sasaki Yukitsuna, *Chūsei*, pp. 212-13),

- is even longer and almost as obscure. For another translation of the poem, see Steven D. Carter, *Traditional Japanese Poetry*, p. 299.
132. Hisamatsu and Nishio, *Karon Shū*, p. 166.
133. Poem and explanation both derived from Koyama Keiichi, *Shōtetsu Ron*, pp. 237-39.
134. See my *World Within Walls*, pp. 494-506.

Bibliography

Note: All Japanese books, except as otherwise noted, were published in Tokyo.

- Araki Hisashi. *Imagawa Ryōshun no Kenkyū*. Kasama Shoin, 1977.
- Araki Yoshio. *Chūsei Bungaku no Keisei to Hatten*. Kyoto: Minerva Shobō, 1957.
- Brower, Robert H. *Conversations with Shōtetsu*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1992.
- . "Ex-Emperor Go-Toba's Secret Teachings," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 32, 1972.
- Brower, Robert H., and Earl Miner. *Fujiwara Teika's Superior Poems of Our Time*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1967.
- . *Japanese Court Poetry*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1961.
- Carter, Steven D. *Traditional Japanese Poetry*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991.
- . *Waiting for the Wind*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.
- Fukuda Hideichi. *Chūsei Wakashi no Kenkyū*. Kadokawa Shoten, 1972.
- Fukuda Yūsaku. *Teika Karon to sono Shūhen*. Kasama Shoin, 1974.
- Hamaguchi Hiroaki. "Gyokuyō Waka Shū no Hyōgen," *Kokugo to Kokubun-gaku*, April 1969.
- Higuchi Yoshimaro. *Kinkai Waka Shū*, in Shinchō Nihon Koten Shūsei series. Shinchōsha, 1981.
- Hisamatsu Sen'ichi. *Chūsei Waka Shi*. Tōkyōdō, 1961.
- Hisamatsu Sen'ichi and Nishio Minoru. *Karon Shū, Nōgakuron Shū*, in Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikai series. Iwanami Shoten, 1961.
- Hisamatsu Sen'ichi et al. *Nihon Bungaku Shi: Chūsei*. Shibundō, 1955.
- Hisamatsu Sen'ichi, Yokozawa Saburō, Shuzui Kenji, and Yasuda Ayao. *Geijutsuron Shū*, in Koten Nihon Bungaku Zenshū series. Chikuma Shobō, 1967.
- Huey, Robert N. *Kyōgoku Tamekane*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1989.
- Huey, Robert N., and Susan Matisoff (trans.). "Tamekanekyō Wakashō: Lord Tamekane's Notes on Poetry," *Monumenta Nipponica* 40:2 (Summer 1985).
- Iwano Toshinori. *Shōtetsu no Kenkyū*. Kasama Shoin, 1978.

- Inoue Muneo. *Chūsei Kadanshi no Kenkyū*, 2 vols. (Nambokuchōhen). Meiji Shoin, 1965.
- Ishida Yoshisada. *Ton'a, Keiun*. Sanseidō, 1943.
- Ishihara Kiyoshi. *Chūsei Bungakuron no Kōkyū*. Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten, 1988.
- Iwasa Miyoko. *Eifukumon'in*. Kasama Shoin, 1976.
- . *Kyōgoku-ha Kajin no Kenkyū*. Kasama Shoin, 1974.
- Iwasa Tadashi. *Shin'yō Waka Shū*, in Iwanami Bunko series. Iwanami Shoten, 1940.
- Kawada Jun. *Yoshino-chō no Hika*. Daiichi Shobō, 1944.
- Kawazoe Shōji. *Imagawa Ryōshun*. Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1964.
- Kazamaki Keijirō, "Shin Chokusenshū," *Kokugo Kokubun*, vol. VIII, no. 3, March 1938.
- Kazamaki Keijirō and Kojima Yoshio. *Sanqashū, Kinkai Waka Shū*, in Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikai series. Iwanami Shoten, 1961.
- Keene, Donald. *Dawn to the West*, 2 vols. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984.
- . *Essays in Idleness*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.
- . *Some Japanese Portraits*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1978.
- . *World Within Walls*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976.
- Keene, Donald (trans.). *Essays in Idleness: The Tsurezuregusa of Kenkō*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.
- Kibune Shigeaki. *Shōku Gosen Waka Shū Zenchūshaku*. Kyōto: Daigakudō Shoten, 1989.
- Konishi Jin'ichi. "Gyokuyō Jidai to Sōshi," in Jōkō Kan'ichi (ed.), *Chūsei Bungaku no Sekai*. Iwanami Shoten, 1960.
- Koyama Keiichi. *Imagawa Ryōshun: sono Bushidō to Bungaku*. Sanseidō, 1944.
- . *Shōtetsu Ron*. Sanseidō, 1942.
- Kyūsojin Hitaku and Higuchi Yoshimaro (eds.). *Shin Chokusen Waka Shū*, in Iwanami Bunko series. Iwanami Shoten, 1961.
- Mass, Jeffrey P. *Court and Bakufu in Japan*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982.
- Matsumura Eiichi. *Minamoto Sanetomo Meika Hyōshaku*. Hibonkaku, 1934.
- Miner, Earl, Hiroko Odagiri, and Robert E. Morrell. *The Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985.
- Morimoto Motoko (ed.). *Izayoi Nikki, Yoru no Tsuru*, in Kōdansha Gakujutsu Bunko series. Kōdansha, 1979.
- Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai (trans.). *The Man'yōshū*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.
- Nishino Taeko. *Kōgon-in*. Kokubunsha, 1988.
- Nōtoru Damu Seishin Daigaku Kokubungaku Kenkyūshitsu Koten Sōsho Kankōkai (ed.). *Sōkonshū*. Okayama, 1973.
- Numazawa Tatsuo. "Shin'yō Waka Shū Kōgi," in *Tanaka Kōza*, III. Kaizōsha, 1932.

- Ogi Takashi. *Shin'yō Waka Shū Hombun to Kenkyū*. Kasama Shoin, 1984.
- Ōtori Kazuma. *Shin Chokusen Waka Shū Kochūshaku to sono Kenkyū*, 2 vols. Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1986.
- Saitō Kazuhiro. *Kōchū Shin'yōshū*. Nihon Dempo Tsūshin Sha, 1945.
- Saitō Mokichi. *Kinkai Waka Shū*, in Nihon Koten Zensho series. Asahi Shimbun Sha, 1950.
- Saitō Yōko. "Fujiwara Teika Kenkyū," *Nihon Bungaku*, no. 16, 1961.
- Sansom, George. *A History of Japan to 1334*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958.
- . *A History of Japan: 1334–1615*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1961.
- Sasaki Nobutsuna. *Nihon Kagaku Shi*. Hakubunkan, 1910.
- . (ed.) *Nihon Kagaku Taikei*, V. Kazama Shobō, 1957.
- Sasaki Yukitsuna. *Chūsei no Kajintachi*. Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1976.
- Seidensticker, Edward. *The Tale of Genji*, 2 vols. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976.
- Senshū Kōgi-hen*, in Tanka Kōza series, vol. 5. Kaizōsha, 1932.
- Toki Zemmuro. *Kyōgoku Tamekane*. Chikuma Shobō, 1971.
- . *Shinshū Kyōgoku Tamekane*. Kadokawa Shoten, 1968.
- Tsugita Kasumi. "Gyokuyō, Fūgashū no Uta no Tokushitsu," in *Nishō Gakusha Daigaku Sōritsu Hachijū Shūnen Kinen Ronshū*. Nishō Gakusha Daigaku, 1957.
- . "Gyokuyōshū no Seiritu to sono Denrai," in *Bungaku*, vol. IX, no. 5, May 1941.
- Tsugita Kasumi and Iwasa Miyoko. *Fūga Waka Shū*. Miyai Shoten, 1974.
- Varley, H. Paul. *Imperial Restoration in Medieval Japan*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1971.
- Yoneyama Muneomi. *Rikashū Hyōchū*. Furukawa Shuppanbu, 1935.

19. BUDDHIST WRITINGS OF THE KAMAKURA PERIOD

There was a great upsurge of religious belief during the Kamakura period, and many varieties of literature reveal the omnipresent influence of Buddhism. During the five centuries from the time that Buddhism first took hold in Japan, its role in the creation of literature had continued to grow. It is true that the various sects at times engaged in unseemly sectarian quarrels and even violence, but such doctrinal matters seldom appear in works of literature. Common to all sects was an awareness of the transience of worldly things; a belief in rebirth and transmigration: in causes from past lives resulting in effects in the present life; and in the existence of a heaven and hell. These concepts were reflected in literature, as obvious facts rather than as religious doctrines. Different sects paid homage to different divinities of the Buddhist pantheon, but whether believers placed their trust in the compassion of Kannon, or in the vow of Amida to save all men, the religion brought comfort in times of adversity, and the awe and gratitude the Japanese felt were often expressed in their writings.

Even literary works that may seem to owe little to Buddhist tradition were usually colored by these beliefs. We are likely to remember *The Tale of Genji* in terms of the peerless hero and the loveliness of the world surrounding him, but we should not forget that again and again Genji expressed his conviction that the beauty of this world was not enough and his determination to quit the evanescent world for the eternal world of Buddhist truth. To the end he did not take this step, but others in the novel, including emperors and their consorts, exchanged their brilliant robes for somber priestly garb. Again, the various accounts of the warfare of the twelfth century are remembered in terms of the deeds of bravery they describe; but the heroes in their last moments generally expressed not defiance of the enemy but reliance on the saving grace of

22.
ESSAYS IN IDLENESS

Tsurezuregusa (Essays in Idleness) is a *zuihitsu* collection—essays that range in length from a single sentence to a few pages. The dating of the work poses problems, but it is generally believed that it was written between 1329 and 1331.¹ This was not a propitious time for a work of reflection and comment. In 1331 the Emperor Godaigo staged a revolt against the Hōjō family, the de facto rulers of Japan, and in the following year he was exiled, only to return in 1333 and overthrow the Hōjō rule. These events and the many incidents that presaged them created great anxiety among the educated classes, but they hardly ruffle the surface of *Essays in Idleness*. It is an expression neither of sorrow over troubled times nor of joy over the temporary successes of one or another party; it is instead a work of timeless relevance, a splendid example of Japanese meditative style.

The author is known by his Buddhist name, Kenkō, but sometimes also by his lay name of Urabe Kaneyoshi or else as Yoshida Kaneyoshi, from the associations of his family with the Yoshida Shrine in Kyoto.² Kenkō lived from 1283 to about 1352.³ He came from a long line of Shintō officials,⁴ but the Shintō connections were broken in the time of his grandfather. His father was a court official, as was one elder brother; another brother was a high-ranking Buddhist priest (*daisōjō*). Kenkō himself as a young man served at the court of the Emperor Goniō (1285–1308). He became a priest after the death of this emperor, but nothing suggests Goniō's death was the cause; dissatisfaction with worldly life had probably accumulated within him and led to his decision. He took the tonsure in 1313 on Mount Hiei and spent some years there before returning to Kyoto.⁵

During his lifetime Kenkō was known as a poet of the conservative Nijō school. Nijō Yoshimoto, the chief Nijō poet of the next generation, wrote that Kenkō was one of the three outstanding poets of the Teiwa

era (1345–1350).⁶ He added that “people considered him somewhat inferior to the others, but his poems were widely quoted.”⁷ Kenkō spent most of his life in the capital, where he took part in poetry gatherings regularly, even though the times were hardly conducive to poetry-making. His indifference to politics is suggested by the readiness with which he shifted allegiance from régime to régime—from Godaigo to Kōgon, the emperor installed by the Hōjō regents in 1331; then back to Godaigo when he returned in triumph from Oki in 1333; then from Godaigo to the Ashikaga shoguns in 1336, when Godaigo was again driven into exile. He associated with the new overlords, notably Kō no Moronao (d. 1351), a violent warrior who desired the trappings of culture. A passage in the *Taiheiki* relates that Kenkō even wrote love letters for Moronao.⁸ Kenkō lived for a time in the Kantō region (in the present Kanagawa Prefecture), a fact that explains the surprising number of episodes in *Essays in Idleness* set in that part of Japan.⁹

Kenkō would probably not be remembered at all if he had not written *Essays in Idleness*, but the work seems to have been little known during his lifetime. For many years the account given by Sanjōnishi Saneeda (1511–1579) of the discovery of the text was generally accepted. This stated that Kenkō had from time to time written down his thoughts on scraps of paper that he pasted to the walls of his cottage. The poet and general Imagawa Ryōshun, learning of this after Kenkō's death, carefully removed the many scraps and arranged them in their present order.¹⁰ Nobody believes this anymore, but the story suggests that *Essays in Idleness* was unknown for some years and had to be rediscovered. The oldest surviving text, dated 1431, is in the hand of Shōtetsu, a disciple of Ryōshun.¹¹ Variant texts exist, but the differences are not major, and it is now generally agreed that the work was composed in the present order.¹² The title, derived from words in the brief introductory passage, also seems to date from Shōtetsu's time, but the present division of the text into a preface and 243 numbered episodes can be traced back only to the seventeenth century.

Essays in Idleness is now almost universally accepted as one of two Japanese masterpieces of the *zuihitsu* genre, along with *The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon*. The two works treat a wide variety of subjects, seemingly in no particular order, and both are distinguished by the unusual clarity of the author's observations. There are also many obvious differences: *The Pillow Book* was written by a court lady who delighted in every piece of gossip that came her way, but *Essays in Idleness* was by a Buddhist priest who, though much concerned with things of this world, was ultimately devoted to religious truth. Sei Shōnagon is often cruelly witty

2. The first person to identify Kenkō as the author was the priest Shōtetsu in his *Tales of Shōtetsu*. (See Hisamatsu Sen'ichi and Nishio Minoru, *Karon Shū, Nōgakuron Shū*, pp. 187–88, where Shōtetsu identifies a well-known passage from *Essays in Idleness* as being by Kenkō.) Shōtetsu also called attention to the fact that Kenkō, contrary to usual practice, kept his lay name Kaneyoshi when he became a priest, though he gave the characters their Sino-Japanese reading of Kenkō. See *ibid.* See also the translation by Robert H. Brower, *Conversations with Shōtetsu*, pp. 95–96. An excellent short account of the known biographical data of Kenkō is found in Fukuda Hideichi, *Chūsei Bungaku Ronkō*, pp. 248–50.
3. The date of his death was usually given as 1350, but documents have been discovered that prove he was alive as late as 1352. See Kubota, "*Tsurezuregusa*," p. 393.
4. A genealogy, derived from *Urabe-ke Keizu* and *Sompi Bummyaku*, is given by Nagazumi in his "Kaisetsu" to Kanda and Nagazumi, *Hōjōki, Tsurezuregusa*, p. 375.
5. It was traditionally believed that Kenkō became a priest after the death of the Emperor Gouda, whom he also served, but this theory is even less plausible: it is now clear that Kenkō entered orders eleven years before the death of Gouda in 1324. Kubota, in "*Tsurezuregusa*," pp. 379–80, gave further evidence why this view is unacceptable; but in 1967, when I wrote the introduction to my translation of *Essays in Idleness*, I repeated the traditional account, first presented by Shōtetsu in *Tales of Shōtetsu*. (See Hisamatsu and Nishio, *Karon Shū*, p. 188). Saitō Kiyoe in *Namboku-chō Jidai Bungaku Tsūshi* also gave this account, but noted (p. 21) that it was "not necessarily" established.
6. Translations of fourteen poems by Kenkō are given in Steven D. Carter, *Waiting for the Wind*, pp. 176–83.
7. Quoted by Kubota in "*Tsurezuregusa*," p. 387. Shōtetsu called him one of the "four heavenly kings" (*shitennō*) among the disciples of Nijō Tameyo, along with Ton'a, Keiun, and Jōben. (See Hisamatsu and Nishio, *Karon Shū*, p. 188.)
8. Kubota believed that this anecdote should not be dismissed out of hand as fiction: Kenkō's collected poems include some written on behalf of other people. See Kubota, "*Tsurezuregusa*," p. 391.
9. Carter (in *Waiting*, p. 178) gives a translation of a poem written by Kenkō while living within sight of Mount Fuji.
10. Sugimoto Hidetarō in *Tsurezuregusa* was at special pains to trace the continuity from one episode to the next. It had long been recognized that certain groups of episodes had mutual connections, and it was argued that no one except the author could have arranged the work in the present order, but Sugimoto was exceptional in the rigorousness with which he demonstrated the links between successive episodes.
11. This text is the one used by Kubota Jun in his annotated edition of the

- Shin Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei series. He notes in "*Tsurezuregusa*," p. 398 of Satake and Kubota, *Hōjōki*, that all other commentated editions have used the later text of Karasumaru Mitsuhiro (1579–1638).
12. See Fukuda, *Chūsei*, p. 251.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
14. From section 22. Text in Satake and Kubota, *Hōjōki*, p. 100. Translation is from my *Essays in Idleness*, p. 23.
15. From section 23. Text in Satake and Kubota, *Hōjōki*, p. 101. Translation in *Essays in Idleness*, p. 23.
16. Section 33. Satake and Kubota, *Hōjōki*, p. 111. Translation from *Essays in Idleness*, pp. 32–33. Sugimoto in *Tsurezuregusa*, pp. 77–82, discusses the function of this window, which served as a kind of peephole, and gives photographs of the window in the present Kyoto Goshō. Its shape was called *kushigata*, or "comb shape," because it looked like an old-fashioned Japanese comb, which resembles a half-moon.
17. Section 203. Satake and Kubota, *Hōjōki*, p. 276. Translation in *Essays in Idleness*, p. 170.
18. Section 204. Text in Satake and Kubota, *Hōjōki*, pp. 276–77. Translation in *Essays in Idleness*, p. 171.
19. Section 50. Text in Satake and Kubota, *Hōjōki*, pp. 126–27, except for the place-name Agui, which they render as Ago. Agui is given by Miki Sumito in *Tsurezuregusa*, II, p. 37. Translation from *Essays in Idleness*, pp. 43–44.
20. Ishida Yoshisada, *Inja no Bungaku*, p. 164.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Section 25. Text in Satake and Kubota, *Hōjōki*, p. 103. Translation from *Essays in Idleness*, p. 25.
23. Section 55. Text in Satake and Kubota, *Hōjōki*, p. 133. Translation from *Essays in Idleness*, pp. 50–51.
24. Section 10. Text in Satake and Kubota, *Hōjōki*, pp. 86–87. Translation from *Essays in Idleness*, p. 10.
25. Section 82. Text in Satake and Kubota, *Hōjōki*, pp. 158–59. Text in *Essays in Idleness*, pp. 70–71.
26. For a further discussion of this point, see my *Landscapes and Portraits*, pp. 18–20; also, my *Pleasures of Japanese Literature*, pp. 10–13.
27. Section 137. Text in Satake and Kubota, *Hōjōki*, pp. 212–24. Translation from *Essays in Idleness*, pp. 115–18.
28. For further meditations on this theme, see my *Pleasures*, pp. 8–10.
29. Adashino was the name of a graveyard in Kyoto. The word *adashi* (impermanent) contained in the place-name accounted for the frequent mention of Adashino in poetry as a symbol of impermanence. The dew was also used with that meaning. Toribeyama is still the chief graveyard of Kyoto. Mention of smoke indicates that bodies were cremated there.
30. Section 7. Text in Satake and Kubota, *Hōjōki*, p. 83. Translation from *Essays in Idleness*, p. 7.

ame kaze wo In the mountain shade
morogoe ni kiku He hears the mingled voices
yamagakure Of the rain and wind.

Shinkei, over a hundred years later (in 1468), added this verse:

ki naru ha wa The yellowing leaves
sono no kozue ni On treetops in the garden
*saki ochite*⁶⁷ Are the first to fall.

Kyūsei's *tsukeku* is at once the simplest and the most effective of the three. Mention of *semi* (cicadas) in the *maeku* evoked the association of *semi-shigure*, a dinning of cicadas that was synesthetically compared to a drizzling rain (*shigure*), and this led Kyūsei to think of rain itself; from rain his thoughts moved to mountain water. Together with the *maeku*, Kyūsei's *tsukeku* means something like: "Are those cicadas singing off where the pine trees grow? No, it is a mountain stream flowing through the pine forest, its sound like rain or perhaps like 'cicada rain.'"

Shūa was even more ingenious. Mention of pines (*matsu*) in the *maeku* evoked for him the association with pine wind (*matsukaze*), and *semi* with *semi-shigure* (as it did for Kyūsei as well). But he added a new subject to the sequence, someone living in solitude in the shade of a mountain who listens to the varied "voices" of the rain and wind. Shūa managed to carry over in his *tsukeku* both images of the *maeku*—the pines (represented by the pine wind) and the cicadas (represented by the "cicada rain")—and even added a human element. Such virtuosity appealed to his contemporaries, but it brought on him the charge of superficial ingenuity from some modern commentators.⁶⁸

Shinkei's *tsukeku* was inspired by a phrase in a Chinese poem contained in *Wakan Rōei Shū*, "Cicadas sing in the yellow leaves."⁶⁹ Shinkei explained, however, "The cicadas had been singing in the leaves of the autumn trees, but after the leaves fell, they moved to the pines." He admitted that he was not entirely pleased with his own verse, but blamed this on the *maeku*, saying it was so ungraceful he could not possibly add a decent *tsukeku*.

It is not hard to imagine why ingenuity of Shūa's kind should have been popular in his day and afterward, or why more traditional renga masters resented this popularity. His style was bitterly attacked years later by Shinkei, the haughtiest of the renga masters, who likened the debasement of the art of renga by Shūa and his followers to the triumph

of the fiendish Chinese emperors Chieh and Chou over the virtuous Yao and Shun.⁷⁰

During the transitional period from 1388 until the middle of the fifteenth century, there were few poets of significance, and the art threatened to revert to its origins as a literary game; but this long slump was followed by an extraordinary revival of renga composition and works of renga criticism. Perhaps the badness of the bad period was exaggerated by the poets of the revival who, pleased with their own consecration to the art of renga, were harsh when they discussed their predecessors. Shinkei, for example, wrote of Bontō (1349–1425?),⁷¹ a military man who, though originally a pupil of Yoshimoto, had been much influenced by Shūa, "Bontō's verses overlook the heart of the preceding links; his only concern is to make his own verses interesting."⁷²

Shinkei's comment was surprising in view of Bontō's expressed views on the subject: "The previous verse is to renga what the topic is to a waka. . . . However hard one many try to compose a waka, if one has a poor grasp of the topic, many errors will result, and what one writes will not be a waka. With renga, too, if one does not have a good idea how to attach one's link to the previous verse it will not be renga."⁷³ Bontō's chief fault in the eyes of his successors may have been that he left the capital and the pursuit of renga for about twenty years, beginning in his fifties when he took the tonsure as a Buddhist priest. During this time he roamed in various parts of the country. When eventually he returned to the capital about 1420 and attempted to resume his life as a renga poet, his compositions were severely criticized, perhaps because his style had remained intact while the style of poets in the capital had undergone many changes.⁷⁴ Shinkei again and again wrote in unfriendly terms about "country people" (*inaka hotori no hito*), contrasting their simplistic understanding of renga with his own profound commitment to the art. Perhaps that was the reason why he wrote disparagingly of Bontō, at least some of the time.

It is hard to date the revival of renga, but it could be argued that it began in 1452 when Ichijō Kaneyoshi, the grandson of Nijō Yoshimoto, collaborated with the renga master Takayama Sōzei (c. 1386–1455) to produce *Shinshiki Kon'an* (New Views on the New Rules), a revision of Yoshimoto's code of renga composition of 1372. In Steven D. Carter's words, "These new rules became the basis for serious renga composition throughout the latter part of the fifteenth century."⁷⁵ Most of the new rules consist of additions to the various categories established by Yoshimoto; for example, under the category of "Things That May Appear as Many as Four Times in a Hundred-Link Sequence," Kaneyoshi

added: "Shrine (twice in the context of Shintō, twice meaning 'imperial residence.' But one of these instances should involve a Famous Place)."⁷⁶ Such changes in the rules undoubtedly meant more to renga poets than we can easily appreciate, but far more important than *what* Kaneyoshi changed was the fact that the highest official in the country was actively interested in renga composition. The patronage given to the art by such a man earned for Kaneyoshi the reputation of being a second Yoshimoto, though he was by no means so distinguished a poet, and renga composition again assumed a dominant role in the literary society of the time.

Kaneyoshi's career in many ways parallels that of his grandfather. Born into the highest rank of the aristocracy, he became minister of the interior at the age of nineteen, minister of the Right at twenty-two, and kampaku at forty-five. As a young man he displayed considerable talent for waka composition, and his learning was also exceptional for the time. He wrote both the Japanese and Chinese prefaces to the last imperial collection of waka, *Shin Shokukokinshū* (1439). Kaneyoshi also served many times as the judge of poem competitions, but none of his own waka or his criticism of other people's is read today; his standard of excellence was the work of Fujiwara Teika, and he was convinced that any deviation from Teika's views was heresy. He is remembered as a man of impressive scholarship, but not as a poet.

Kaneyoshi produced a large number of books, including important studies of the Heian classics, most notably *Kachō Yojō* (Overtones of Flowers and Birds, 1472), a commentary on *The Tale of Genji*. He delivered lectures to the nobility at his house from 1444 on *The Tale of Genji* and other Heian texts. Unlike earlier commentators, who had confined their explanations to items of vocabulary, Kaneyoshi gave ample consideration to the meaning of whole passages in the text, profiting by his exceptional knowledge of court ceremonial and precedents to clarify customs that had become obscure in the centuries since Murasaki's time. His views on *The Tale of Genji* are no longer of much interest, but his advocacy of the work greatly contributed to its popularity during the Muromachi period.

It is not clear when Kaneyoshi first became interested in renga composition, but probably it was after meeting Sōzei, his future collaborator. Sōzei, originally of the samurai class, had served the powerful Yamana family in the province of Tajima, and he maintained these connections until the end of his life, even though in the meanwhile he had become a priest on Mount Kōya.⁷⁷ He studied waka with Shōtetsu and renga with Bontō, and demonstrated proficiency in both. In par-

ticular, the renga he composed during sessions held in 1445 attracted such favorable attention that three years later the shogun, Ashikaga Yoshinori, named him the "administrator of the renga meeting place" (*kaisho bugyō*) at the Kitano Shrine,⁷⁸ and also "renga teacher" (*renga sōshō*), the highest positions a renga poet could obtain.⁷⁹ It was probably after he received this recognition that Sōzei went to visit Kaneyoshi.

The combination of these two men—a gifted poet and the outstanding intellectual of the day—ensured that a revival of renga could occur under the most favorable conditions, but they were not together for long. Sōzei left the capital in 1454 after Yamana Sōzen, whose troops had fought against the shogun, was ordered to retire to his domain in Tajima. Sōzei followed his protector into exile, where he died the following year.

Sōzei's renga, though enhanced by the *yūgen* he had learned from Shōtetsu, is not so highly regarded today, mainly because of its ingenuity, suggesting that renga was still something of a game for him. The following *tsukeku* typifies his art:

<i>ura ka omote ka</i>	Is it inside or outside?
<i>koromo to mo nashi</i>	Maybe a cloak, perhaps not.

<i>shinonome no</i>	In the faint glimmer
<i>ashita no yama no</i>	As day breaks on the mountain,
<i>usugasumi</i> ⁸⁰	A pale swathe of mist.

Sōzei's *tsukeku* interprets the "cloak" of the *maeku* as mist that seems to clothe the mountain at daybreak, when there is still not enough light to discern whether one sees the outside or the lining of the "cloak." The *maeku* is extremely vague, and it was clever of Sōzei to make sense of it by identifying the cloak as early morning mist, but there is little depth in such a verse. All the same, Sōzei supplied a necessary link in the chain of poets from Kyūsei to the masters of the 1460s and 1470s. Shinkei praised Sōzei, along with Chiun (d. 1448), as "masters the likes of whom will probably not be born for another two or three hundred years,"⁸¹ and credited the two men with the revival of renga in recent years;⁸² but he also criticized Sōzei in these terms:

If one examines his poetry carefully, one will see that for all his devotion to the art, he was a man of the mundane world through and through. He was a warrior by disposition, and grew up surrounded day and night by the crudities of the world of soldiers and

weapons. He had absolutely no conception of the transience and changes of the world, no inclination to study and practice the Buddhist Law. Perhaps because he lacked even a particle of such interest, his skill was entirely technical, and there is no imagination, no overtones, no compassion in his verses. He composed not one decent love poem, but only crude verses that are absolutely devoid of *ushin* or *yūgen*. Shōtetsu frequently said the same thing.⁸³

Shinkei's feelings toward Sōzei, a man who long had enjoyed the protection of a warlord, may also have been influenced by the disgust he felt on witnessing the destruction of the capital by the military during the Ōnin War. Shinkei wrote the first of the three letters that make up *Tokorodokoro Hentō* (Replies to This and That) in 1466, the year before the war actually broke out, and the last in 1470, at the height of the fighting. He fled the capital in 1468 and did not return until 1473.

The archetypal figure of the intellectual during the Ōnin War was Ichijō Kaneyoshi. Although he had known only the privileged life of an aristocrat until this time, he was suddenly faced with danger and even, for a time, with starvation. In his *Fude no Susabi* (The Consolation of the Brush), written in 1469 when he was living in Nara as a refugee from the warfare with his son, the abbot of a temple, he described the destruction of his most valuable possession, the library that had been passed down in his family for generations:

Every single one of all the temples in the East Hills and West Hills that had stood, a perfect beehive of roof-tiles ranged alongside roof-tiles, was set afire and destroyed, and now not a blade of green grass was left, only clouds blotting out the whole. If one looks into the cause of what has happened, it is clear that it was nothing that should have developed into such a disturbance. People who yesterday were as close as father and son today tried to kill each other, behaving as if they were confronting tigers or wolves. . . . The time had come for the destruction of the Buddhist Law and the temporal law, and it seemed as though the merciful gods of the various heavens had exhausted their power to help. Now that it had become a struggle between dragons and tigers, the fighting would not quiet down until both friends and enemies had perished. . . . For a time I found a place to stay in the area of Kujō, where I pondered all that had happened, but before long the place went up in smoke and was left an ashen wasteland. My library, probably because the building was roofed with tiles and had earthen walls, managed to escape the

flames, but bandits of the neighborhood, supposing that there must be money inside, soon broke their way in. They scattered the hundreds of boxes that had been the haunt of bookworms, and not one volume was left of all the Japanese and Chinese works that had been passed down in my family for over ten generations. I felt exactly like an old crane forced to leave its nest, or a blind man who has lost his stick. And as for *renga*, I had always regretted that no collection preserved the works that had been composed since the *Tsukuba Shū*, and I had made up my mind to collect as many compositions of recent times as came to my attention. I gave this manuscript the title of *Shingyoku Shū*⁸⁴ and had begun to copy out the text in twenty volumes. But this, too, was scattered somewhere, and I have no idea where it might be now.⁸⁵

Kaneyoshi remained in exile a total of ten years, five of them in Nara. He resigned as *kampaku* in 1470, and spent his time writing and lecturing on the classics. This was his most productive period as a writer, and because of his presence, Nara, which for centuries had been largely deserted except by priests, became the cultural center of the whole country. Many nobles, escaping from the war-torn capital, went to join Kaneyoshi in Nara, and he, freed from his duties at court and enjoying the comforts of the great monastery Kōfuku-ji, devoted himself to the study of *The Tale of Genji* and other classics, corrected examples of *renga* sent to him, wrote prefaces to other people's books, and kept up a lively correspondence. During his years of exile he was helped materially by the *renga* master Sōgi, whom he had earlier befriended. It was ironic that Kaneyoshi, a member of a most distinguished noble family, should have depended on Sōgi, a man of the humblest origins, but such shifts in fortunes were not uncommon during an age characterized as *gekokuujō*, those underneath conquering those above.

It would be easier to sympathize with Kaneyoshi had he not been such an extremely vain man. He compared himself to Sugawara no Michizane, pointing out three respects in which he was superior to the god of literature.⁸⁶ His achievements did not confirm he was entitled to such an honor, though he was clearly the outstanding scholar of the age and, it might be argued, the last high-ranking aristocrat to contribute significantly to the creation of Japanese literature.

SHINKEI (1406–1475)

Shinkei, though he has not enjoyed the fame of Sōgi, his younger contemporary, was one of the two or three finest renga poets of all time. He came from samurai stock, but entered the Buddhist priesthood as a small child and spent the rest of his life in orders, rising eventually to the high rank of acting archbishop (*gonsōzu*). His early literary training was in the waka, which he studied with Shōtetsu. He later recalled that when Shōtetsu died in 1459, “Although I had served him day and night for thirty years, I could not remember a single thing he had said and had never achieved the smallest degree of enlightenment. Now that my teacher was no more, I felt like stamping my feet in vexation.”⁸⁷ This statement was presumably an example of self-effacing modesty: Shinkei’s poetry, both waka and renga, showed how much he had in fact benefited by Shōtetsu’s guidance.⁸⁸ But the death of Shōtetsu apparently convinced Shinkei that the waka was also dead; he wrote,

In recent times the art of the waka has been completely abandoned, and I therefore thought I would try to study and clarify this art of the renga as sincerely as I could, in the hope that I might embody in renga at least some fragments of the teachings of waka, soften the hearts of soldiers and rustics, and transmit its feelings to people of later ages.⁸⁹

It is not clear with whom Shinkei studied renga, but as early as 1433 he was taking part in such events as the ten-thousand-link renga offered at the Kitano Shrine under the sponsorship of Ashikaga Yoshinori. In 1447 Shinkei, along with several outstanding renga poets of the day (including Sōzei and Chiun), composed the *Anegakōji Imashimmei Hyakūin* (One Hundred Verses Composed at the Imashimmei Shrine in Anegakōji).⁹⁰

There are gaps of many years separating the known events in Shinkei’s poetic career. Perhaps they were occasioned by the ill health of which he early complained, or it may be that his priestly duties kept him from composing poetry. In 1463 Shinkei wrote his best-known work of criticism, *Sasamegoto* (Whisperings),⁹¹ which established his importance among the renga poets of the day. His chief contribution to renga was the Buddhist religiosity that he brought to a previously secular art.

Sasamegoto is cast in a familiar form of renga criticism, the question and answer. Probably Shinkei composed not only the answers but the questions. A typical section discusses the importance of *yūgen*, a critical

term in the appreciation of renga. The overall meaning of this difficult section seems to be that true *yūgen*—that is to say, true beauty of expression—is not a surface manifestation, as people of Shinkei’s day supposed, but lies in the heart of the poet. It is difficult to find equivalents for Shinkei’s key terms, and in the following passage I have had to translate certain Japanese words in several quite different ways:

Question. Is it correct to keep the style of *yūgen* central in one’s mind as one cultivates this art?

Answer. People of the past used to say that *yūgen* should pervade the form [*sugata*] of every verse. It is the most essential thing for anyone who practices the art. However, what people in the past understood by *yūgen* would seem to be far removed from what most people today suppose it means. People of the past seem to have considered that the heart was where the most important aspects of *yūgen* were to be found, but most people today think it refers to a gentility of surface [*sugata*]. Perfect beauty [*en*] is difficult to achieve within one’s heart [*kokoro*]. Many people try to improve their external appearance, but only the solitary individual can improve his mind [*kokoro*]. That is why the poems which the people of the past considered to be in the *yūgen* style are not easy to understand these days.⁹²

The word *kokoro*, as always, is difficult, corresponding to both mind and heart in English. *Sugata* usually means “form,” but in poetic criticism often is closer to “overall tone.” *Yūgen* varied in meaning with the time and the person who used the term; the characters with which the word is written literally mean “mysterious darkness,” but often *yūgen* meant “charm” or “elegance” rather than anything more profound. Not all of Shinkei’s pronouncements are so hard to translate, but he was a difficult poet and critic and demanded the most of all who practiced the art of renga, as the following may suggest:

Question: Why is it that the verses by a poet who has attained the highest realm of expression should become increasingly difficult to understand?

Answer. Our predecessors have discussed this matter. It is to be expected that ordinary people who have ears only for the verse that has just been linked should find it difficult to understand the mind of a man for whom the study and practice [of this art] involve not disregarding the meaning of every previous verse and every single

particle. He keeps the whole of the hundred links in mind, constantly going back and forth, considering links that skip a verse [*uchikoshi*] or repeat an earlier theme [*tōrin'e*], and he gives careful thought even to the link that the next man is likely to append to his own verse.⁹³

Obviously, it was beyond the average practitioner of renga to follow the example of the master conjured up by Shinkei in this section of his work. Only a person who devoted his every faculty to the art with a consecration no less than that devoted to a religion could satisfy Shinkei's description of a master of renga. His study of Zen philosophy led him to demand exalted ideals for the art that went far beyond the lyrical impulses of earlier masters or the pleasure in the game that probably still induced people to take part in renga sessions. Shinkei often discussed renga in Buddhist or Confucian terms, citing the "ten virtues" or the "seven treasures" of the art, or tracing parallels between the three bodies of the Buddha and the three kinds of understanding of renga.⁹⁴

The effect of such prescriptions was to impart to renga a forbidding dignity and grandeur. It is unlikely that people of his time understood his purpose. The renga composed at the court still contained a strong element of play, and Shinkei seems not to have participated in more than a handful of official sessions. Unlike Sōzei, Shūa, Sōgi, and various other renga masters, he was never appointed as the Kitano "administrator" of renga. In short, he seems to have been relatively little known in his own time.⁹⁵ For his part, Shinkei had only contempt for the rank and file of amateur renga poets. In *Sasamegato* he used the words "country people" as a term of abuse, and *tomogara* (the masses) was equally pejorative. When queried about the belief, common in China (and in Europe), that great poetry should be intelligible even to a peasant, his answer was unambiguous:

Someone asked, "They say that a waka or renga accords with the true way of poetry when it is enjoyable even to the humblest, most barbarous peasant. What do you think of that?"

No art worthy of the name is intelligible to persons of shallow understanding who have not mastered it. No doubt even the most untalented and ignorant person may be pleased by closely related verses⁹⁶ and a banal style, but it is inconceivable that anyone only vaguely familiar with the art could understand poetry of an elevated and profoundly beautiful nature.⁹⁷

By Shinkei's time the history of renga was long enough for him to be able, like Teika prescribing the correct way to learn waka, to urge renga poets to learn from the masters of the past. Without study of the old models, he asserted, it is impossible to become an accomplished poet. On the other hand, study of the wrong models permanently impairs a poet. Shinkei told the story of a man who asked a famous *shakuhachi* player to admit him as his pupil. "Can you already play the shakuhachi?" the master asked. The would-be pupil replied, "I have practiced a little." To this the master responded, "Then I can't teach you." Shinkei concluded, "From this one may see that it is impossible to straighten a mind that has once entered an incorrect path, however briefly."⁹⁸

Shinkei's preference in waka was for the style of the *Shin Kokinshū*, not too surprising in a pupil of Shōtetsu's. He recalled that Shōtetsu had often said, "It is true that I studied with Lord [Reizei] Tamehide and [Imagawa] Ryōshun, but in waka I look to the hearts of Teika and Jichin for direct guidance. I feel no nostalgia for the worn-out remnants of the Nijō and Reizei schools."⁹⁹ Shinkei, looking back on the period of the *Shin Kokinshū*, felt it was a time of prodigies, when waka poetry "fell into place." "It was indeed an age when Buddha himself appeared in the world of this art. [The poets included] the Emperor Gotoba, Fujiwara no Yoshitsune, the priest Jichin, Shunzei, Teika, Ietaka, Saigyō, Jakuren. And among the poets of recent times, the 'bones' [*fūkotsu*] of Shōtetsu provide the best model for the careful study and practice of this art."¹⁰⁰

Shinkei made little distinction between the waka and renga; his reason for devoting himself mainly to renga was, he wrote on several occasions, because the art of waka was neglected in his time. He considered renga not (as some renga poets did) as an independent art that had its own ancient roots, but as the appropriate form of poetry for an age that was sadly unlike the ages of the past when waka had flourished.

The qualities that most attracted Shinkei to the poetry of the *Shin Kokinshū* or of the Chinese masters was what he called *take takaku hiekhōri*, literally, "lofty and chilled to ice." Loftiness is an easily recognized ideal, but the chill of poetry, as opposed to warmth, has not often been espoused. Shinkei explained this conception in the following terms:

The greatest of the Chinese poets, Tu Fu, during the course of his lifetime composed poems only about his grief, and it may be said that his life was one of grief. Hsü Hün during his whole career composed poems only about water, three thousand of them. Truly,

there is nothing so deeply moving, so cool and refreshing as water. At mention of "the waters of spring" one's heart becomes relaxed and a vision comes before one's eyes, somehow moving. In summer at the source of pure water, near a spring, the water is chilly and cold. At the words "the waters of autumn" the heart becomes chilled and clear. And nothing is so exquisite as ice. Again, is it not delightful, exquisitely beautiful, when of a morning a harvested field is coated with a thin sheet of ice, when icicles hang by cypress-bark eaves, or when the dew and frost on the grasses and trees in a withered field have turned to ice?¹⁰¹

Shinkei's literary preferences are otherwise stated in *Sasamegoto*: "This Way takes evanescence and lamentation as the aim of both word and heart."¹⁰² Shinkei's poetry is prevailingly dark. The austerity of expression—the iciness, to use his word—grew naturally from his love of the poetry of the *Shin Kokinshū* and of Shōtetsu. It reflected his Buddhist conviction of the sadness and transience of the world, and may also have been fostered by his dislike of the frivolous or overly ingenious renga of his immediate predecessors; but increasingly it seemed to be a judgment on the age in which he lived. In the fourth month of 1467, shortly before the outbreak of the Ōnin War, he left the capital on what he supposed would be a journey of a few months at most, but by the time he reached Shinagawa, outside the newly created town of Edo, the warfare in the capital had become so intense that he abandoned all thought of returning. In the years that followed, up until his death in 1475, he lived mainly in the area of Edo. In 1468 he wrote *Hitorigoto* (Talking to Myself), a book of renga criticism that is interesting for the autobiographical elements, especially his account of the fighting he had witnessed.

In Edo he continued to compose both waka and renga, participating on several occasions in gatherings sponsored by the local military, including Ōta Dōkan (1432–1486), whose castle at Edo, built in 1457, is considered to have formed the nucleus of the city now called Tokyo. Much of Shinkei's time seems to have been spent bringing the civilizing art of poetry to the local warriors—soothing their fierce spirits, in the old phrase. The terrible warfare of the period had at least this one compensation: poets who were obliged to flee from the capital came to make their living by teaching renga to uncultured military men, thereby spreading to the provinces the culture that had been confined to the capital. The craze for composing renga extended to every part of the country; and even in the capital, where the emperor and the shogun

Ashikaga Yoshimasa did their best to forget that people were being killed and houses destroyed a few steps away, the craze raged unabated during the worst of the fighting. Most of the renga composed was of the mushin, or unliterary, style. Shinkei did not relish this development:

The renga I have heard recently in country districts have none of the earmarks of a disciplined, conscious art. The poets seem to be in a state of utter confusion.

Yes, one might say that ever since such amateurs have grown so numerous, the art of writing noble, deeply felt poetry seems to have become extinct. Renga has become nothing more than a glib chattering, and all mental discipline has vanished without a trace. That is why when one passes along the roads or the marketplaces one's ears are assailed by the sounds of thousand-verse or ten-thousand-verse compositions, and even the rare persons who have some real acquaintance with the art use this knowledge solely as a means of earning a living. Day after day, night after night, they engage in indiscriminate composition together. Our times would seem to correspond to the age of stultification and final decline of the art. . . . Renga is in such a state that neither Buddha nor Confucius nor Hitomaro can save it.¹⁰³

Shinkei's contributions to renga stand apart from the mainstream of fifteenth-century composition.¹⁰⁴ Although he was devoted to the principles of renga and did not consciously violate the rules, his verses are marked by an individuality that is rare in renga. Konishi wrote that in any renga sequence in which Shinkei took part, his verses stand out and leave a special impression; if one concealed the names of the authors, only Shinkei's verses would be identifiable. He stated, "I believe that Shinkei's stanzas are of unmatched greatness. Sōgi also writes outstanding stanzas, but if one considers stanzas alone, it is Shinkei's that one would judge to excel by the profound effect they have on us."¹⁰⁵

Individuality was not prized as such by renga masters. Perfect conformity to the rules, grace of language, richness of overtones—the importance of these and other qualities was stressed in contemporary discussions of renga, but the renga masters seem never to have considered it desirable for the participating poets to speak with distinctive voices. Shinkei once stated, "The supreme renga is like a drink of plain boiled water. It has no particular flavor, but one never wearies of it, no matter when one tastes it."¹⁰⁶ Surely he did not intend his verses to stand out from the others, but his perceptions of the world had greater depth and