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TANNISHO p. 7

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Tannishō

歎異抄

Introduction

“Tannishō” is a book that condenses the doctrine of Shinran (1173–1262), an outstanding religionist of the Kamakura Period (1192–1332) and the founder of Jōdo Shin-shū Buddhism. Although it is a small pamphlet, it occupies a very important position among the writings of Japanese Buddhism. The author is presumably Yuien, a man from Hitachi Province (now Ibaraki Prefecture), who closely attended Shinran in his later years. Yuien wrote this pamphlet, as he stated in its introduction, about 30 years after Shinran’s death in order to convey the truth of his teacher’s doctrine and to criticize the heretical teachings that diverged from Shinran’s thoughts. Shinran himself wrote many books, including *Kyō Gyō Shin Shō* (his main work), *Yui Shin Shō Bun I*, *Jōdo Monrui Jushō*, and *Gotoku Shō*. “Tannishō,” although written by one of his disciples, has been not only extensively read as an elementary text of the belief of Shinran for both believers and scholars but also has entered the canon of Jōdo Shin-shū.

The greatest reason for this is probably the fact that Shinran’s thoughts on faith are conveyed accurately through sentences that waste no words. The first half (chapters 1–9) of “Tannishō,” especially, a collection of the teacher’s words remaining at the bottom of his disciple’s ears, is so vivid that the reader feels that he is listening to Shinran himself. Shinran’s teachings were the leading voice

for Yuien, and it seems that Yuien made his best efforts in his work to convey his teacher's doctrine correctly, with careful polish and improvement. But he by no means adopted methods in which his master's teachings were demonstrated from the viewpoint of Buddhist dogmatics. The author insists earnestly that these are Shinran's teachings, living as they actually were in the memory of his disciples. This does not seem to mean that the oral teachings of his master were merely transcribed word for word. It probably indicates that Shinran's teachings are conveyed correctly because they have with difficulty been prepared for the written form and thus represent a readable distillation of the author's religious experience. Perhaps this is the secret of the pamphlet's popularity.

Jōdo Shin-shū, commonly referred to as Shin-shū or the Shin Sect, is the largest Buddhist sect in Japan, with 14 million believers and 20,000 temples. The principal doctrine of Jōdo Shin-shū, compared with the more conservative Jōdo (Pure Land) Buddhist teachings, puts relatively little emphasis on repetition of the Nenbutsu. Salvation is seen as coming *solely* from the grace of the buddha Amida, in whom one's faith should be placed. The grace of Amida, which is the heart of Jōdo Shin-shū belief, was promised by the buddha Amida in his Eighteenth Vow:

If, after my attaining buddhahood, all beings in the ten quarters should not desire in sincerity and trustfulness to be born in my country and if they should not be born by only thinking of me . . . , except those who have committed the Five Great Offences and those who are abusive of the true Dharma, may I not attain the Highest Enlightenment.

This is the Original Vow. Shinran interpreted this to mean that salvation did not depend upon discipline or formulas. It had already been promised by Amida. And thus the significance of the Nenbutsu, which originally meant "to meditate on the Buddha," changed. In the older teachings of the Jōdo Sect, the term refers to the invocation of the name of Amida by the formula, "*Namu Amida-butsu*" (I dedicate to the buddha Amida), in order to be reborn in Amida's

Pure Land. In Jōdo Shin-shū, the Nenbutsu became a prayer of gratitude for what had already been given. The sect gave up the ancient Buddhist discipline that all sects at that time retained. Shinran allowed its priests to marry, eat meat, and live as laymen, as he himself did. At the time it marked a complete break with the past, although it is now a prevalent custom for priests in all of the Buddhist sects of Japan.

Shinran was born in a village near the capital, Kyōto, in the 3rd year of the Shōan Era (1173), the son of Hino Arinori, a distinguished noble and a kinsman of the Fujiwara family. His childhood name was Matsuwaka-maru. He lost his parents when he was still young. At the age of 8 he went to Enryaku-ji temple on Mt. Hiei and entered the Buddhist priesthood under a high priest of the Tendai Sect called Jien. At that time he was given the Buddhist name of Hannen. From then, he made great efforts in his studies at that center of Buddhist dogmatics for 20 years.

Yet, he was not satisfied. He was conscious of the sin and helplessness that essentially clung to human existence and realized from the depths of his heart that the scholastic Buddhism that then existed could scarcely bring peace to his mind. In 1201 he left the mountain temple and confined himself in Rokkaku-dō, a temple of the Tendai Sect in Kyōto, for a hundred days. Then he met Hōnen (1133–1212), who was preaching the doctrine of the Nenbutsu at a hermitage in Higashiyama, Kyōto. When he heard Hōnen lecture, the 28-year-old Shinran realized that he had finally found in those teachings the very truth that he had been seeking.

Six years later, in 1207, he was exiled to a place in Echigo Province (now Niigata Prefecture) because of the slander of the priests of Mt. Hiei. He was divested of his priesthood and given the secular name of Fujii Yoshizane. It was around this time that he married Tamahi, a Buddhist nun. It was a shocking act at the time. Shinran was pardoned in 1211, but he did not return to Kyōto. Instead, he determined to stay in the rural districts propagating the teachings. At that time he called himself Gutoku Shinran. He did

not return to Kyōto until 1235. In 1262, at the Zenbō-in in Kyōto, he died, at the age of 89.

It is generally said that Hōnen was the founder of the Jōdo Sect and that Shinran was the founder of Jōdo Shin-shū. But Shinran himself in his remarks on Jōdo Shin-shū understood it to be the teaching of Hōnen. During his life he kept the consciousness that he was one of Hōnen's faithful disciples. In all things there were important differences between the master's and the disciple's belief, although the religion of both is sometimes generically called the Nenbutsu Sect. For example, Hōnen thought of the Nenbutsu as indispensable to the attainment of *ōjō-jōdo* ("go and be born," passing to the next world and the Pure Land) and thought of it as a *gyō* (a practice of religious austerity), while Shinran did not think that the very action of invoking the Nenbutsu would come about by his own efforts. According to Shinran, when a person, even though he is a very sinful man, believes that he is rescued by the saving power of the Original Vow (Hongan) of the buddha Amida and that the *ōjō-jōdo* of the next world in the transmigration of the soul has been determined for him, then the words gush naturally out of his mouth as a gift of Amida. The Nenbutsu comes from gratitude as a return for Amida's mercy, and it is not the indispensable condition for salvation. Here lies the "absolute salvation from without" that characterizes Shinran's belief.

The 12th and 13th centuries in which Shinran spent his days were a great turning point in the history of Japan, as administrative power moved from the declining nobility to the rising class of warriors. This period was also a great turning point in the history of Buddhism, the greatest reformation since Buddhism was introduced into Japan in the 6th century. Through it, a genuine Japanese Buddhism called Kamakura Buddhism by historians was born. Eminent founders made their appearance. Among them were Dōgen (1200–1253), the founder of the Sōtō (Zen) Sect in Japan; Nichiren (1222–1282), the founder of the Hokke (Nichiren) Sect; and Shinran, whose teachings are embodied in "Tannishō."

Translator's Note: "Tannishō" has come down in various manuscripts. The basic text for this translation was the Ōtani-bon manuscript, which was made in the Muromachi Period (1338–1573) and is now in the possession of Ōtani University. *Tannishō Shin Chū* (A New Commentary on Tannishō) (Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 1976) by Dr. Taya Yoritoshi was referred to in writing the footnotes. For further information on Jōdo Shin-shū, see "Sin and Divine Grace in Pure Land Buddhism" by Dr. Nakamura Hajime (THE EAST, May, 1975).

Text

When I privately compare the past and the present, pondering them with my poor thoughts, I deplore the fact that some of the current teachings are different from the true belief taught orally by our late master, and I am afraid that later students might encounter some doubts and difficulties when they try to inherit the true belief. Without the fortune of being led by a true teacher, how can one enter the single gate of easy practice?¹ One should not, because of one's own views and understanding, distort the doctrine of the Other Power.² Therefore, I shall write down some of the sayings of the late Shinran Shōnin, those which have been impressed deeply on my memory. This is simply for the purpose of clearing up the doubts of followers with the same heart. *Et cetera.*

(1) He said:³

The moment an intention to chant the Nenbutsu occurs to us in the belief that we shall go and be born [into the Pure Land], saved by the wonder of the Vow of Mida [Amida], he has already given us the benefit of taking us in, never again to abandon us. The Original Vow of Mida makes no discrimination between the old and the young or between the righteous and the wicked. We should know that belief is the only thing that is needed because the Vow was for the purpose of saving all of us who are heavily burdened with heavy,

¹ *Igyō*, the doctrine of attaining rebirth in the Pure Land by relying on the vow of Amida. "The single gate of easy practice" is often used as a synonym for Jōdo Buddhism. The opposite of *igyō* is *nangyō*, the difficult practice in which one attains enlightenment by one's own efforts.

² *Tariki*, rebirth in the Pure Land through complete reliance on the power and grace of Amida (the Other). Contrasted to *jiriki*, self-power, rebirth through one's own efforts in the practice of a discipline or good works.

³ This phrase serves as a kind of verbal quotation mark. In this case, "he" refers to Shinran.

evil passions and sins. Therefore, in believing in the Original Vow, no other good is needed, because no other good can compare with the Nenbutsu. Evil should not be feared, because there is no evil that can hinder Mida's Original Vow.

(2) He said:

The reason each of you has come here across the borders of more than ten provinces, even at the risk of your lives, is only to inquire into the way of going and being born into the Land of Utmost Happiness.⁴ However, if you want to know some other way of going and being born besides the Nenbutsu or want to know about the doctrines and commentaries, thinking that I have some profound knowledge, you are making a grave mistake. If that is what you want, there are many great scholars in the southern capital and on the northern mountain,⁵ and you should meet them and inquire into many essential elements concerning going to be born. I, Shinran, have received instructions from the Good Man⁶ to simply chant the Nenbutsu and be saved by Mida. There is nothing besides this belief.

Is the Nenbutsu the seed of birth into the Pure Land, or is it the deed that causes us to fall into hell? I know nothing about that kind of thing. Even if I have been deceived by Hōnen Shōnin⁷ and fall into hell chanting the Nenbutsu, I would never regret it. If, however, I could have become a buddha by some other practice and fell into hell because of chanting the Nenbutsu, I might have regretted having been deceived. But since every practice is beyond my reach, hell

⁴ Gokuraku, "Utmost Joy," from a Chinese translation of the Sanskrit "Sukhāvātī," the Pure Land of Amida.

⁵ Nara and Mt. Hiei north of Kyōto, respectively. These two areas were the ecclesiastical and scholarly centers of their time.

⁶ Hōnen, Shinran's master.

⁷ "Shōnin" 上人 literally means "superior man" but came to be used as a respectful title for revered religious leaders, particularly in the Jōdo and Nichiren sects. The "shōnin" 聖人 often used after Shinran's name means "saint" or "holy man," a title given to a priest of high rank.

would definitely be my dwelling place in any event. If the Original Vow of Mida is true, then the teachings of Shakuson [the historical Buddha] cannot be false.⁸ If Buddha's teachings are true, Zendō's⁹ commentaries cannot be false. If Zendō's commentaries are true, how can the words of Hōnen be false? If the words of Hōnen are true, couldn't it be that what I, Shinran, say can't be false either? After all is said, this idiot's¹⁰ belief is like this. Now, it is entirely up to each of you whether you accept and believe in the Nenbutsu or reject it.

(3) Even the righteous go and are born [into the Pure Land]. How not the wicked? Nevertheless, the ordinary people of this world usually say, "Even the wicked go and are born, how not the righteous?"¹¹ This passage seems reasonable at first sight, but it really runs counter to the spirit of the Original Vow and Other Power. That is because those who try to do good by their own efforts lack the heart to totally depend upon the Other Power and do not conform with the Original Vow of Mida. However, if they give up the heart of self-dependence and accept total dependence on the Other Power,

⁸ According to the sutras on the Pure Land, Shakuson (Gautama), the historical Buddha, preached salvation by Amida, as he was believed to have been a manifestation of the buddha Amida himself.

⁹ Shan-tao (613–681), the founder of the Shan-tao School of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism and third of the five patriarchs of Chinese Pure Land doctrine. In Japan, he is regarded as the fifth of the seven great masters of Jōdo Shin-shū.

¹⁰ *Gushin*, a general word used to humble oneself. Shinran later in his life took the name Gutoku Shinran. "*Gutoku*" literally means "bald idiot."

¹¹ This is considered one of the primary points of doctrinal difference between Shinran's Jōdo Shin-shū and Hōnen's Jōdo-shū. Some modern scholars, however, have recently found documents that suggest that Shinran received the concept from Hōnen. This concept is remarkable in Buddhism for its emphasis on the teaching that the evil person is of primary concern to Amida, much more so than the righteous person.

even they can go and be born in the Land of True Recompense.¹² The true intention of the recital of the Vow was compassion for us, we who have every kind of evil passion and illusion and who cannot be freed from birth and death by any practice. Since it is for the wicked to attain buddhahood, the wicked who totally depend upon the Other Power have attained the right cause for going and being born. Thus it can be said, “Even the righteous go and are born. How not the wicked?”

(4) He said:

In terms of compassion and mercy, there is a difference between [the Gate of] the Holy Path and [the Gate of] the Pure Land.¹³ The compassion of the Holy Path means commiseration, sympathy, and care for beings. But it is extremely difficult to help them to our satisfaction. Compassion in Jōdo means becoming buddhas quickly by chanting the Nenbutsu, and once the mind of Great Compassion and Great Sympathy is attained, benefiting sentient beings to our heart's content. In this life, since we cannot help others to our heart's content no matter how much we sympathize with them, this compassion is incomplete. So the enduring mind of Great Compassion can be found only in chanting the Nenbutsu.

(5) He said:

I, Shinran, have not once chanted the Nenbutsu simply out of filial piety for my father and mother. This is because all sentient beings in some life and birth have been my father, mother, or

¹² Shinjitsu-hōdo. In Jōdo Shin-shū this term represents the Pure Land produced by Amida's boundless merit. Those with faith in Amida's Eighteenth Vow are born in this true Pure Land.

¹³ The Gate of the Holy Path leads to salvation or enlightenment through self-help or one's own efforts. The Gate of the Pure Land brings salvation through the grace of Amida.

brothers. Therefore, we can become buddhas in our next life and help them all. If we could attain the good by our own efforts, then we could help our parents by transferring the merits of the Nenbutsu to them. However, if we open ourselves to enlightenment by abandoning our self-efforts, we can first help those who are sunk into suffering within any of the Six Paths and Four Births¹⁴ through transcendental power and expedient means.

(6) He said:

For there to be quarrels among those who practice the Nenbutsu exclusively—"This man is my disciple" or "No, he is another's disciple"—is unthinkable. I, Shinran, don't even have one disciple. This is because I could only consider someone my disciple if he chanted the Nenbutsu because of my intentions. However, to say that a person who chants the Nenbutsu by virtue of Mida's intervention is my disciple is completely absurd. The fact is that if a person is destined to follow me he accompanies me, and if he is destined to part from me he leaves me; to say that if a person leaves his master to follow another man in chanting the Nenbutsu he would not go and be born, or the like, is simply outrageous. Would we try to take back faith given by Nyorai [Amida] just as if it were our own? Again and again, such a thing should not happen. If we conform to the principle of nature,¹⁵ we will know our obligations to the Buddha and to our master.

¹⁴ The Six Paths (Roku-dō) are the six worlds throughout which the souls of sentient beings transmigrate: hell; the worlds of hungry spirits, animals, demons, and men; and heaven.

The Four Births (Shisei) are: birth from a womb, birth from an egg, birth from moisture, and birth from sudden transformation.

¹⁵ *Jinen*. This term refers to the grace of Amida and is called the "principle of nature" because once we put our faith in the Eighteenth Vow of Amida and thus receive his saving power a feeling of gratitude and indebtedness *naturally* arises in our hearts.

(7) He said:

The Nenbutsu is the one unhindered path. The reasons are that the gods of heaven and earth respect believers in the practice and that neither devils nor those outside the path can hinder them. Evil sins cannot lead to their results, and many good works cannot compare to the Nenbutsu.

(8) He said:

The Nenbutsu is, for its adherents, neither a practice nor a virtue. Since it is not a practice of our own will, it is not a practice. Since it is not a virtue of our own will, it is not a virtue. Since it is entirely from the Other Power and completely separate from self effort, for the adherents it is neither a practice nor a virtue.

(9) It was said:

When I asked, "Even if I chant the Nenbutsu, a feeling of joy to the extent of dancing and jumping is lacking within me, nor do I have a desire to go to the Pure Land soon. How can this be explained," he answered, "I, Shinran, also have the same question, and so you, Yuien-bō and I are now of the same mind. If we closely consider this question, we should realize that our rebirth is all the more certain, since we cannot feel joy to the extent of dancing in heaven and dancing on earth when we should. Our evil passions are the cause of our lack of joy, and they suppress the joy in our hearts. However, since Buddha, knowing this from the beginning, called us common mortals full of every kind of evil passion and illusion, we should be all the more confident, knowing that the compassionate Vow of the Other Power is for us, wretched idiots. Again, our evil passions are the cause of our filling ourselves with the fear of death when we have even a little trouble [illness], we who do not have the heart to quickly enter the Pure Land.

"The fact that we have not been able to completely reject this

former home of suffering and illusion, where we have been flowing and turning [transmigrating] for myriads of kalpas¹⁶ in the past to the present, and that we do not long for the Pure Land of Peace and Sustenance, where we have never been, shows indeed how strong our evil passions are. Even though we are sorry to part [from this world], when the causes holding us to this world of endurance are exhausted and our own power has disappeared, we can go to that Land. He has mercy all the more, especially upon those of us without the desire to go quickly. Therefore, the more reliance we put on the Great Vow of Great Compassion, the more certain we are of going to be born. If we have the feeling of joy to the extent of dancing and jumping as well as the desire to go into the Pure Land soon, we might doubt that we have evil passions at all.”

(10) The essence of the Nenbutsu is non-judgement, for it is immeasurable, cannot be taught, and cannot be conceived. So the Master said.

Now, in the old days, when he was living, those who managed to come from long distances to Rakuyō¹⁷ with the same heart and with one belief set their hopes on the future Land of Recompense and at the same time received the Master's teaching. However, among countless young and old people who followed them in chanting the Nenbutsu, it is said that quite a few teachings different from those taught by the Master have recently been held. In the following it will be made clear how those teachings are without foundation.

(11) That there are some who, seeing a person who cannot read even one word chanting the Nenbutsu, frighten him by asking, “Do you chant the Nenbutsu believing in the inconceivability of the

¹⁶ An immeasurably long time.

¹⁷ Loyang, the capital of various Chinese dynasties, including the Later T'ang (923–936). A metaphorical expression for Kyōto.

Vow of Vows, or do you chant believing in the inconceivability of the Name [Nenbutsu]. ”

By not explaining clearly the difference between the two inconceivabilities, they bewilder his mind. This point should be checked over and over and be clearly understood. Because of the inconceivability of the Vow, Mida has devised the Name, which is easy to hold and utter, and promised to come and receive all who utter it. Therefore, we first believe that we will be liberated from birth and death, saved by Mida's Great Vow and Great Compassion. If we think that our chanting of the Nenbutsu is completely due to the will of Nyorai, since not even a little of our own effort can be of use, then we will go and be born in the True Land of Recompense according to the Original Vow. If we simply believe in the inconceivability of the Vow, we believe at the same time in the inconceivability of the Name. The inconceivability of the Vow and the Name are one, never separate.

Next, when we insert our own will and think, concerning good and evil, that good and evil are a help and obstruction to going to be born, we no longer rely on the inconceivability of the Vow. Instead we strive to go and be born by our own deeds, making even the Nenbutsu dependent on our own practice. Such people do not believe in the inconceivability of the Name either. That those without belief go and are born into the Border Land, [the World of] Sloth and Idleness, the Castle of Doubt, the Womb Palace, and are finally born into the Pure Land by the Vow of Final Attainment¹⁸ is made

¹⁸ Those who lack faith in Amida's Eighteenth Vow are reborn into one of several areas in the Hōben-kedo, the provisional and temporary pure land created by Amida for those who tried to attain rebirth through their own good deeds or through chanting the Nenbutsu. The Border Land on a corner of the Pure Land is where those lacking faith in the vow of Amida are born. The World of Sloth and Idleness is where lazy and idle people are born. The Castle of Doubt and the Womb Palace is where doubters are born and confined in a lotus for a certain period before they can enter the Pure Land. That they are eventually born into the Pure Land is by the Vow of Final Attainment, Amida's Twentieth Vow: "If,

possible by nothing but the inconceivability of the Name. It follows that it is because of the inconceivability of the Vow. Therefore, they must be one.

(12) That those who do not read and study the sutras and commentaries are not assured of going to be born.

It should be said that this opinion is not worth mentioning. The sacred teachings that expound the truth of the Other Power make it clear that if we believe in the Original Vow and chant the Nenbutsu we can become buddhas. What other study than that is necessary for going to be born? Those who truly do not understand this point should study using any means to understand the truth of the Original Vow. If you read and study the sutras and commentaries but do not understand the true meaning of the sacred teachings, it is regrettable. Since the Name was devised to be easy to chant, even for those who cannot read even a single word and who do not know the point of the sutras and commentaries, it is called the easy practice. The way wherein study is most important is the Gate of the Holy Path and is called the difficult practice. Against those who in studying make the mistake of dwelling on thoughts of fame and wealth, there is moreover a document questioning the certainty of their going to be born.

At this time, those who totally believe in salvation through the Nenbutsu and those who believe in the Gate of the Holy Path are engaged in doctrinal disputes, saying "Our own teaching is superior and that of others is inferior." This produces groups hostile to the sacred teachings that slander the true law. However, isn't this only slandering their own teaching? Even if those of the other gates say that the Nenbutsu is for worthless people and that our teaching is

after my attaining buddhahood, all beings in the Ten Quarters who heard my name and wished to be born in my land and performed many good deeds should not *finally* attain birth in my land, may I not attain the Highest Enlightenment."

frivolous and vulgar, we do not argue at all. We are told and believe that we ordinary people who are of inferior ability and who cannot read even one word can be saved through our trust. Therefore, even if this teaching is vulgar for those of superior ability, it is the supreme teaching for us. Even if other teachings are excellent, it is difficult to practice them because we cannot call up the needed capability out of ourselves. Since it is the true intention of the various buddhas that we and they be freed from birth and death, if we politely ask people not to bother us, without showing any ill feelings, who would be against us? Furthermore, a testimonial passage says, "Where there are arguments, there are various evil passions; therefore, those who would be wise stay far away from argument."

The late Master [Shinran] said, "Buddha once taught that there would be people who believed in this teaching and also people who slandered it. Therefore, I believe in this teaching. And because there are also people who slander it, I know this teaching of Buddha to be true. So, we should understand that going to be born is quite certain. If there were, by some chance, no one slandering the teaching, we might wonder why there were people believing in it but no one slandering it. By saying this, I do not mean that the teaching should always be slandered. Buddha, knowing that there are usually both believers and slanderers, so taught, lest people have any question. I am simply telling you what Buddha taught."

Is it that the people in today's world strike the pose of studying in order to prevent others from slandering their teaching and thus think that logical controversy is the most important? If they study, if they really understand the truth of Nyorai's teaching, if they comprehend the true greatness of the Compassionate Vow, and if they teach the lowly, even those who are skeptical of going to be born, that the Original Vow makes no distinction between the good and the bad, the pure and the impure, there is meaning in being a scholar. However, if they tell even those who chant the Nenbutsu with a simple heart in accordance with the Original Vow to study, then they are devils against the true law and deadly foes of the Buddha

himself. They not only lack belief in the Other Power but also make the mistake of leading others astray. We should humbly and with awe recognize that such a thing is against the will of our late Master. We also should have pity for such people who are not in accord with the Original Vow of Mida.

(13) That if you do not fear evil because of the inconceivability of the Original Vow of Mida, you presume upon the Original Vow and cannot go and be born.

Those who say so doubt the Original Vow and do not understand that good and evil actions result from previous lives. A good mind results from the virtuous deeds of previous lives, and evil actions result from evil deeds in previous lives.

The late Master said, "You should know that committing sins that are like merely a grain of dust on the tip of the hair of a rabbit or sheep is nothing but a result of deeds in your previous life."

He also once asked, "Yuien-bō, will you believe what I am going to say?"

I answered, "Yes, I will."

He then asked further, "Will you never disobey what I'm going to say?"

I therefore humbly agreed. Then he said, "Will you kill one thousand people? Then you can be certain of going to be born."

When I responded, "Although you have said this, I don't think that it is within my power to kill even one person," he then said, "Then how could you have said that you would never disobey the words of Shinran?"

And then he added, "Now you know. If you left everything to your mind, you could kill a thousand people when commanded to do so to go and be born. But you cannot harm even one person because of your destiny determined by your past actions. It is not that you cannot kill because you have a good heart. Nor is it that you cannot entertain the thought of doing harm or that killing a hundred or a

thousand people is impossible.” He said this to point out that we think it good to have good thoughts and evil to have evil thoughts and that we do not know salvation based on the inconceivability of the Vow.

Once there was a man who, having fallen into a wrong view, said that because the Vow was to save those who had done evil, one should do evil on purpose as the cause of going to be born. Therefore, he was doing evil in various ways. Hearing of this, the Master wrote in a letter, “Just because there is a medicine, you should not love poison,” to correct that wrong belief. He by no means meant that evil obstructed going to be born. He also said, “If we believe in the Original Vow only by observing the precepts, how can we become free from birth and death?” Even such lowly men as us, if we encounter the Original Vow, can indeed have some presumption. Moreover, we can never do evil without the proper cause within us. He also said, “Those who pass through this life casting nets and fishing in the sea or rivers, those who live by hunting animals and catching birds, and those who subsist by trade or cultivating fields are the same.” When we are driven by a certain cause, we might do anything.

Nowadays, despite the Master’s words, there are those who pretend to be seekers of the afterlife and believe that only the good should chant the Nenbutsu. They sometimes post a notice outside the hall that those who have done such-and-such cannot be admitted to the hall. Don’t they simply appear conscientious, clever, and righteous while in their hearts they nurture falsehood and deceit? The sins committed because of presumption upon the Vow are simply the results of the accumulation of our past deeds. Then, both good and evil should be left to the results of our past deeds. If we totally depend upon the Original Vow, it is the Other Power.

In the *Yuishin-shō*,¹⁹ too, it is said, “Don’t you know how much power Mida has when you think that since you have performed so

¹⁹ A treatise on Pure Land Buddhism written by Shōkaku (1169–1237), one of Hōnen’s disciples.

many evil deeds it is too difficult to be saved?" With a heart that relies on the Original Vow, our belief that puts trust in the Other Power should become more certain. It seems best for us to believe in the Original Vow only after completely removing the evil deeds and evil passions from ourselves, for then we could not become dependent on the Vow. Yet, if we completely remove the evil passions from ourselves, we become buddhas. For buddhas, meditation on the Vow for five *kalpas* is unnecessary. The people who warn us against presumption upon the Original Vow are also not without evil passions or impurities. Aren't they presuming upon the Vow? What kind of evil do they call presumption upon the Original Vow? What kind of evil do they call not presuming upon it? Isn't it childish?

(14) That we should believe that one utterance [of the Nenbutsu] extinguishes the grave sins of eight billion *kalpas*.

In this theory, a sinful man of the ten evil deeds and five deadly sins who hasn't chanted the Nenbutsu every day meets a good teacher for the first time on his deathbed, and through one utterance the sins of eight billion *kalpas* are extinguished. Through ten utterances the deadly sins of 80 billion *kalpas* are removed, and he goes and is born.

Doesn't saying "one utterance, ten utterances" reveal the gravity of the ten evil deeds and five deadly sins? This is the benefit of removing sins. But it is short of what we believe. The reason is that we are illuminated by the shining light of Mida. Since we are endowed at the end of our lives with the faith of diamonds, when one thought is raised in us, we are received into the rank of the destined group.²⁰ At the end of life, passions and evil hindrances are all extinguished, and we are enlightened with the truth of non-birth. That we chant the Nenbutsu throughout our lives, thinking, "If there were no Compassionate Vow, could worthless, sinful

²⁰ Those who are destined to attain rebirth in the Pure Land.

beings like us be delivered from birth and death," is entirely thanks to our indebtedness to the Great Compassion of Nyorai and gratitude for his benevolence.

Believing that you extinguish your sins whenever you chant the Nenbutsu is essentially striving to go and be born by extinguishing your sins by yourself. If such is the case, then we are able to go and be born without falling back only by chanting the Nenbutsu unceasingly up to the last minute of our lives, because whatever thoughts we have throughout our lives are nothing but bondage to this birth and death. However, because the results of our past actions are determined, we might encounter unexpected things, be tormented with the pains and agonies of disease, and end our lives without correct faith. In that case, it is difficult for us to chant the Nenbutsu.

Then, how can we extinguish the sins committed in that period? Can't we go and be born without our sins having been extinguished? If we depend totally upon the Vow that embraces without forsaking, no matter how many sins we may have committed under unexpected circumstances, even if we die without ever chanting the Nenbutsu, we go and are born immediately. Even if we are able to chant the Nenbutsu at our death, we are but giving thanks for his grace, depending on him all the more the closer the time for the opening of enlightenment approaches. To think that we should extinguish our sins is the heart of Self Power. This is the objective of those who pray for the right thoughts at the time of death. They lack faith in the Other Power.

(15) That we can enter into enlightenment with bodies filled with evil passions and illusions.

This theory is ridiculous. That you become a buddha with this body is the core of Shingon esoteric teaching and is the fruit of the Three Mystic Practices. Purifying the six sense organs is the teaching of the One Vehicle of the Lotus and is to be attained through the

Four Blissful Practices.²¹ These are all the difficult practices for those with high capacity, in which enlightenment can be realized through meditation. Jōdo's tenet of the Other Power as the attainment of enlightenment in the next life is the way of certain faith. Again, this is the easy practice for those of low capacity and a teaching that does not distinguish between good and evil.

Generally, since it is almost impossible for evil passions and evil hindrances to be extinguished in this life, even pure monks practicing the ways of Shingon or Hokke also pray for enlightenment in the next life. How not with us? Although we cannot practice discipline or have true wisdom, we cross the painful sea of birth and death carried by the Ship of Mida's Vow. When we arrive at the shore of the Land of Recompense, the menacing black cloud of evil passion will immediately clear away, the enlightened moon of the essence of things²² will appear, and we will be made one with the light that shines unobstructed throughout all Ten Quarters [everywhere] and will be able to benefit all sentient beings. Only at that time can we say that we have been enlightened.

Can those who say that they will be enlightened in this body benefit others with their teachings by manifesting themselves like Shakuson as the transformed body, and are they equipped with the 32 marks and 80 subordinate marks of excellence?²³ These can

²¹ The Three Mystic Practices of Japanese Shingon ("True Word") Buddhism are: reciting words or syllables that contain the essence of absolute truth; assuming symbolic postures with the hands or body; and meditating on visual representations of Buddhist, Hindu, and Shintō deities, symbolic attributes, and Sanskrit letters that lead man deep into the mysterious unity of the cosmos.

Purifying the six sense organs (eye, ear, nose, mouth, body, and mind) frees them from attachment. This is taught in the Lotus Sutra, the "One Vehicle," which is considered by some schools to be the only vehicle that takes people to enlightenment.

²² "The enlightened moon" is a metaphor for enlightenment (nirvana). The essence of things is *dharmatā* (truth).

²³ Transformed Body: *Ōge no Shin* or *Ōjin*, one of the threefold bodies

indeed be said to be examples of enlightenment in this life. A Japanese hymn²⁴ says,

As we wait for the time faith is established
 Firm and hard as a diamond
 We are embraced and protected by the light
 of Mida's heart
 And severed forever from birth and death

Because we are embraced and protected by the light when our faith is established, we will not transmigrate back into these six realms. Therefore, we are “severed forever from birth and death.” How can we distort this understanding by calling it “enlightenment?” Is it not pitiful? Didn't the late Master say, “It is taught in Jōdo Shin-shū that we believe in the Original Vow in this life and attain enlightenment in that Land.”

(16). That a believer with faith who usually gets angry, does wrong, or argues with his fellow believers should turn his mind [repent] without fail.

Does this view mean severing evil and practicing good? For those who single-heartedly practice the Nenbutsu alone, what is called turning the mind happens only once. This turning of the mind happens when a person ignorant of the true teaching of the Original Vow and the Other Power receives the wisdom of Mida, becomes aware of the fact that it is impossible for him to go and be born with his

of a buddha. A buddha transforms himself into any form that conforms to the capacities and conditions of those who are to be saved. The 32 distinguishing marks on the body of a buddha include white hairs between the eyes, light radiating from the pores, and a golden color. The 80 subordinant marks are also used to distinguish a true buddha.

²⁴ *Wasan*, a hymn that alternates 7 syllables and 5 syllables written to extol the virtues of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Here it refers to Jōdo Kōsō Wasan by Shinran.

present heart, changes his heart, and becomes totally dependent upon the Original Vow. Only this can be called "turning the mind." If we must in everything turn our mind morning and evening to go and be born, then wouldn't the Vow of Vows that embraces and never forsakes be meaningless? This is because if the exhaling breath does not wait for the inhaling breath, we may die without turning our minds and thus not reside with thoughts of peace and patience.

Those who say with their mouths that they depend upon the power of the Vow think in their hearts that the Vow that is said to save even evil men, despite its inconceivability, in reality can save only those who are exceptionally good. Thinking in that way, they doubt the power of the Vow and lack the heart that depends totally upon the Other Power. It is a most pitiable thing that they can receive life only in the Border Land. Once faith becomes firm, going to be born is made possible by Mida's compassionate means. Our efforts aren't involved. Even if we find evil in ourselves, if we depend completely upon the power of the Vow to such an extent, then a gentle and patient heart will arise from the principle of nature.

Whatever may happen, we should not possess clever thoughts about going to be born but should always recall with fondness how deep and profound the grace of Mida is. Then the Nenbutsu is chanted. This is the principle of nature. That which does not happen in accordance with our efforts is called "naturalness." This is the work of the Other Power. However, I've heard that some people say, assuming an air of wisdom, that there is something special called "naturalness." This is very deplorable.

(17) That those who go and are born in the Border Land will eventually fall into hell.

In what document is this theory found? It is deplorable that this theory is advocated by those who pretend to be scholars. How do they see the sutras, commentaries, and right teachings of Buddhism? I have heard that followers who lack faith are, because of their

doubt of the Original Vow, born into the Border Land and that only after atoning for the sin of doubt will they attain enlightenment in the Land of Recompense. Because there are few followers who believe, many people are led to the Transformed Land. To say that it will be in vain is to accuse Nyorai of lying.

(18) That in Buddhist teachings one becomes a great or a small buddha according to the size of one's donations.

This theory is absurd. It is totally ridiculous. First of all, how can you determine the size of a buddha? The bodily size of the Lord Teacher in the Pure Land of Peace and Sustenance is mentioned somewhere, but this refers only to the Expedient Recompense Body.²⁵ If we have been enlightened to the true nature of the Buddha and are free from the forms of long, short, square, round, or such colors as blue, yellow, red, white, and black, how can we fix him as big or small? It is said that when you chant the Nenbutsu you see the Transformed Buddha. Could this refer to the passage, "a large Buddha in a loud chant, a small Buddha in a soft chant?"²⁶ If this interpretation refers to this principle, it has certainly been distorted. On the other hand, donation might be said to be the practice of almsgiving. No matter how much treasure you offer to Buddha or donate to your master, it is in vain if you lack faith. You cannot offer even one sheet of paper or even half a *sen*²⁷ to Buddhism, but if you devote your heart to the Other Power and believe deeply, that is the true intention of the Vow. After all, don't those immersed in worldly greed simply intimidate their fellow believers under the pretext of teaching Buddhism?

²⁵ The Lord Teacher is Amida. The Expedient Recompense body is the provisional body of a buddha, which is the corporeal form of the real nature of the phenomenal world.

²⁶ A passage from "Senjaku Hongan Nenbutsu Shū" by Hōnen.

²⁷ A very small denomination of money.

Could these things mentioned above have stemmed from differences of faith? According to a story told by the late Master, there were very few among the many disciples during Hōnen Shōnin's time with the same faith. Shinran once had a heated argument with his fellow disciples. The cause: When he said, "The faith of Zenshin [Shinran] and the faith of our Master [Hōnen] are one," his fellow disciples, including Seikan-bō and Nenbuchi-bō, opposed him strongly.

They retorted, "How can the faith of the Master and the faith of Zenshin-bō be one?"

He replied, "If I were saying that the Master's vast wisdom and knowledge were the same as mine, it would be unreasonable. But there can be absolutely no difference concerning faith in going to be born. They are therefore as one."

However, because there was still the question of "How can it be so," they explained it before the Master in order to settle the question of which opinion was correct. After they explained the matter to Hōnen Shōnin, he said, "The faith of Genkū [Hōnen] is the faith given by Nyorai, and the faith of Zenshin-bō is also the faith given by Nyorai. Therefore, they are one. Those with different faiths will never be able to go to the Pure Land where Genkū will be saved."

So, similarly, in these days it seems that among those who singleheartedly practice the Nenbutsu alone there are some whose faith is not one with that of Shinran.

Although all of the above is repetitious, I have written everything down. As long as my life is like dew hanging from withered grass, I will listen to the questions of the people I meet and tell them the purport of the master's teachings as I heard them from him. But I deplore the fact that after I close my eyes there will surely be many loose teachings. When, by chance, you are misled by those advocating these idiotic views, you should carefully examine the sacred scriptures that were in accord with the heart of the late Master and used by him. Generally speaking, these scriptures contain the true, real, expedient, and temporary teachings. You should throw

out the expedient and reach the real, put aside the temporary and use the true, as was the true intention of the Master. But you should never misunderstand the scriptures.

I have selected some of the important epistles as the criterion and added them to this treatise.²⁸ The Master often used to say, “If I carefully consider the Vow that Mida made after five *kalpas* of meditation, it is clear that it was made wholly for this one man, Shinran. How grateful I am that the Original Vow saves a man full of so many sins!” When I think about this recollection, I find that it is not at all different from Zendō’s golden words: “Know that we are ordinary men, immersed in sin and evil, birth and death, for immeasurable *kalpas* and flowing and turning with no chance for liberation.” If so, he thankfully showed us by referring to himself that we have been deluded about the depth of our sins and evil and the heights of the grace of Nyorai. Indeed, we and others neglect the grace of Nyorai and simply argue about good or evil. Didn’t the master say, “I do not know either good or evil at all. That is because I could only say I knew good if I knew it so thoroughly that Nyorai would recognize it as good in his heart. I could only say that I knew evil if I knew it so thoroughly that Nyorai would recognize it as evil. We are ordinary men of evil passions and illusions in this world that is a burning house of impermanence. Everything is falsehood and folly, there is no truth. Only the Nenbutsu is true.”

There is one thing that is especially deplorable about us and others, who are truly arguing about nothing but folly. It is the fact that sometimes, when we discuss the principles of faith in the Nenbutsu and question each other, some of us insist that the Master said something that he never did to shut the mouths of others and bring argument to an end. This is completely deplorable. When we contemplate this point deep in our hearts, we should understand this thoroughly.

Although what I have said so far is not simply my words, it may

²⁸ Perhaps refers to the quotations that follow.

no doubt sound ridiculous, because I do not know the spirit of the sutras and commentaries and do not really understand the deep meaning of Buddhist doctrine. Yet I have written them down, remembering maybe a hundredth of the purport of the late Shinran's words. How sad it is that someone fortunate enough to chant the Nenbutsu is not born directly in the Land of Recompense but instead puts up his home in the Border Land! Lest there be differences in the faith among the adherents in the same room, I have wet my brush with tears to record these matters. I will call this the "Tannishō" [Notes Lamenting Differences]. This should not be seen by the public.²⁹

²⁹ An expression of humility.

Part 2

Hagakure

葉隱

Text

(15) Advice given to a certain person. Details to be given by oral instructions. Those with the status of *rōnin* reproaching their masters: A certain *rōnin* thoroughly understood his own defects and was restored to his former position in service in five or six years. At first, he declined, but the second time he received the proposal, he wrote an oath [to his master]. We should highly evaluate the fact that he declined the first pardon when it was issued and did not shave his hair.¹ Another *rōnin* in the same circumstances was not reinstated because he did not understand his own defects. Even now he invites the wrath of heaven by getting angry and constantly saying that his master is despicable and shameful. It is said that he will suffer punishment [meted out by heaven]. People do not [easily] pardon [others]. If he realizes that he is a man who deserves blame, he will be restored to his former position.

(16) When I helped Sawabe Heizaemon commit harakiri [by decapitating him], Nakano Kazuma sent me a letter of commendation from Edo. He wrote, with exaggeration, "You have won a name for your family." Even though I thought at the time that such words merely for assisting at harakiri were too much, after reflecting on them later, I understood that his was the way of a veteran expert. When people are young, if they perform even the most minor duty

¹ That is, become a Buddhist priest.

of a *bushi* well, they will continually serve their lord with valor. I soon received a letter of commendation from Nakano Shōgen as well. Both letters have been treasured; [even] Gorozaemon presented me with a saddle and stirrups.²

(17) It is not polite to yawn in public. When you indiscreetly yawn, the yawn will be stopped if you rub your forehead. If you don't do this, you should yawn so that no one knows by licking your lips with your tongue while keeping your mouth closed or by hiding your mouth by moving your sleeve across your mouth toward your neckband. It is the same with sneezing. Someone sneezing looks like a fool. One should remember many ways other than these to be polite.

(18) [The priest Tsunetomo]³ contemplated the things he had to do the next day the night before and noted them down. This should be considered and realized by various other people in order not to be inferior to others. When he visited someone by appointment, he used to contemplate every detail [of his actions] toward the person he met, even the content of his greetings and possible opportune things to do. He told me the following when we went somewhere together:

When you visit someone to talk with him about something, you should first think deeply about the host in many ways. This is the path of harmony. This is courtesy. When you are called

² Nakano Kazuma: This name was used to refer both to Nakano Masatoshi and his son, Toshiaki. In this case, the reference is to the son. Masatoshi served Nabeshima Katsushige as *ontoshiyori* and *kahan-karō* (head of the *karō*, retainers ranking second only to the daimyō). Toshiaki served Nabeshima Mitsushige as *karō*.

Nakano Shōgen served as *koshō* (page) in the time of Mitsushige, later as *ontoshiyori*. He was ordered to commit seppuku in the 9th month of 1689 as punishment for a mistake. His relative, Yamamoto Tsunetomo, assisted at the seppuku.

Gorozaemon: Yamamoto Gorozaemon Tsuneharu, the uncle of Yamamoto Tsunetomo.

³ Known as Jōchō after he entered the priesthood.

before a person of high birth and you are worried about the visit, you must take your place [with decorum]. Otherwise, you would be very rude. It is better for you to visit thinking that [the experience] will be interesting. It is better not to go somewhere if you have nothing that is pressing unless you have been invited. When you have been invited, if you do not impress the host with your good manners, you are not a guest at all. It is important to contemplate how you should behave beforehand. The matter of sake is the most important item. It is also difficult to judge when to leave. You should not bore your host, nor should you make your departure too early. In ordinary cases and in the case of food, it is bad to go overboard with consideration for your host. You can refuse once or twice, but then it is better to receive what the host has offered. When you accidentally come across a person on the road, you should behave in the same way.

(19) In order to fulfill the four oaths, you must not be eclipsed in the ways of the *bushi*. You should be resolved to display your bravery under heaven. ([The priest Tsunetomo] wrote about this in detail in *Gukenshū* [Collection of My Opinions].) You should be useful to your master. You should occupy the position of chief retainer, offer advice to your master, and [help to] govern the domain. (This matter is written in detail in *Gukenshū*.) Filial piety is attached to loyalty to the master. They are the same. You should devote yourself to making all people useful to our lord.

(20) When examining a bride's trousseau, a certain person said, "A koto [Japanese zither] and a shamisen [Japanese lute] are not noted in the list. These are necessary."

Another person said, "A koto and a shamisen are not necessary."

And he roughly stopped them from being written down in the list. He said this because of the people around him.

However, on the following day this same person said. "These [the koto and the shamisen] cannot be left out of the trousseau. Add two top quality ones of each of these to the trousseau list."

[Upon hearing this story] I said, "What a pleasant fellow he is."

[The priest Tsunetomo] replied, "No, you are not thinking ad-

equately. Everything he did was to enhance himself. This is typical of people who come from other domains. First of all, such behavior is impolite to those of high birth, and moreover it is useless to the lord. If he were a man who knew the proper way, he would react somewhat like the following, even about items he deemed unnecessary: While [admitting] that it might be so, he would select his words carefully to avoid the issue. A samurai performs his duty well by not putting anyone to shame. Furthermore, his careless, foul, and irrational thinking merely served to put a high-ranking person to shame, since those things which were not to be entered [one day] had to be appended to the list the next day.”

(21) Samurai with determination and samurai without determination are described in military history. “Samurai of determination” does not only mean warriors who perform admirably when they encounter something. Samurai of determination carefully examine various methods beforehand and then set out to attain their goal. In other words, they are samurai who consciously choose their methods for dealing with anything beforehand. On the other hand, when samurai without determination encounter the same thing, even though they complete it in time, it is only temporary good luck. Those who do not examine the problem thoroughly beforehand are called samurai without determination.

(22) I want all *rōnin* to be invited to the memorial service held one hundred years after Lord Nippō’s death. First of all, the deceased lord would be pleased with this summons to the memorial service. I guarantee that he would be pleased. However, this probably cannot be done because [the ceremony is to be] so subdued. Not so long ago, the descendants of *rōnin* who committed seppuku were abandoned, and it became customary for both *te-aki-yari* and *rōnin* to be disqualified from service. Because our lord does not know Kokugaku, he appoints such retainers as *te-aki-yari* group chiefs.

(23) A drinking bout should be dignified. When you look closely, [you will notice that] most people do nothing but drink. Sake is a drink that should be neatly lifted [to the mouth]. You will seem

vulgar if you do not pay attention to this. Generally, a man's innermost being can be perceived [in his way of drinking]. A drinking bout is a public event.

(24) Someone said that he was carefully saving on expenses in those days. I don't think that it was good. There is a proverb that says, "If water is too clear, fish will not live there." If there are duckweeds in the water, fish live hidden behind the duckweeds. The common people live peacefully because they are barely seen or heard. You must understand man's moral conduct.

(25) When a certain municipal officer decided to deliver a written complaint to the Ukeyakusho,⁴ the official of the supreme office said that he could not accept it.

As they bandied words about the matter, another person present said, "First accept it, and then, if it is not needed, it may be returned."

So, the official conceded, saying, "If that is the case, I will accept it."

Then the officer disrespectfully answered, "You have no choice but to accept a document someone wants to deliver, don't you?"

When someone related the above story, [the priest Tsunetomo] said that he thought that the person had corrected his harsh manners. However, he still had not smoothed the sharp edges from his personality. It is generally proper for an officer to treat people with decorum in offices, even though they are close friends. It is not proper to treat someone in a dirty way and shame the other party in such a way.

(26) When a certain person was asked to obtain a house by a high-ranking personage, he said that he would offer his own residence. In the middle of negotiations about the future move, he was informed that the house was no longer necessary. Accordingly, he grew more and more insolent about this development. The high-ranking individual apologized, and he accepted the apology. Further-

⁴ The highest administrative and judicial office in Saga Domain.

more, he took money for striking the bargain.

The above story is utterly laughable. It is generally thought to be disagreeable for a person to be deceived and beaten by others. But this case [of the high-ranking person making a mistake] differs from that one [the low-ranking person taking advantage of the situation]. It is quite strange to say that even though a man is of high birth, he is not allowed to utter a single word [to vindicate himself]. This present matter concerns profit and loss. It is fundamentally dirty. It is inconsiderate and rude to speak arrogantly when you meet a high-ranking person. A man is, by definition, beaten if he takes money in this situation. It will become an obstacle in the future. All lawsuits and claims—what people say to justify their actions—are based on profit and loss. If a man swallows the loss, he will have no opponent. If he is patient about this matter alone, in the end he will not be beaten. One who has little wisdom cannot understand this.

(27) Ishii Mataemon is a person of extraordinary ability. However, he has been a fool since his illness. Once, when the organization of the master's attendants was examined, someone asked Mataemon about the post of *waka* master.

Mataemon then answered, "Since my illness, I don't even remember what you have asked. However, even if I were to remember it, I could not tell you something that my lord ordered me not to talk about to others, could I? So, I can't talk about what I don't remember."

(28) When there was a fire at a lord's residence, Yamamoto Gorozaemon, the *ometsuke* on duty, rushed to the scene. When he was not allowed to enter the gate, someone said, "There is no fire here."

Gorozaemon threatened, "If you won't allow this person who has come here by our lord's order to enter, I will have to use my sword."

And so saying, he unsheathed his sword. Then, the gate was reportedly opened. The fire in the residence was finally extinguished by the lord's retainers who had hurried there as a man.

(29) When he wrote characters on ornamental paper [*shikishi*] for Yasaburo,⁵ he said, “You must bear down as though you want to break the paper and think about writing one character that fills the whole paper. It is the job of a master to judge it good or bad. It is appropriate for a samurai not to have cramped calligraphy.”

Then, he took up his writing brush.

(30) When [Lord Mitsushige] read a storybook [in his childhood] before Kaion Oshō,⁶ he said, “Young men and young priests! Please come here and listen. When there are few listeners, it is difficult to read.”

Deeply impressed, Oshō said to the young priests, “You should have that [kind of resolution and preparedness] in everything.”

[Three chapters omitted. These passages are unclear and not traceable to any other source.]

(31) *Details of morning Buddhist services.*

(32) *Various interpretations of the word “jiki” 時宜, meaning “circumstances” or “timeliness.”*

(33) *A discussion of ceremonies conducted to bring rain or ward off unlucky happenings.*

(34) *Comments comparing famous priests of past and present.]*

(35) If we consider the retainers of today, [we realize that] their aim is very low. The expression in their eyes is like that of a pick-pocket. They are only assuming a posture if they are greedy for their own profit or pretend to be clever or look like persons of little understanding. If they do not aim at dedicating their bodies to the lord, quickly deciding to take their lives and to become spirits for the lord, thinking of the lord’s wishes around the clock, advancing everything for the lord’s sake, and establishing a firm foundation for the Nabeshima clan, they cannot be called true retainers. There is no discrimination against high or low in this. Once they are de-

⁵ A samurai lower in rank than Yamamoto Tsunetomo.

⁶ Eleventh high priest of Tenyū-ji, one of the most famous temples in Saga Domain. After retiring from that position, he went to Kitaharu Eimei-ji temple in the village of Kasuga.

terminated to become loyal retainers, not even the movements of the buddhas and gods can sway them.

(36) According to a certain person, Matsukuma Kyōan⁷ of the former generation once said:

Man and woman are compared to the yin [positive] and the yang [negative] in medical science, and there are different ways of medical treatment for each. But even man's pulse has changed. In the last fifty years, man's pulse has become the same as woman's. Once I became aware of this, I realized that woman's eye treatment could be adequately applied to man's eye diseases. Even if I tried the man's treatment on a man, it would be ineffective. This is because the world has become degenerate; man's spirit has withered and has become the same as woman's spirit. Even though I have certainly understood this matter from my experience, I have kept it a secret.

In this same way, when observing the men of today, [the number of men] with woman's pulses must be very large. It is rare for a man to look like a real man. Therefore, a man of today should easily be able to surpass others if he strains himself even a little. Proof of the dissipation of man's courage can be found in the facts that few people ever cut off the head of a bound criminal and that the age has dawned when those who cleverly refuse to perform such [samurai duties] as helping those committing harakiri by decapitating them are called wise or cultured. I remember men doing such things as *matanuki*⁸ forty or fifty years ago. Those without scars did not dare to expose their thighs in public, but even they used to expose their thighs in private. Men's jobs were all bloody. However, at present, they are said to be akin to foolishness: work is evaluated simply by the skill with which one speaks, and men put as little effort as possible into their work. This is something which all young people should understand.

⁷ An eye doctor serving Nabeshima Motoshige (Katsushige's eldest son), the founder of one of the small fiefs within Saga Domain, the Ogi.

⁸ Although the exact meaning of this term is not clear, the context suggests that it refers to the practice of exposing the thighs in public.

(37) Some people serve until the age of sixty or seventy, but I entered the priesthood when I was forty-two. When I think of my service, it was, indeed, short. As a matter of fact, this is rather rare. When my lord died, I decided to die, but then I entered the priesthood. I now believe that if I had continued my service to today I would have experienced more and more difficulty. It is indeed marvelous that I have spent my days peacefully for the last fourteen years. Moreover, many people have thought about themselves and me, and they have come to understand me. When I contemplate the matter, I feel I have hidden [my true self] well. I have received such good treatment from so many people that I can only think of it with guilt.

(38) A certain person was to escort his master on the round of New Year's calls. At that time he said, "My attitude on this occasion dictates that while I am in the country I should give up sake; otherwise, I will be utterly sloven. However, if I say I am abstaining, they will think that I am a bad drinker. Therefore, I will say that I am allergic to sake, and pretend to throw away two or three cups. People will not press sake on me if I act this way. Furthermore, I will make a deep bow so that it seems my waist is in great pain. I will not say anything until people address me."

He was a very clever person. The basis of gaining superiority over others is to consider the future in advance.

Then [the priest Tsunetomo] said, "That is true preparedness. In short, if you act subdued, as though you have changed and lost your vigor, you will be well mannered. Furthermore, the first words are most important."

[Four chapters omitted. Their significance and relation to the other parts of Hagakure are obscure.]

(39) *A discussion between Tannen-oshō, a Buddhist priest, and Sanenori, a court noble.*

(40) *Perhaps an interpretation of a passage from the Senwaka-shū, an anthology of 1,000 poems.*

(41) *A discussion of the senility of an unknown man.*

(42) *Various interpretations of the word “maboroshi” 幻, meaning “illusion” or “apparition.”*]

(43) When his daughter was married, one of his attendants strongly objected. Young people should understand this thoroughly. We can certainly understand why he spoke up. Some people will probably say that this was to the point. If he thinks about his feelings seriously and says what he thinks should be said, then he will realize his true desire even if, in the end, he must commit harakiri. However, deliberate more deeply. This served absolutely no purpose. It is a mistake to think that such a person is anything but a rogue. His speaking out was, first and foremost, meaningless: he had to resign from service, could not help to educate his master, and could not care for him as he was dying.

This was truly regrettable. People who get carried away probably make many mistakes. Generally speaking, a retainer is not loyal if he admonishes his master despite his inappropriate rank. If he thinks deeply about his master, he will privately reveal his thoughts to someone who is suitable [to offer admonitions to the lord], and if the idea is conveyed as that of the [more suitable] person, the situation can be settled. This is loyalty. If after the conference the [suitable] person does not give his word [to tell the lord], he [the unsuitable retainer] should talk to others privately and do his utmost [to get his idea conveyed to his master]. If his idea is accepted, great loyalty dictates that he adopt the posture that he knows nothing about it. The situation is beyond his control when he tells his idea to many people who do not accept it. Then after a certain amount of time passes, his idea will generally be accepted. If he wants to become famous as a rogue, his opinion will never be accepted because he thinks only of his own reputation.

There are many people who offer admonitions [to their lord] in vain, but most of them eventually destroy themselves. After all, they are not truly loyal. If they fling themselves away body and soul and think only of the best for their lord, they will never err.

(44) It is difficult to establish propriety by hating impropriety. However, if a person thinks about the essence of the defense of

propriety, he will make many mistakes as he earnestly establishes propriety. There is a way higher than propriety. It is difficult to find. It is ultimate wisdom. Viewed from this, propriety is very narrow. A person does not understand it unless it is realized body and soul. However, if he cannot realize this body and soul, there is a means by which he can set out on the way. It is by discussion. Even though a person has not set out on the way, he can judge from the perspective of an outsider. This is the same as saying that the spectator in a game of *go* plays best. The best way is for a person to talk about his knowledge and deficiencies in a discussion. In order to attain the discretion of the ancients, he should listen and remember what is said. He should also look at and remember what is written, thereby abandoning his own faulty thinking.

(45) A certain old swordsman once said:

The training of a lifetime is done in gradual stages. When he is at a low stage, he does not really know about training, so he thinks he is unskillful and that others are also unskillful. According to this, no one is useful. At the middle stage, even though he is not yet very useful he can perceive both his own deficiencies and those of others. At the higher stages, he can take pride in his accomplishments, is pleased with praise by others, and deplores shortcomings in other people. This person is useful. The man at an even higher stage acts as though he knows nothing about swordsmanship. He perceives others' skill as well as his own. Most people belong [to these four stages described] so far. Above these is a higher stage that surpasses all others and [represents those who have] set out on the way. If he immerses himself deeply in the way, he realizes that, in the end, nothing can be achieved and that there is nothing about which he can think, "this is as far as it goes." Once he really understands his own shortcomings, he achieves [the state in which] he cannot realize his lifetime aim, he loses his pride, and he no longer flagellates himself. Lord Yagyū⁹ once said, "I don't know the path for

⁹ Yagyū Muneyoshi, founder of the Yagyū Shin-kage School of Swordsmanship and fencing advisor to Tokugawa Ieyasu.

defeating others; I only know the path for defeating myself.” This implies that we must be better today than we were yesterday, and we must be even better tomorrow, thereby improving ourselves day by day for our whole lives. There is no end to this.

(46) A wall writing [proclamation] of Lord Naoshige reads: “Consideration about important matters shall be done smartly.”

Ittei explained this as follows: “Consideration about lesser things shall be increased.”

Important matters probably consist of only two or three articles. These should be understood if they are discussed in the usual way. By examining these things beforehand, the time spent on important matters can be thought to be lessened. If someone does not resolve things beforehand, it is difficult to act smartly and to hit the target. Plans will not materialize as expected. However, if someone lays a foundation beforehand, then he can comprehend the basis of the previous saying, “Consideration about important matters shall be done smartly.”

(47) When men of learning, such as Lord Mimasaku-no-kami¹⁰ and Ittei, conducted a scholarly discussion with Kōnan-oshō of Sōryū-ji temple, he said, “It is fine to be as learned as you. However, your knowledge of the way is less than that of ordinary people.”

Hearing this, Ittei replied, “I don’t think there is a way other than that of the sages.”

Kōnan-oshō replied:

That learned men are unaware of the way is like someone going west when he should go east. The more they know of things, the further from the way they go. This is because their opinions have been heightened by reading or hearing the words of the sages of old, and then they think of themselves as sages and of ordinary people as [no better than] a worm. This proves

¹⁰ Shigetoki, the leader of Taku Mimasaku, one of the four extremely small fiefs within Saga Domain that were still administered by members of the Ryūzōji family.

they are unaware of the way. What is called “the way” means knowing one’s own faults. If someone knows his faults from one moment to the next and devotes himself assiduously throughout his life, he embodies the way. The word “sage” can be read “*hijiri*,” which means “to know faults.”¹¹ Buddha preached that the way can be embarked on by adhering to the four characters 知非便捨 [*chi-hi-ben-sha*, know your faults and rid yourself of them immediately]. If someone observes his own mind carefully, he knows that wicked thoughts arise in unlimited numbers during a single day. Therefore, he should never think that he is good.

Hearing these words, those present respected Kōnan-oshō. However, bravery is something else again. If a man does not stick out his chest and think that he is the bravest samurai in the country, it is difficult for him to truly display his bravery. In order to display bravery, a particular mental attitude is necessary. (oral instructions)

(48) In *Bushidō kōsha-sho*,¹² it is written: “A master samurai can distinguish himself through deeds performed by others.” There are probably many who have misunderstood the true meaning in later ages. The word “even” should be inserted.¹³

Furthermore, Shida Kichinosuke said, “If neither living nor dying matters, it is better to live.”

The unconventional Shida said these words as a joke, but I fear that young people will hear them and make the mistake [of taking them seriously] and so begin to say words improper to a samurai.

Shida continued by saying, “If someone wonders whether he should eat something or not, it is better for him not to eat it. When

¹¹ The character 聖, “sage,” can be read “*hijiri*.” Another way of writing “*hijiri*” is 非(を)知り, which means “know your faults.”

¹² *Book on the Masters of Bushidō*, a treatise on the martial arts written by Ogasawara Katsuzō in 1649.

¹³ 功者の武士はせざる武篇に(も)名を取る道あり

Without the word “even” (も), the sentence may be interpreted as “the only way famous samurai distinguish themselves is through deeds performed by others.” However, if the word “even” is inserted between “can” and “distinguish,” the sentence implies that some master samurai are so famous that deeds performed by others are attributed to them.

someone wonders whether he should kill himself or live, it is better for him to kill himself.”

(49) When someone returned after serving for several years in Ōsaka and spoke in the Kamigata dialect at the provincial office, all the people there felt it strange and laughed at him. Therefore, when someone works in Edo or Kamigata for a long time, he should use his own dialect even more than usual. It is natural to try to change your style to conform to that of the area in which you are living and to think that the rusticity of your home province is inferior to the style of other districts. When he hears of something even slightly appealing in other districts, he envies it. However, [this attitude] is utterly meaningless and foolish. It is important for the inexperienced to retain the rusticity of their home provinces. Otherwise, their style will simply resemble an unconvincing imitation.

When someone spoke to Shungaku-oshō, he said, “The Hokke Sect is not good because its characteristics are too violent.”¹⁴

Shungaku-oshō replied, “The Hokke Sect does have violent characteristics. But if it were any other way, it would be a different sect.”

His words are to the point.

(50) When there was a conference about promoting someone, it was decided that the promotion would not be approved because he had previously been involved in a drunken brawl.

At that time, someone said, “If someone who has made but one mistake is left as he is, no one will ever be of any use. A man who has once erred may be useful because he repents his past deeds and conscientiously tries to reform himself. Therefore, he should be promoted.”

Another person responded, “Will you guarantee him?”

¹⁴ The head priest of the Taicho-in temple in Saga. Renowned for his scholarly pursuits and wealth of knowledge, he even went to Nagasaki in 1687, supposedly to do research into Christianity.

The Hokke Sect, which he criticizes, is the same as the Nichiren Sect, founded by Nichiren in 1253. Its teachings are based on the Lotus Sutra.

The first person answered, "Of course, I will."

Again, other people asked, "How can you guarantee him?"

And again he answered, "I will guarantee him because he once made a mistake. One who has never made a mistake is dangerous."

Thus, the person under discussion was reportedly¹⁵ promoted.

(51) When discussing [the plight] of criminals, Nakano Kazuma advised his master to lighten the sentences by one degree. This is wisdom so superior that it is like a treasure. In those days, there was no one but Kazuma to lead discussions when people gathered together. Therefore, he was reportedly called Mr. First Speaker or Mr. Twenty-five Days.¹⁶

(52) Those who improve their lord's mental attitude well and who help their lord to avoid mistakes exhibit great loyalty. They should serve diligently without wasting any time so that their lord will sufficiently understand the family customs and the mind of his ancestors when he is still young. Therefore, the duty of the tutor¹⁷ is very important.

(53) Men of olden times wore their swords in the *otoshizashi* style.¹⁸ At present, few people consider various ways of wearing their swords. Many people wore their swords so that they could be unsheathed [quickly] as is taught by the Yagyū School. This, how-

¹⁵ This word means that the passage was directly dictated to Tsuramoto by Tsunetomo.

¹⁶ Soy sauce and *miso* (soybean paste) take 25 days from the time they are made to the time they can be eaten. Kazuma's speaking was as customary as the soy sauce or *miso* seasoning period.

¹⁷ The position in Japan lies somewhere between an English tutor and a foster father. He was in charge of imparting to the lord's children all the duties, skills, knowledge, and character expected of them. Each son usually had a separate tutor.

¹⁸ This style, wearing the long sword more or less perpendicular to the ground, came into fashion in the Genroku Era (1688–1704). It was also called *kojiri-sagari*. Before this time, the long sword was usually worn almost parallel to the ground.

ever, has not been transmitted by tradition, nor do people give any serious thought to it. They simply glance at how people wear their swords and imitate their styles of unsheathing them. Lord Naoshige and Lord Katsushige wore their swords at their sides in the *otoshizashi* style. In those days, it was more advantageous for those who were skilled swordsmen to have their swords at their sides in the *otoshizashi* style because, first of all, it was impossible for someone else to pull the sword out of the hilt. Lord Mitsushige reportedly wore his sword at his side in the *otoshizashi* style because of Lord Katsushige's instructions.

(54) When Lord Mitsushige and Lord Tsunashige¹⁹ were in Edo, an audience was granted by Lord Mitsushige at his official residence on the first day of the first month. Lord Tsunashige was present during the audience in a room behind the dias.

Lord Mitsushige asked, "Where is Tsunashige?"

And a page answered, "The young lord is *okakure gozanasare sōrō*." [This phrase has a double meaning, one is that he is hiding, and the other is that he is dead.]

We should be careful about making such mistakes.

(55) A certain person was put to shame because he did not return blow for blow during a quarrel. Returning blow for blow is nothing but defying [the opponents] and being killed. He cannot be put to shame by that means. His timing will be off because he thinks he should kill his opponent. He calculates the number of opponents from fear of their numbers and loses time, resulting in endless deliberation. Returning blow for blow is thus abandoned. Even if there are thousands of opponents, once you decide to slash out [at them], fulfill [your determination] with direct confrontation. Then you can probably perfect your ideas.

Furthermore, it was a mistake for Lord Asano's *rōnin* not to commit harakiri at Sengaku-ji temple on the night of their attack. Moreover, their revenge was realized a very long time after their master's death. It would have been truly pitiful if Lord Kira had

¹⁹ Nabeshima Mitsushige's eldest son and heir.

died of illness in the meantime. People in Kamigata are good at doing praiseworthy things because they possess great wisdom; however, they have no reckless strain like that of those in the Nagasaki Incident. Furthermore, even the night attack of the Soga took a particularly long time. When Jūrō Sukenari of the Soga was checking the family crest on the curtain, he missed his chance and fell on unlucky times. Gorō was a skillful speaker.²⁰

Generally, I do not make these kinds of critical comments; however, they should be mentioned to delve deeply into martial arts. If there is no close scrutiny beforehand, someone will be put to shame because he could not discern clearly what he should do. To prepare sufficiently beforehand, it is necessary to listen to stories and to read books. In the martial arts particularly you should think that you do not even know what will happen today and closely scrutinize item by item each day and night. Victory or defeat is decided by the circumstances. Not to be put to shame, however,

²⁰ Lord Asano's *rōnin*: This refers to the 47 loyal *rōnin* who avenged an insult to their lord. In the 3rd month of 1701, Lord Kira had insulted their lord on a ceremonial day in Edo Castle. Lord Asano responded by unsheathing his sword, but since this act was forbidden in Edo Castle he was ordered to commit seppuku. His retainers, now *rōnin*, planned their revenge and 21 months later, in the 12th month of 1702, killed Lord Kira. They waited for the shogunate to order them to commit seppuku as the law demanded, an action that Tsunetomo claims was not fitting of a true samurai.

Nagasaki Incident: In the 12th month of 1690, two Nabeshima retainers met a Takagi retainer in Nagasaki. They exchanged insults after mud splashed on the Takagi retainer's clothes. Angered, the two Nabeshima retainers hit the Takagi retainer. That night, 10 Takagi retainers went to the Nabeshima residence, beat the two retainers, took their swords, and left. To avenge the insult, the two Nabeshima retainers, together with 19 comrades, attacked Takagi's residence, killed many men, including Lord Takagi himself, and then committed seppuku on the spot.

Soga Incident: In this famous episode of the Kamakura Period (1192–1333), two *bushi*, Soga Jūrō Sukenari (1172–1193) and his younger brother, Soga Gorō Tokimune (1174–1193) fought for 15 years to avenge their murdered father. The incident has figured in many romances and Kabuki plays.

is a different matter. The only way is to die. Even if you think you will be defeated, you must return the blow some time. Wisdom is not needed for this. A person who is extraordinarily tough does not think of victory or defeat, but rushes into the jaws of death single-mindedly. By doing this, he awakens from the dream [of this transitory world].

(56) There is one defect in retainers. It is that they rise to wealth and honor. If a retainer remains in poverty, he has no defect. If a person is clever, though, he instinctually notices defects in work. He cannot be useful in these circumstances. Even though there are many defects in the world, if a man thinks primarily of them, his expression will probably show his discontent, and then others will not receive him. If he is not received by others, he cannot be truly trustworthy, no matter how good he is. This should also be understood as a defect.

(57) Someone once said, "That man has a violent temper and he has said such-and-such a thing in front of other people."

The words do not conform to his station. He did this so that he could be called extraordinarily tough. [Yet] he is still at a low status. He looks like a person who is still quite young. Samurai are admirable when they behave with proper courtesy. Saying things like that in front of people is as base as the conversation of spear carriers. There are many people who do not behave in accordance with their social status in the matter of dwellings and furniture. However, it is not wrong to use a somewhat better quality of things like fans, paper handkerchiefs, writing paper, and bedclothes.

(58) A certain person was not satisfied with his foolish adopted²¹ son. Moreover, the man, who had been ill for a long time, became short tempered, chastised him every day, and spoke ill of him. The adopted son found it more and more difficult to behave with pro-

²¹ When there is no son to assume the headship of a family in Japan, a younger son from another family is often adopted. He is usually already an adult, and his natural parents may still be living.

priety and thought it better to return to his parents' home in the immediate future.

His foster mother, who came about this matter, said, "Even though it is a lot of trouble for you, could I ask you to remonstrate with his father to have patience despite his illness?"

When the priest Tsunetomo declined, the foster mother, with tears streaming down her cheeks, implored, "I beg of you, please, comply with my request."

And so it became impossible for Tsunetomo not to accept.

He said, "It is contrary to reason [for me to remonstrate with] the father, especially since he is ill. So, send the son to me."

The foster mother returned home without understanding. In the meantime, [the adopted son] went to see Tsunetomo, and Tsunetomo told him:

Generally speaking, you should consider the fact that you have been born as a human being in this world a very happy thing. Moreover, there is nothing more desirous in life than to be a samurai of this house [the Nabeshima]. You should understand this by looking at the farmers or merchants. Those who inherit the headship of a family from their real fathers are thankful; how much more overjoyed you should be, you who can inherit the headship of a family even though you were born the youngest son in another family, you who can become a retainer in service to our lord. Becoming a fiefless samurai, unattached to our lord, is disloyal, and not satisfying your parents is lacking in filial piety. There is no place in this world for he who denies both loyalty and filial piety. Return home and deliberate well on this matter. At this point, the only loyalty and filial duty is to satisfy your father. However, you think that even if you wish to satisfy your father you could not possibly do anything but drive him to ill humor. Accordingly, I will teach you how to improve his attitude. You should pray to the clan deity and shed so many tears that you almost begin to shed blood, so that your outer appearance and countenance will please your father. This is done not for your own sake but for loyalty and filial piety. This wholehearted devotion will induce a favorable effect in your father's mind. Go home and try this. Your father's attitude

should quickly change for the better. This is the marvelous empathy among heaven, earth, and man. Since your father has been ill for a long time and is not expected to live long, your filial duty will be easy to perform for a short time.

The son shed tears of joy and returned home. I heard later that when he returned home the father said, "It seems as though my son has met my feelings and that his perspective has improved more than anything else." And so, the father's willfulness also improved. This is, indeed, superb truth unmeasurable by human knowledge. The son returned to thank [the priest Tsunetomo] because he could rectify himself with both loyalty and filial duty. There is nothing that compares with praying for the path to truth. The prayer will penetrate both heaven and earth. If someone wishes to such an extent that he sheds tears of blood, the wish will reach the gods, [the priest Tsunetomo] said.

(59) It is not good to hold your own opinion. It is wrong to think that anything has already been completed just because a man has devoted himself to holding his own view. The facts that a man first delves for at their inception and then pursues through avid training will not reach fruition in his lifetime. We should not think that this stage of understanding represents fulfillment at that stage. We must realize that we are far from the truth. Throughout our lives we must deeply delve into things to find the way. We must never let our minds rest, but should always train ourselves. Within these means lies the true way.

(60) Some of the articles composed of the words of Yamamoto Jinuemon²² of the previous generation were:

—Once one direction has been found, all eight directions can be understood.

—A man who forces a smile is a poor-spirited fellow, and a woman, a vamp.

—You must look into the eyes of people you are giving a message

²² Yamamoto Jinuemon Shigezumi (1590–1669), the father of Yamamoto Tsunetomo.

to or conversing with. It is sufficient to bow at the beginning, but it is improper to speak with your eyes downcast.

—It is improper to put your hands into your *hakama*.²³

—After reading a copybook or a regular book, you should get rid of it by burning. It is the duty of a court noble to read books, and it is the duty of the Nakano family to display bravery with oak swords.

—A samurai who does not join the group or have a horse is not a samurai.

—An extraordinarily tough man can be depended on.

—A person should get up in the morning at the seventh hour [4:00 a.m.] every day, take a bath, arrange his hair, have breakfast at sunrise, and go to bed at sunset.

—Even if a samurai does not eat, he uses a toothbrush. He attaches a tiger pelt on the outside of his coat and a dog skin inside his coat.²⁴

(61) What should one answer if asked, “How should a man train himself to essentially realize his aim?”

I will try to answer this question. He should at all times have the proper mind. Many people seem to have lost heart. When people have the proper mind their countenance is alive. When someone tries to do myriads of things, one thing naturally arises in his mind. This develops into loyalty to the master, filial duty to parents, and bravery in the deeds of a warrior. This can be applied to a million other things. It is difficult to discover. It is, however, even more difficult to continually retain. There is nothing more important than maintaining this consciousness in the present. (*To be continued.*)

²³ A long divided skirt worn by samurai in public.

²⁴ In this way a samurai does not show his weak points to the outside world, even though he may be suffering on the inside.

Part 2

Hitachi Fudoki

常陸風土記

Text

Namekata County

(The eastern, southern, and western parts face the sea. Ubaraki County lies to the north.)

According to the elders, in the fourth year of Hakuchi [653], during the reign of the emperor who ruled the country from his great palace, Nagara-no-Toyosaki, in Naniha, Sefuotsu-no-shimotsushina¹ Mibu-no-murajimaro, a governor of Ubaraki; Daiken² Mibu-no-atahi-onoko, a governor of Naka; and other officials asked Subeosa³ Mahetsugimi⁴ Takamuko and Mahetsugimi Nakatomi-no-hatorida to separate eight villages from the land of Ubaraki and seven villages from the land of Naka to establish a county with more than 700 households.

The origin of the name of Namekata County is as follows: Emperor Yamatotakeru traveled through the lands under heaven and conquered the lands north of the sea. When he was crossing this land, he came to the clear spring of Tsukino. He approached the water,

¹ There were 26 ranks for officials in the Imperial Court. This system was established by the 38th emperor, Tenji (r. 661–671), in 664. Sefuotsu-no-shimotsushina is the name of the 24th rank.

² The name of the 25th rank in the official Court bureaucracy.

³ The title of officials who supervised more than one province.

⁴ A general term used for high-ranking Court officials.

washed his hands, and, holding jewels, blessed the well. This spring is still in the village of Namekata and is called the "clear well of jewels." He traveled further in his sacred palanquin and came to the hill of Arahara. There he had his meal. At that time, after looking in all four directions, the emperor turned to his servants and said, "After stopping my palanquin, walking around, and lifting my eyes to gaze around me, I have found that the curved lines of the mountains and the shore are intertwined. With clouds floating over the tops of the mountains and fog filling the lower reaches of the valley, the scenery of the land is very interesting, and the landscape much to be admired. Truly the name of the land should be the land of Namekuhashi [beautifully arranged (scenery)]." (According to a saying of the people, because the sudden rain looks as if it falls in a straight line, this land is called Namekata [(drops of rain falling) in rows in the same direction].)

This hill is called Arahara because it appears [*araharu*] high and flat on top. When the emperor descended the hill, he came to the Ohoya River. He got into a small boat, but the rudder broke in two. Perplexed, he called this river the Kajinashi [without rudder] River. This river is the border between the two counties of Ubaraki and Namekata. There are so many kinds of fish in this river that it is impossible to record them all.

When the emperor reached the border of the region from the Kajinashi River, he saw a wild duck flying across the sky. The emperor shot an arrow; the duck was hit right away and fell to the ground. That place is called Kamono [field of the wild duck]. The land is so infertile that neither grass nor trees grow. North of this field, yew, oak, maple, and cypress trees grow quite high, forming a mountain forest. At this place there is a pond called Masu, which was made at the time of Mahetsugimi Takamuko. Katori Shrine lies to the north. The mountain fields near the shrine are fertile, and grass and trees grow there.

A ferry landing is in the west of this region. This is also called the sea of Namekata. Algae, which is used to produce salt [by pouring

salt water over it and burning it], and thick-haired codium [a type of seaweed] grow in the sea. It is impossible to record all the fish in the sea here, but whales have never been seen or heard of.

A shrine dedicated to a terrestrial god⁵ lies in the east of this county. It is called the god of the prefecture. A cold water spring called Ohowi [big well] is found on the shrine land. All men and women living near this area come together to drink from this spring.

A huge zelkova tree stands at the southern gate of the county office. Its northern branch hangs down to touch the ground; the whole tree soars into the sky. In ancient times, there was a brook here. Even now, when there is a long rain, water gathers in pools in the garden of the county office. Mandarin orange trees grow in the village at the edge of this county.

The village of Tega lies in the northwest part of the county. In ancient times, native people who disobeyed the Court, called Tega, lived there. Because of this, their name was affixed to the village. North of this village is a shrine dedicated to the god of Kashima. The mountain fields around the shrine have fertile earth, and quite a few oak, chinquapin, and chestnut trees, as well as bamboo and various kinds of gramineous trees, grow there. The hamlet of Sone lies to the north of this place. In ancient times, native people called Sone-biko lived there. Their name was later affixed to the name of the village. Now there is a relay station there. This is called the relay station of Sone.

According to the elders, during the reign of the emperor who ruled Ohoyashima⁶ from the palace Tamaho-no-miya⁷ in Ihare, there was a man called Matachi from the Yahazu clan. He opened the region by clearing away the reed fields in the valley to the west in

⁵ In the *Kojiki* and the *Nihonshoki*, the gods are classified as *amatsukami* (heavenly gods), who are genealogically related to the Imperial Family, and *kunitsu-kami* (terrestrial gods), who are not.

⁶ Literally the "great eight islands," that is, Japan.

⁷ The 26th emperor, Keitai, who probably ruled in the 5th century. His palace was located in the present Sakurai city, Nara Prefecture.

this county. At this time, the gods of Yatsu [gods of the valley] appeared, slithering forward in a large force. They came on endlessly, attacking from the right and the left, to prevent people from making rice fields. (According to a saying of the people, snakes are referred to as the gods of Yatsu. Their shape is that of a snake with horns on its head. When people escape in a group from the trouble caused by snakes, if they turn back and look, their families will be destroyed, for they will not be able to bear heirs. In truth, quite a few snakes inhabit the fields on the edge of this region.) With anger welling up in his heart because of this, Matachi put on his armor and took up a halberd himself. Then he slaughtered the snakes and chased them away. When he reached the foot of a mountain, he raised a staff to mark the border in the middle of the slope and told the gods of Yatsu, "Let the area above this spot be the land of the gods. The area below this spot shall be made into rice fields for men. From now on, I shall be the priest of the gods and respect and worship you. As long as I do as I have vowed, may you neither curse nor bear a grudge against men." So saying, he is said to have established a shrine and begun to worship them. So, he further cleared away 10 *tokoro* of land for rice fields. Matachi's descendants inherited this among themselves and have continued to worship the gods without interruption to the present day. Later, during the reign of the emperor who ruled the country from the great palace, Nagara-no-Toyosaki, in Naniha, Mibu-no-muraji-Marō occupied this valley for the first time and built a reservoir. At that time, the gods of Yatsu gathered, went up chinquapin trees around the pond, and even though much time passed, they would not leave. So Marō raised his voice and shouted, "This pond has been built to allow men to live. What kind of heavenly gods, whose terrestrial gods, do not follow the imperial precepts?" He then gave an order to the men working on the reservoir, saying, "Thoroughly slaughter every kind of the various things, all kinds of fish and insects, you can see. Do not have fear or hesitate." As soon as he had finished saying these words, the divine snakes escaped and hid themselves. The pond is now called the pond

of Shihiwi. There are *shihi* [chinquapin trees] around the pond. A spring [*wi*] of clear water issues into it and gave its name to the pond. This is on the horse path up to Kashima.

The village of Wotaka lies 7 *sato* to the south in this county. In olden times, there were natives who disobeyed the Court called Wotaka. Because this was where they lived, the village was named after them. The pond, constructed when Mahetsugimi Tagima was the district governor, is still located east of the road. Quite a few boars and monkeys live in the mountains west of the pond. The mountains are thickly covered with grass and trees. To the south lies a whale mound. In the most ancient times, whales floundered, washed ashore, and lay on their sides here. The pond of Kuriya is in this area. This pond got its name because there were large chestnut trees [*kuri*] there. A shrine dedicated to the god Katori⁸ lies to the north.

There is a village called Asafu. In ancient times, flax plants grew beside the pools of water. The circumference of the flax plants was like that of large bamboo, and the length more than one *tsue*. There are mountains around the village. Chinquapin, chestnut, zelkova, and oak trees grow there, and boars and monkeys live there. Wild horses can be found in the mountain fields. During the reign of the emperor who ruled the country from the great palace of Kiyomihara in Asuka,⁹ Takerube-no-okoro-no-mikoto from the village of Ohofu in the same county captured these horses from the fields and presented them to the Imperial Palace. They are called the horses of Namekata. Some people make the mistake of calling them the horses of the village of Ubaraki.

Twenty *sato* to the south in this county is the village of Kasumi. According to an old tradition, Emperor Ohotarashihiko climbed Tomi Hill in Inami in Shimotsufusa Province. He walked around and looked far away. When he turned to the east, he said to the officers

⁸ Katori, like Kashima, has been known as a martial god since ancient times.

⁹ The 40th emperor, Tenmu (r. 673–686). The area in which his palace was situated is now in Asuka village, Nara Prefecture.

accompanying him, "On the sea, blue waves are drifting, and crimson mist is lying over the land. I can see the district between them." People at that time, because of this, named the village Kasumi [mist]. There is a shrine on the mountain east of this village. There, quite a few hackberry, zelkova, chinquapin, and camellia trees, as well as bamboo, arrow bamboo, and mountain sedge grow. A sand bank is in the sea west of this village. It is called the sand bank of Nihibari. The name originates from the fact that when someone stands on the sand bank and looks toward the north, he can see Mt. Tsukuha in the land of Nihibari. This is how it was named.

The hamlet of Itaku is 10 *sato* south of here. This hamlet faces the sea and has a relay station. It is called the relay station of Itaku. To the west is a forest of hackberry trees. During the reign of the emperor in Kiyomihara of Asuka, Prince Womi was sent to live here. In the sea here grows seaweed that is cooked to produce salt, thick-haired codium, surf clams, spiral shellfish, and clams. According to the elders, during the reign of the emperor who ruled Ohoyashima from the palace of Mizugaki-no-miya¹⁰ in Shiki, Takekashima-no-mikoto was sent to the borders of the eastern provinces to pacify unruly bandits. (He was the first ancestor of the governor of Naka.) He took soldiers with him and conquered other savage people on the way. When he gazed toward the eastern part of the sea while he was staying on Aba Island, he noticed smoke, and his soldiers wondered if people might be living there. Takekashima-no-mikoto, looking up into the heavens, vowed, "If this is the smoke of the subjects of the emperor, may it come over and cover me. But if this is the smoke of the savage bandits, may it go fluttering away into the sea." When he said this, the smoke wafted out toward the sea. Thus he knew that these were savage people. Therefore, he ordered his soldiers to eat breakfast early and cross the sea. At that time, two natives who had disobeyed the Court, Yasakashi and Yatsukushi, were living there.

¹⁰ The 10th emperor, Sujin, who probably ruled in the early 4th century. The area in which his palace was situated is now in Sakurai city, Nara Prefecture.

They had become the leaders of the group, dug holes, built a small fortress, and lived there. They spied on the Imperial Army, hid themselves, and defended themselves. When Takekashima-no-mikoto released his soldiers to pursue them, every one of the bandits fled into the fortress and shut the gate to defend it firmly. So, Takekashima-no-mikoto immediately convened a big conference and chose those brave warriors willing to die. They hid themselves in the caves in the mountains and prepared their weapons and swords to destroy the bandits. Then, they buckled on their splendid armor on the shore, formed boat forces, and built rafts. Shaking their large silk sunshades over their heads and flying their beautiful banners high, they played their heavenly flutes and harps as the waves and tides came and went. For seven days and seven nights, they enjoyed themselves, singing and dancing to the Song of Kishima.¹¹ When the bandits heard the splendid music, everyone in the families—men and women—came out and enjoyed themselves on the shore. Takekashima-no-mikoto ordered his cavalry to close the entrance to the fortress. Then, they attacked the bandits from behind, captured all of them, and burned each and every one of them to death at the same time. The place where they carried out this painful [*itaku*] killing is now called the village of Itaku; the place where they cut the people up [*futsuni*] is now called the hamlet of Futsuna; the place where they cut [*kiru*] easily [*yasuku*] is now called the village of Yasukiri; the place where they killed [*saku*] luckily [*e*] is now called the hamlet of Esaki.

A sand bank 3 or 4 *sato* long lies to the south of Itaku. In spring, almost all the men and women from the two counties of Kashima and Namekata come to the shore to pick up many kinds of shells, such as clam shells and surf clams.

The village of Tagima lies 15 *sato* toward the northeast in this region. According to the elders, Emperor Yamatotakeru was traveling around this region, and when he passed this village, there was a native who had disobeyed the Court, called Torihiko, living there.

¹¹ A folk song of Kishima County in Hizen Province (Saga Prefecture).

Because he had disobeyed the emperor's commands, the emperor killed him. Then, as he came to a temporary palace at Yakatano to rest, the narrow road over which his palanquin passed was very rough and uneven [*tagitagishi*]. From the character of the bad road, the village was named Tagima. (Some people call it Tagitagishi.) Although the earth of this land is not rich, the *murasaki* plant¹² grows here. There is a shrine dedicated to two gods [Katori and Kashima]. In the mountain fields that surround it, different varieties of oak and chestnut trees grow as a forest. Many boars, monkeys, and wolves live there.

The village of Kitsu lies to the south of this place. In ancient times, there were two natives who disobeyed the Court, called Kitsu-hiko and Kitsu-hime. When Kitsu-hiko met the emperor, he disobeyed him and acted against his policy, rudely showing disrespect. So, the emperor unsheathed his sword and killed him instantly. Seeing this, the frightened and saddened Kitsu-hime raised a white flag and came out to the road to pay homage to the emperor. The emperor, feeling pity for her, mercifully forgave her family. He traveled around further in his palanquin and came to a temporary palace in Wonukino. Kitsu-hime came with her sisters and served him with all her heart. Ignoring the rain, she continued to serve him day and night. The emperor took pleasure in her complete courtesy and loved her [*uruhashimu*]. This is why this field is called the field of Uruhashi.

The village of Ta lies to the south of this place. When Okinagatarashi-hime was the empress, there was a man called Kotsu-hiko who lived here. He was sent to Kara [Korea] three times. She gave rice fields [*ta*] to him to honor his acts in battle. That is why this village is so called. There is also the field of Hazumu. Emperor Yamato-takeru once lodged on this field and here repaired the tips [*hazu*] of his bows. So, this field is called the field of Hazumu. North of this field is a shrine dedicated to the god of Kashima. The earth around

¹² Purple dye is extracted from the roots of the *murasaki* plant.

it is not fertile, and oak and elm trees, as well as bamboo, grow only in one or two places.

The villages of Afuka and Ohofu are south of this place. According to the elders, when Emperor Yamatotakeru was staying at a temporary palace at Wokazaki in Afuka, the kitchen cottage was set near the sea, and many boats were tied up to form a bridge so that people could walk to the place where the emperor was staying. The village was named Ohofu from the word meaning "feast." Emperor Yamatotakeru's empress, Ohotachibana-hime-no-mikoto, came from Yamato to this place. Since she met [*afu*] him here, the village is called Afuka. [slightly abridged]

Kashima County

(The ocean is to the east; Lake Aze, the boundary between Shimotsufusa Province and Hitachi Province, is to the south; the inlet is to the west; Lake Atakana, the boundary between Naka County and Kashima County, is to the north.)

According to the elders, in the 5th year of Taika [649], during the reign of the emperor who ruled the country from the great palace, Nagara-no-Toyosaki, in Naniha, Daiotsu-no-kamitsushina¹³ Nakatomi-no-[]¹⁴-ko, Daiotsu-no-shimotsushina¹⁵ Nakatomibe-no-unoko, and others petitioned Subeosa Takamuko to establish a region for the gods which was separated by one village to the south of Karuno, a territory of the governor of Unakami in Shimotsufusa, and by five villages to the north of Samuta, a territory of the governor of Naka. Three shrines, one dedicated to the Great Heavenly God, another called Sakato Shrine, and the third called Numao Shrine, were joined together and called the Great Heavenly God of Kashima. From this evolved the name of the county. (A folk story describes the land of Kashima as the place where hail falls.)

When "pure" and "impure" were not clearly separated, before

¹³ The 19th rank in the official Court bureaucracy.

¹⁴ The text is not clear here. One character is missing.

¹⁵ The 21st rank in the official Court bureaucracy.

the heavens and earth were opened up, the ancestral goddess and god (called Kamirumi and Kamirugi by the people) gathered eight million deities together in the Plain of High Heaven. Then, Kamirumi and Kamirugi declared, "Now the place where our descendants will rule shall be Toyoashihara-no-mizuho-no-kuni.¹⁶" The great deity who descended from the Plain of High Heaven is called the Great Heavenly God of Kashima. In heaven, this place was known as the Hi-no-Kashima Shrine and on earth as the Toyo-Kashima Shrine. (According to the sayings of the people, when Kamirumi and Kamirugi decreed that Toyoashihara-no-mizuho-no-kuni be entrusted [to their descendants], the violent gods, and even the stones, trees, and blades of grass, spoke. The land was such that in the daytime there was much noise, like the swarming of flies, and at night it shone with the brilliancy of fire. Therefore, a great god descended from heaven to pacify and rule the land.)

Later, in the reign of Emperor Mimaki, who first ruled the land, ten great swords, two halberds, two iron bows, two sets of iron arrows, four sets of iron armor, a piece of flat iron, a piece of refined iron, one horse, one saddle, two mirrors with eight lines,¹⁷ and one set of thick-woven silk in five colors were dedicated. (According to the people, during his reign, Emperor Mimaki, wearing a big white robe and carrying a white halberd as a staff, went up to the top of Mt. Ohosaka, and he proclaimed the words of the gods: "If you worship the gods, you will be able to rule all the lands that you should rule, both large lands and small." At that time, he gathered 80 clan chiefs, who served the emperor, to whom he related this oracle and asked its meaning. Then Kamukikikatsu-no-mikoto of the great

¹⁶ Literally "Land of the Plentiful Reed Plains and of the Fresh Rice-ears." An epithet for Japan used by the gods in the heavens.

¹⁷ *Yata-no-kagami*: Although *yata* literally means "eight lines," it in reality refers to a complex pattern with many lines on the back of a mirror. In the *Kojiki* and the *Nihonshoki*, this type of mirror was used in the ritual to lure Amaterasu out of the rock cave. It was then given to the first emperor of Japan as one of the Three Sacred Treasures.

family of Nakatomi¹⁸ answered, "This is the oracle given by the great heavenly god living in the land of Kashima, who told you that you should rule all the land known by you in the land of Ohoyashima." The emperor, when he heard this, was surprised and filled with awe. He put the offerings mentioned above away in the sacred palace.)

The number of households under the shrine is 65. (It was originally eight. Fifty were added during the reign of the emperor at Naniha,¹⁹ and nine were added during the reign of the emperor at Kiyomihara in Asuka. This made a total of 67. In the fourth year of the Empress Jitō [690], two were removed, and the population was officially set at 65.)

During the reign of the emperor at Ohotsu in Afumi,²⁰ people were sent to build the shrine of the god for the first time. Since then, repairs and reconstruction have never stopped

Every year, in July, a boat is built and dedicated at a shrine near the sea. According to the elders, during the reign of Emperor Yamatotakeru, the great heavenly deity told Ohosayama-no-mikoto of the Nakatomi clan, "Now dedicate the sacred boat and thus serve me." Ohosayama-no-mikoto responded, "I humbly accept your order. I could not possibly reject it." The great heavenly deity, after the dawn, told him, "I have placed your boat on the sea." When he looked, the owner of the boat [Ohosayama-no-mikoto] found the boat on the land. The great heavenly deity said, "I have placed your boat on the land." When the owner looked again, he found the boat again on the sea. This kind of thing happened not just two or three

¹⁸ One of the priestly clans who served at the Imperial Court. They traced their lineage to Ame-no-koyane-no-mikoto, who played an important ritual role in the Plain of High Heaven and descended with Ninigi-no-mikoto, the grandson of Amaterasu and ancestor of the Imperial Family. The main Nakatomi family later became the Fujiwara, the family with the most influential role in the Heian Period (794–1191).

¹⁹ Emperor Kōtoku (see TRADITIONS, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 27n.)

²⁰ The 38th emperor, Tenji (r. 661–671). Ohotsu in Afumi is now Ōtsu city in Shiga Prefecture.

times. He was immediately awed and humbled. So he had three new boats, each 2-*tsue* long, built and dedicated them for the first time.

Every year, on the tenth day of the fourth month, a festival was held, and sake drunk. People from the Urabe clan,²¹ both men and women, gathered together, drank sake, enjoyed themselves, sang, and danced, as many days passed and night was added to night. One song goes as follows:

*Arasaka no kami no misake wo
tage to ihikebakamoyo
aga ehinikemu*

Perhaps because I was told to drink the sacred
and strong sake of a new brew
I am now drunk

The area around the shrine of this deity is inhabited by the Urabe clan. The land, high and evenly flat, faces the sea to the east and the west. The uninhabited area overlaps with the inhabited area like dog's teeth. Trees in the mountains and grass in the fields grow like a roughly-woven fence with an inner yard. The streams in the valleys and the springs from the cliffs are prepared as drinking water in the morning and evening. Cottages were built on the top of the mountain, with pine trees and bamboo defending them from beyond the hedge. A well was dug at the lower part of the valley, and ivy leaves cover the cliff. When people pass this village in the spring, they find flowers blooming beautifully among hundreds of blades of grass. When people walk along these roads in the autumn, they find leaves as colorful as brocade on the thousands of trees. The border of the area is said to be the place where the sacred hermits live and where the gods came into existence. The abundant beauty of this area cannot be recorded in detail.

The county office lies to the south of this shrine. Numao Pond

²¹ The Urabe traced their lineage to the same ancestor as the Nakatomi. They also performed a ritual function in the Court.

lies to the north of the shrine. According to the elders, this watery swamp has flowed from heaven since the age of the gods. The lotus roots have quite a unique taste, and they are far sweeter than those of other areas. If those who are sick eat the lotus of this swamp, they are healed quickly. Quite a few crucians and carp live there. Many mandarin oranges planted where the county office once was also taste good.

Takamatsu Beach is 2 or 3 *sato* towards the east in this county. Sand and shells carried by the ocean have piled up and formed a high hill. Pine trees grow to form a forest mixed with chinquapin and oak trees, and it is just like a mountain field. There is a spring to the southeast of this area at the foot of the pine trees. Its circumference is about 8 or 9 *ashi*, and its water is clear and very good. In the first year of the Kyōun Era [704], the lord of this district, Uneme-no-asomi, with a blacksmith named Sabi-no-ohomaro, and others gathered the iron on the shore of Wakamatsu and made swords. Thirty *sato* south of here, there is nothing but a pine [covered] mountain on the shore of Wakamatsu in the village of Karuno, and *matsuhodo* and *nearu-matsuhodo*²² are dug up every year. The Wakamatsu shore is the location of the mouth of the Aze River, which marks the boundary between the two provinces of Hitachi and Shimotsufusa. The sandy iron found here is good for making swords. However, because this is the sacred mountain of Kashima, heedlessly entering the area, cutting down pine trees, and digging out iron is not possible.

The village of Hama lies 20 *sato* to the south in this county. There is a large swamp in the pine mountains east of the village. It is called Samuta and is some 4 to 5 *sato* around. Carp and crucians live there. The rice fields in the two villages of Shima and Karuno are irrigated from it. A big boat once drifted to the shore east of Karuno. It was 15 *tsue* long and 1 *tsue* wide. It was buried in the sand, where it

²² *Matsuhodo* and *nearu-matsuhodo* are medicinal herbs that grow under pine trees.

decayed, and it remains there. (It is said that, during the reign of the emperor at Afumi, a shipbuilder from Ihaki in Michinoku Province was ordered to build a big boat to investigate the innermost part of the county of Ihaki. When the boat reached the shore here, it was wrecked.)

The “pine field of Unawi”²³ lies to the south. In ancient times, there was a young man and woman here. (According to the people, they were called “Boy of the Gods” and “Girl of the Gods.”) The man was called Iratsuko²⁴ of Samuta in Naka, and the woman was called Iratsume²⁵ of Aze in Unakami. Both of them were perfect in appearance and shone in their home villages. They heard of each other and had the same longings. They lost control of themselves. The months passed and day overlapped day until they accidentally met at an *utagaki*²⁶ (people called this *utagaki* or *kagahi*). At that time, Iratsuko composed the following song:

Iyazeru no Aze no komatsu ni
yufu shidete wa wo furimiyumo
Aze-koshima hamo

When she hung the clothes on a small pine
tree of Aze

I saw them waving to me
From the small island of Aze

Iratsume responded with the poem:

²³ There are two interpretations of the word “*unawi*.” One asserts that it means “young boys and girls”; the other, that it is a corruption of the word meaning “beach” (*unahi*).

²⁴ A term of endearment for young boys.

²⁵ A term of endearment for young girls.

²⁶ An *utagaki* was an ancient religious festival of spring and fall in which local people gathered in the mountains, danced, exchanged songs, and drank sake. Folklorists think that these festivals were marriage proposal feasts.

*Ushiho ni ha tatamu to ihedo
nase no ko ga yasoshima gakuri
wa wo misabashiri*

Even though I said I would stand in the tide
You saw me hiding among eighty islands²⁷
And came running to me

They wanted to talk with each other at once, but afraid of being discovered by the others, they avoided the area around the *utagaki*. They hid under a pine tree, took each other's hands, placed their knees together, and expressed their feelings of love. They were released from their old love-sick feeling that had built up and smiled, overcome with a new joy. This was the season when dewdrops like jewels were on the twigs of the trees and the autumn wind gently blew against the trees. It was where the clear moon shines brightly, where crying cranes fly over, going west. It was where the whispering pine-wind sings, where traveling geese fly over, going east. The mountains are quiet and lonely, and a spring trickles out of the rock. The night is calm and lonely with new frost. In the near mountains, colors look as though they are dyed on the maple forests, and in the far ocean, only a voice crying among the blue waves can be heard. Here there is no greater happiness than this one. Giving in to the sweetness of their dialogue, they completely forgot that the day was dawning. Suddenly a rooster cried, dogs barked, the sky brightened, and it was day. Not knowing what to do, the pair, ashamed of being seen by others, transformed themselves into pine trees. Iratsuko is now called Nami-matsu and Iratsume is now called Kotsu-matsu. They were so named long ago, and the name has not been changed to today.

The village of Shirotori lies 30 *sato* north in this region. According to the elders, during the reign of Emperor Ikume,²⁸ swans [*shiratori*]

²⁷ "Eighty islands" refers to many islands, and, by extension, to the large number of people who came to the *utagaki* from Iratsume's home district.

²⁸ The 11th emperor, Suinin, who probably ruled in the 4th century.

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came flying from heaven and were transformed into maidens. At night they flew back up to heaven, and the next morning they flew down again. They picked up stones and made a pond. When they tried to build its dike, they spent days and months in vain, for each time a dike was built, it soon crumbled and was incomplete. Each maiden sang,

*Shirotori no ha ga tsutsumi wo
tsutsumutomo
arafu mashiroki ha koe*

We tried to build a dike with our white wings, but
How broken and pale our poor shattered wings
have become

And, as they sang this song, they went back up to heaven, never to come down again. Because of this, that area is named the village of Shirotori. [slightly abridged]

The plain that lies south of this place is called the beach of Tsunore. According to tradition, there was a huge snake here in ancient times. Wishing to reach the sea in the east [Pacific Ocean], it made a hole, digging under the beach, but its horns [*tsuno*] broke [*ore*] and fell off. That is why this place has been so named. Some people say that when Emperor Yamatotakeru lodged on this beach and a meal was offered, there was no water at all. So he picked up a deerhorn to dig the earth, but the horn broke. This is why the place is so named. [slightly abridged]

Naka County

(The ocean lies to the east, the counties of Kashima and Ubaraki to the south, the big mountain forming the boundary between Shimotsukeno Province and Nihibari County to the west, and Kuji County to the north.)

[slightly abridged] Ohokushi Hill is 12 *sato* west of the Hiratsu

relay station. In ancient times, there were people here. They were extremely tall and large. They lived on top of the hill but used their hands to dig up large clams on the seashore. After they ate the clams, the shells piled up to form a mound. Taking the meaning of the word "*ohokujiri*" [digging up large (clams)], the people now call the mound Ohokushi Hill. Their footprints are about 40 *ashi* long and 20 *ashi* wide. The hole into which urine is discharged has a diameter of about 20 *ashi*. [slightly abridged]

The village of Ubaraki. There is a high hill called Mt. Kurefushi north of this village. According to the elders, there were two persons, an elder brother and younger sister, here. The brother was called Nukabiko, and the sister, Nukabime. When she was staying in her room, a man, whose name is unknown, visited her often to court her. He came in the evenings and left again in the mornings. Finally, they got married. She became pregnant in one night. When the month came for her to bear the child, she finally gave birth to a small snake. It did not talk during the day, but at night, it talked with its mother. With this, the mother and her brother were surprised and wondered in their hearts if the child might be divine. So they placed it in a purified cup, erected an altar, and put it there. During one night, it grew to fill the cup. When it was transferred to a plate larger than the cup, it grew to fill the plate. After having transferred it to a larger container three or four times, they had no other container they could use. So the mother said to the child, "Judging from your ability, it is obvious that you are a divine child. The power and wealth of our tribe are not sufficient for your upbringing. Go where your father is. You should not stay here." The child grew sad and wept. Wiping its face, it replied, "I humbly accept my mother's orders. I would not dare to reject them. However, I will have to go out alone. There is no one at all to go with me. My only hope is that you will have the mercy to let one child go with me." The mother said, "The only two members in our family are your mother and uncle. You obviously know this. There is no one who could possibly accompany you." Then the child filled with anger and said not a word. When the time

came to part, anger overcame him, and he killed his uncle with thunder. When he was about to go up to the heavens, his shocked mother picked up a plate, threw it, and hit him. This made it impossible for the child to ascend. Therefore, he stayed on the mountain. The jar and plate where he had been placed are still in the hamlet of Katawoka. The descendants of the child have built a shrine and hold festivals that have been transmitted without interruption. [slightly abridged]

There is a relay station on both sides of the Aha River northeast of that area. (Originally, the relay station was called Kafuchi [surrounded by a river] because the river flowed around the stations. So even now the station is called as it originally was.) To the south, a spring comes out from the middle of a slope. The water is abundant and extremely clear. It is called Sarashi-wi [bleaching spring]. The women living in villages near the spring come together in the summer months to wash, bleach, and dry their clothes. [slightly abridged]

Kuji County

(The ocean lies to the east, and Naka County is to the south and west. The mountains that form the border between Taka County and Michinoku Province are to the north.)

According to the elders, a small hill stands not far toward the south in the region. Its shape resembles a whale [*kujira*]. Emperor Yamatotakeru named the region Kuji. [slightly abridged]

In the reign of the emperor who ruled the country under heaven from the great palace of Ohotsu in Afumi, Karu-no-atai-satomaro was sent to investigate the people of Fujiwara-no-Uchi-no-Ohomi²⁹ and build a reservoir. The place north of the pond is called Mt. Taniahi. A sheer cliff there that looks like a single plain rock is yellow in color and has holes in it. Monkeys gather, stay there all the time, and eat.

The village of Kafuchi lies 20 *sato* to the northwest. Originally it

²⁹ Fujiwara Kamatari (614–669), also known as Nakatomi Kamatari, the founder of the Fujiwara family.

was called the village of Koko. (According to the sayings of the people, people imitated the voices of monkeys by saying “*koko.*”) There is a stone mirror in the mountains to the east. In ancient times, there were ogres there. They gathered, played with the mirror by peering into it, and then went away. (According to the people, it is said that when even a fierce ogre looked into the mirror, he defeated himself.) The earth there, which is as blue as indigo, would be beautiful used in paints. (The people called it *aoni* or *kakitsuni.*) At that time, this earth was picked up and dedicated by Imperial decree. The source of the Kuji River is here. [slightly abridged]

The village of Shidori is 10 *sato* to the west. In very ancient times, there was no one who knew how to weave *shizu* [patterned cloth]. But, then, *shizu* was woven for the first time. The village was named accordingly.³⁰ A small stream flows in the north. It looks like there are blue agates mixed together in its waters. These stones are good for flintstones. Therefore, the river is called the Tama [jewel].

The village of Yamada [mountain rice fields] is 2 *sato* north in this region. Much of it has been made into newly-cultivated rice fields. That is why this place is so called. A clear river there with its source in the northern mountains flows near the south side of the county hall and meets the Kuji River. Quite a few *ayu* [sweetfish] can be caught. They are as large as an arm. The bank of the river is called Ihato. Densely-growing trees form a forest. A deep pool of clear water flows above the waterfall and then flows downward with a murmuring sound. Green leaves turn in the wind like silk sleeves obstructing the view; white sand seems to be a mat on which little wavelets dance. On hot days during the summer months, people come from villages, both distant and near, to avoid heat and seek coolness. With their knees side by side, holding each other's hands, they sing the festival songs of Tsukuha and drink the delicious sake of Kuji. Even though this is human enjoyment, we can completely forget the

³⁰ “*Oru*” is a word meaning “to weave.” The combination of “*shizu*” (patterned cloth) and “*ori*” (weaving) became “Shidori.”

worries within the dust [human world]. There is a cliff in the hamlet of Ohotomo near there. The earth [on the cliff] is yellow in color. Birds come in flocks to pick up clay to eat.

The shrine of Nagahatabe stands in the village of Ohota, 7 *sato* to the east in this region. According to the elders, when Sume-mima-no-mikoto³¹ descended from heaven, a goddess named Kamuhatahime-no-mikoto descended with him to weave him a robe on Mt. Futagami in Himuka in Tsukushi Province. Then she reached the hill of Hikitsune in Mino Province. Later, during the reign of Emperor Mimaki, Tate-no-mikoto, an early ancestor of the Nagahatabe clan, left Mino and moved to Kuji, built a building for weaving, and wove for the first time. The clothing that he wove was in itself a noble robe without any need of cutting and sewing. This was called a *utsuhata* [complete robe]. It is also said that, when he wove thick silk, he closed the doors and wove in the darkness, because otherwise he would have been easily seen by people. Therefore, it is called *utsuhata* [robe of crows]. Strong, powerful, soldiers, even strong, sharp swords, could not cut it. Now it has been consecrated and dedicated as an offering to the gods [of the Nagahatabe Shrine].

The village of Satsu lies north of here. In olden times, natives who had disobeyed the Court, called Tsuchikumo, lived there. But Unakami-no-mikoto set up warriors, who punished and destroyed them. Then, because they had been able to kill them easily, he said, "We are very lucky." Therefore, the village is called Satsu [lucky]. The white earth of the northern mountains is suitable for being used as paint.

A large mountain located to the east is called the tall peak of Kabire. A heavenly god called Tachihayawo-no-mikoto lives there. His other name is Hayafuwake-no-mikoto. Originally, he descended from heaven and sat on a pine tree in Matsuzaha. He sat on the part

³¹ Sume-mima-no-mikoto, literally "grandson of the heavenly god," refers to Ninigi-no-mikoto, the grandson of Amaterasu, who descended from the heavens to pacify the land. He is the progenitor of the Imperial Family.

of the pine tree where many branches came out from the trunk. The evil spells of the god were quite severe. When anyone turned to the pine tree to discharge his liquid or solid wastes, the god indicated his wrath by inflicting a painful sickness upon him. The people living nearby suffered greatly all the time, and so they explained the situation to the emperor, entreating him to give them relief. Katawoka-no-Ohomuraji was sent to pay homage and respect to the god. He prayed, "If you remain here now, the farmers living nearby will loathe you day and night. It is not right for you to stay here. So, you should move and settle in the sacred area high in the mountains." The shrine was surrounded by a stone wall, and many people served there. Various treasures, bows, halberds, iron pots, and other vessels all have turned to stone and still remain there. The various birds that passed this mountain all flew quickly and never passed over the top of the mountain. It was so in ancient times, and it is so today. At that place, there is a stream called the Satsu River. Its source is in the northern mountains, and it flows south to join the Kuji River. [slightly abridged]

The village of Mitsuki is 2 *sato* northeast of what is called Takechi. There is a clear spring inside the village. People call it Ohowi. It is cold during the summer and warm during the winter. Its water flows out to form a river. When it is hot during the summer, men and women gather from villages near and far, bring sake and fish, and enjoy themselves by resting, playing, and drinking. The south and east sides of the village face the sea. (Sea-ear, sea-urchin, and other shellfish and fish are abundant.) Mountains rise on the north and west sides of the village. (Chinquapin, oak, Japanese nutmeg, and chestnut trees grow. Deer and boars live there.) It is impossible to record all of the delicious things from the sea and the mountains.

The relay station of Sukekaha is 20 *sato* northeast of this village. Formerly, it was called Afuka. According to the elders, when Emperor Yamatotakeru came here, his wife, the empress, came to meet [afu] him. So it was named accordingly. When Mahetsugimi Kume became the lord of this district, the river was renamed Suke because

salmon can be caught in it. (According to a saying of the people, the ancestors of salmon [*sake*] were called *suke*.)

Taka County

(The ocean is to the south and east, and the high mountains that form the boundary between Michinoku and Hitachi provinces are to the west and north.)

According to the elders, during the reign of the emperor who ruled Ohoyashima from the palace Takaanaho-no-miya³² in Shiga, Takemisahi-no-mikoto was appointed governor of the county of Taka. When he came to the area for the first time, he traveled throughout the county and named it Taka because the mountains were deep and high [*taka(shi)*]. (Takemisahi-no-mikoto is from the Izumo-no-omi.³³ Today, this is called Taka and Ihaki. According to the sayings of the people, it was also called Komomakura Taka.)

When Takemisahi-no-mikoto was sent, he made the Suke River, which is the border between Kuji and Taka, the [southern] entrance [to Taka County]. (The village 30 *sato* southwest of the county office is even today called the village of Michinokuchi [entrance to the land].) He also made the hamlet of Kuma the exit to Ihaki County in Michinoku Province. Later, during the reign of the emperor who ruled the country from the great palace, Nagara-no-Toyosaki in Naniha, in the 4th year of Hakuchi [653], Ihaki-no-Atahi-Miyabe, the governor of Taka County; Shikoaka of the Miyatsukobe of Ihaki County; and others petitioned Mahetsugimi Takamuko to divide the district into Taka and Ihaki, because the area ruled was so vast that it was inconvenient to come and go, passing through the distant places in the district. (The county of Ihaki is now within the boundaries of Michinoku Province.)

³² The 13th emperor, Seimu, who probably ruled in the 4th century. The area in which his palace was situated is in Ōtsu city, Shiga Prefecture.

³³ Izumo-no-omi is the clan founded by Ame-no-hohi-no-mikoto. (See TRADITIONS, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 28n.)

The hamlet of Akita is in the village of Michinokuchi. According to the elders, Emperor Yamatotakeru stayed in the fields here while he was inspecting the remote areas to the east. At that time, one man said, "Herds of deer too numerous to count flock to the tops of the fields. Their towering antlers look like a field of withered reeds. When they exhale, they resemble hills of morning fog. There are also abalone in the sea that are about 8 *saka* long. There are also various other delicious things and many fish to catch." So the emperor went out onto the field and sent Empress Tachibana to the sea to fish. They went separately to search for things of the mountains and those of the sea in order to compete for the largest catch. At that time, the hunting in the fields was completely unsuccessful, for not even one animal was caught, although they hunted and shot arrows all day long. Catches from the sea were rather small, but each fish had a hundred different flavors. When the meal was served after they had finished fishing and hunting, [Emperor Yamatotakeru] said to his servants, "In today's hunting and fishing, the empress and I went separately to the fields and the sea and competed with each other for the amount of the catch. (People call the catch *sachi*.) There was no catch from the fields, but we were satisfied enough after eating all the delicious catch from the sea." In a later age, the village was named Akita [enough] after this story.

When Kahara-no-sukune-kuromaro was the lord of Hitachi Province, an image of Kanzeon Bosatsu³⁴ was carved into the stone wall beside the ocean. It remains there even today. Therefore, the shore there is called Hotoke [Buddha].

The relay station for Meshima lies 30 *sato* south of that area. On the southeast shore, there are pebbles that can be used in Go. Their color resembles that of gems. What are called the beautiful Go pieces of Hitachi are found only on this beach. In ancient times, when Emperor Yamatotakeru got on a boat and floated on the sea to

³⁴ Kanzeon Bosatsu refers to the bodhisattva Kannon (Avalokiteśvara), the goddess of mercy.

enjoy viewing the shore of the island, he found various kinds of seaweed growing densely. Therefore, the island was so named [Meshima—*island of seaweed*]. And so it is now.

Part 3

Towazu-gatari

とはずがたり

Introduction

Beginning as a concubine of the retired emperor, Go-Fukakusa, Nijō at the age of 15 suddenly entered into a parallel love affair with a man who had been one of her childhood friends. Because of this relationship, which Nijō herself thought horrible, her life began its step-by-step progress toward tragedy. Even though the distortions created by the life of love and lust at the court are softened by the special veil of a brilliant, noble society, the revenge of life can hardly be expected to pass them by. *Towazu-gatari* faithfully records the emotional contradictions of Nijō's life in a world that encouraged yet condemned her promiscuity. Unable to reconcile the gap between appearance and reality, Nijō felt the beginning of life's revenge as a burden of sorrow no novel can truly express. Although Nijō herself tries to avoid awareness of the fact, the extraordinary long journey undertaken during the last half of her life can be understood as one aspect of a person suffering the consequences of her past acts. The literary value of this diary permeated with constant, unshakable self-criticism will perhaps increase with future study.

The question remains: Who is Nijō's lover? He is given no name until the second part of the manuscript, and then is called only by the pseudonym of "Yuki no Akebono" (Snowy Dawn). An established theory among scholars is that her lover was Saionji Sanekane.

Sanekane was representative of the Saionji family, then among

the highest nobility. He was six years younger than his cousin, Go-Fukakusa. He was nine years older than another cousin, Nijō, the writer of *Towazu-gatari*. When Go-Fukakusa later gained political domination, Sanekane gave his daughter, Shōshi, entry into the court as second consort to the emperor. He occupied the high position of *naidaijin* (minister of the interior) when he was 43 years old. He advanced to the position of *dajō daijin* (chancellor) when he was 45 and both enjoyed and abused his reputation in the world.

His covert role as Nijō's lover came to an end when she was in her early 20s. However, even after Nijō became a nun, he continued to protect her as her patron. What was the deep abyss of the heart opened between these two persons? It was natural that Nijō wanted to carefully conceal her enduring relation with this man of influence, a tie sometimes broken off but never really ended. Taken as a whole, the true record of Nijō's life is a fascinating, and touching, study of the depths of a human heart.

Text
A Love Game

Not much time had passed since the dawn of that day [when Nijō's father died], when a guest visited me by moonlight on the tenth day of the "Long Month" [ninth month of the lunar calendar] and said, "How is it with you?"

Since it was a time when everything was black, his appearance in patternless casual clothes of the court was indistinguishable from my color [of lamentation]. I met him at the south side of the main building, so that I need not convey my words through an intermediary. We talked throughout the night of happy and sad affairs now and in the past.

Sometimes we laughed and sometimes wept as we said, "This year was sadder than other, usual years. There has been no time for sleeves [wet with tears to dry]. At a certain feast during a past snowy night you said that we should meet in this way often.¹ I thought that it was your feeling [for me]."

As we talked, the night passed, and the sound of a temple bell could be heard announcing the dawn. Birds chirped while there were still words left unsaid in the autumn night [too short] for lovers.

He said, "It may be rumored that my morning return is not usual."

With sadness filling my heart I wrote,

わかれしもけさの名残をとりそへて

おきかさねぬる袖の露かな

Wakareshimo kesa no nagori wo torisoete

okikasanenuru sode no tsuyu kana

To that other parting is added this morning's sadness
On sleeves already damp, still more dew falls

¹ According to Dr. Tsugita Kasumi in the *Nihon Koten Zensho* edition of *Towazu-gatari* (Tōkyō: Asahi Shinbun-sha, 1966), it was Nijō's father

I had a maidservant carry this poem to his waiting carriage.
[He sent back a poem.]

名残とはいかがが思はん別れにし
袖の露こそひまなかるらめ
Nagori to wa ikaga omowan wakare nishi
sode no tsuyu koso himanakarurame
How can the dew on your sleeves be thought
to be from the memory of me?
It is your separation from your father,
with whom you were so close

Today, while I was recalling that night and all to the extent of recapturing the intimacy of my arm serving as a pillow for my lover, a samurai wearing formal dark-red warrior's dress and holding a letter case stood at the middle gate. This was his messenger. The letter was written in minute detail:

忍ぶあまりただうたたねの手枕に
露かかりきと人やとがむる
Shinobuamari tada utatane no tamakura ni
tsuyu kakarikito hito ya togamuru
People will criticize me for the dew falling
on my sleeves
But I simply dozed on my arm as a pillow

Since I was sentimental and used to feel such love games entertaining, I wrote him in minute detail:

秋の露はなべて草木におく物を
袖にのみとは誰かとかめん
Aki no tsuyu wa nabete kusaki ni okumono wo
sode ni nomi to wa tareka togamen

who advised them to meet often. Dr. Tsugita interprets the remarks to mean, "Look in on her often."

The autumn dew usually falls on grass and trees
Who can be blamed for its falling on my sleeves?

Passing Each Other By

On the forty-ninth day [the end of mourning], a Buddhist ceremony was held under the chief mourner, General Masaaki.² After the respected chief priest of Kawara-in temple intoned the well-known passage, “under the bedcovers of the mandarin ducks and the vow of *hiyoku*³ . . .” and the ceremony with its well-known passages had ended, the Buddhist prelate Kenjichi conducted a memorial service with the Lotus Sutra that had been copied by my father himself on the back of such things as old letters.

Many prominent persons, such as Dainagon Sanjō-bōmon, Dainagon Madeno-kōji, and Dainagon Zenshōji,⁴ came to hear the sutras. Religious services for the repose of the dead followed one after another. Their parting filled me with sorrow. Since we would pass each other by on that day,⁵ I went to stay at the house of my old wet-nurse at Sanjō-ōmiya. When returning, the dew was dense on my sleeves, and I had no way [to lament my fortune]. People had gathered together, but now I had to part from those who had been speaking words of consolation. It was difficult to express the feelings deep within my heart now that I was alone.

² Minamoto no Masaaki, Nijō's half-brother and vice-minister of the Sakonoefu, one of the six agencies charged with guarding the Imperial Palace.

³ Symbols of conubial happiness. Mandarin ducks are said to go everywhere together as husband and wife; the *hiyoko* is a mythical bird whose left eye and wing are male and whose right eye and wing are female.

⁴ Sanjō-bōmon: Minamoto no Michiyori; Madeno-kōji: Minamoto no Morochika; both Nijō's first-cousins once-removed.

Zenshōji: Shijō Takaaki, Nijō's uncle.

⁵ That is, the relatives would no longer be together after the end of mourning for Nijō's father.

An Unexpected New Pillow

While I was sunk in gloom for so many days, the former emperor secretly came to me and said, "Since it is a time when everyone is wearing dark clothes [of mourning for the emperor], I think that even though you may be wearing your mourning clothes you should come to me after the fifty days of religious services are over.

Even though he had come to me, I [still] felt grief-stricken, and I stayed in. On the twenty-third day of the ninth month, the forty-ninth day [after her father's death], even the sound of the insects faintly chirping sounded desolate, as though calling to the dew on my sleeves. I received word from the former emperor as follows: "You have been staying at home so much. Why? Why?"

I was not moved, however, and did not feel like attending at his palace. And then it was the "Month without Gods" [tenth month].

Around the tenth of the month another messenger came to me. The letter read: "Longing to speak to you day by day, I did not know when my messenger might come across the former emperor's messenger. So, against my desires the days have passed unexpectedly."

The house where I was staying was on the corner of Shijō and Ōmiya. Thorns called *sarutori*⁶ grew in the destroyed part of the wall that faced Ōmiya and Shijō. The thorns grew over the wall, and two big stems could be seen.

Looking at these, the messenger asked, "Is there any guard for this house?"

Someone answered, "No."

Then the messenger said, "Then this will be a good passage."

The messenger was said to have cut off the thorn stems with his sword. I wondered what meaning this had and could not understand these proceedings.

From the moonlight it seemed about the time of the rat [midnight] when someone stealthily tapped on one of the doors.

⁶ The smilax plant, a kind of thorn.

A maid called Chūjō said, "Is that the call of a moorhen? What an unexpected call." She opened the door and then said in a loud voice, "The man standing here says that he wants to see you where he is standing."

Since this was totally unexpected, I was utterly speechless. No words of answer came to me. I simply remained silent in astonishment. The maid's voice seemed to lead the man in my direction, and he soon reached my side. He was dressed in a casual robe with a woven maple-leaf pattern and in light purple trousers, both of which were loose fitting, clearly indicating a secret visit to a lover.

I said to him, "If you really care for me, then let's meet at Mt. Nochise."⁷

Although I had strongly said that I would evade him that night, he would not accept it, by saying, "Since you are in such a delicate condition, I will behave with complete decorum and simply talk about my heart filled with love for you for these many months and years. Even the god of the Mimosuso River⁸ would allow me to simply doze by your side."

Since he had vowed this so innocently and I was weak, I did not have the strength even to say "No." And so he came, even into my bedroom. Throughout the long night his attitude in talking about various things was such that even the T'ang [Chinese] tiger⁹ would have been moved to tears. Even though my heart was neither made of stone nor like a tree, and I did not think I was risking my life, I was very afraid that the former emperor might see my unexpected new pillow in a dream.

Surprised by the sound of a bird, he left me while the night was still deep. I felt sad at his parting and did not think I could fall asleep

⁷ A mountain in Wakasa Province (now Fukui Prefecture) that figures prominently in the poems of the *Manyōshū* (compiled in the 8th century). A poetic allusion signifying "the next meeting."

⁸ The Isuzu River near the Ise Shrine.

⁹ A metaphor for a strong man.

again. However, I remained in bed, and before the eastern sky dawned, a letter arrived. He wrote:

かへるさは涙にくれて有明の
月さへつらきしのめの空
Kaerusa wa namida ni kurete ariake no
tsuki sae tsuraki shinonome no sora
On my way home my eyes were dim with tears
Even the wan morning moon of the dawn
was bitter for me

It continued, "I had worried until now about how filled with love for you I had become. But now my love can never perish. How completely conscious I am of this world of sadness."

I answered with a poem:

帰るさのたもととはしらずおもかげは
袖の涙にありあけのそら
Kaerusa no tamoto wa shirazu omokage wa
sode no namida ni ariake no sora
I wonder if my face was reflected in your sleeves
on your way home
But your face is reflected in my sleeves of tears

While I was in my present condition, I tried to avoid him with all my might, but it was all in vain. Yet there was no way for me to complain. It had been conjectured that my future would progress very slowly. I was weeping silently, unseen by anyone, when around noon a letter arrived.

"I wonder what you have in mind by living at that house for so long. With so few people here, there is no one who can divert His Majesty."

That the letter was written more affectionately than usual moved me.

Favorite White Wine

When it grew dark but before it was very late, he called on me again. I was utterly astonished. I felt as though this kind of thing was happening for the first time and could utter not a single word. My nurse's husband had left the house to live with the priest on Senbon Avenue after he joined the priesthood, and since then no male had ever frequented this house.

The husband had, however, come to say, "Tonight I will make a rare visit to this house." My nurse's children also gathered together, and their clamor made me more and more upset. Furthermore, my old nurse, unlike someone raised in the old palace, was not the least bit considerate [about love affairs] and only raised a clamor. I was depressed because she was behaving like the foster mother of Princess Imahime.¹⁰ I was wondering what would happen. Since I thought it best that she not know that someone was in my room, I blew out the candle, seemingly to enjoy the moonlight, and let my guest remain in my bedroom. I was leaning on a hibachi near the shōji when my old nurse appeared.

While I was thinking how vexing this was, she said, "Autumn nights are very long. My husband says he will make a bonfire and entertain you. Would you mind coming to join us?"

As she spoke her appeal I got even more upset.

"Let us do something together. So-and-so and so-and-so are here."

She continued to say the names of her real and foster children, talking about the feast they were going to have. It was as annoying as counting the baths in Iyo.¹¹

Saddened, I considered her point of view and answered, "I am too morose."

¹⁰ A character in *Sagoromo Monogatari*, a romance written between 1069 and 1077.

¹¹ A famous hot spring area in what is now Ehime Prefecture. It was a favorite pleasure spot of the court nobility from before the 7th century.

She then answered, "As usual, you aren't listening to what I say." Then she stood up. She was always grumbling that young girls should stay near their parents, and the like. Since my usual room was next to the garden just like hers, we could hear all the various sounds. All the noise reminded me of the sound made in Yūgao's house when the T'ang mortar was stepped on.¹² I was totally miserable by this time.

Since I was sad at giving up the idea of repeating what I had said or continuing in the same vein as before, I thought I would continue when the house quietened down. Just as they were going to sleep, a man came and knocked loudly on the gate. It was none other than Nakayori.¹³

He said, "I was late because I was waiting on His Majesty." He continued, "There is an oxcart with an eight-leaf design¹⁴ standing at the Ōmiya corner. When I went to look inside, I found it filled with sleeping attendants. The ox had already been tied to the shaft. Where has the owner of the cart gone?"

As I coolly listened to his words, the old nurse said, "Send someone to see whose cart it is."

Next I heard the voice of the nurse's husband say, "Sending someone to see is useless. There is no need to look into other people's business. If he is someone who is paying a secret visit to a person who is staying at her birthplace, he is presumably waiting eagerly near the ruined part of the wall hoping that the barrier-station guards will sleep. Whether a woman is of high or low birth, you must keep an eye on her, even when she has a child at her breast."

The old nurse replied, "How can you say that! Who's going to

¹² A reference to an incident in *Genji Monogatari*, a romance written by Lady Murasaki in the early 11th century. Genji and Lady Yūgao were sleeping together when they were disturbed by the sound of a mortar exploding outside.

¹³ A son of Nijō's nurse.

¹⁴ A kind of oxcart used for such informal occasions as flower-viewing, moon-viewing, and snow-viewing parties in the country.

come? Even if the former emperor comes, why should he be secret about it?" I could hear what she was saying even from my room. "She will be reproached and united with men of low birth."

Hearing these words from my old nurse made me miserable. When one more child joined the noisy crowd, it became impossible to sleep. It seemed as though the preparations were finished when they chattered, "Invite the Lady to come here."

Someone came to invite me and then reported, "The Lady does not feel well." Then the old nurse came to my room and knocked roughly on the shōji. I now felt as though a stranger had come to my room. I was afraid and my heart beat wildly.

Tapping on the door near my pillow, she said, "What kind of sickness do you have? Come out of there and look at what we have! Please! Please!"

Since things had developed to this point, I had no choice but to answer, "I am very despondent."

She said, "I say that because I've brought your favorite things. You ask for things only when we don't have them. If someone talks to you, it's always the same. Then just do as you like!"

The old nurse left grumbling. I thought I should say something humorous, but I felt as if I were about to die.

Then he asked, "What is this favorite thing that you usually order?"

I thought of speaking elegantly of frost, snow, and hail, but I knew he would not think I was telling the truth, so I answered truthfully, "Once in a while I ask for white sake, which is rather rare. The old nurse speaks of the thing in such an exaggerated way."

"I was very lucky to come here tonight. When you come to me, I will look for that white sake even as far as the Land of T'ang," he said, smiling.

I will never forget that. Such a memory while things were so difficult for me never materialized in the past nor will it again in the future.

Intending to Part from Six Illusory Worlds

And so, night after night passed with my remembering his affection deep within my heart. I simply could not return to the former emperor's palace.

About the 20th day of the "Month Without Gods," I heard that Gon-Dainagon, my maternal grandmother, had gotten sick. While I feared what would happen should the dew disappear, I was informed that she had passed away before many days had passed. My grandmother had long lived at a place called Ayato in Zenrin-ji temple¹⁵ in the Higashiyama District. When I heard this day that she had finally passed away, I was lonely because so many illusory relations had perished. Thinking about the continuous sadness, I wrote:

秋の露ふゆのしぐれにうちそへて

しぼりかさぬるわが袂かな

*Aki no tsuyu fuyu no shigure ni uchi soete
shibori kasanuru waga tamoto kana*

First the autumn dew and now the early
winter rain

How I wring my sleeves over and over

Since no letter had arrived from the former emperor for some days, I wondered whether or not he had become aware of my lapse. Then, in a letter even more affectionate than usual, he asked how I was and said that he would send someone to take me back to the palace that night.

Accordingly, I sent him back a letter saying: "Since my grandmother died the day before yesterday, I want to stay here for a short time to mourn until the impurities are removed."¹⁶ I included a poem:

¹⁵ A temple of the Jōdo Sect in Higashiyama, Kyōto.

¹⁶ A person was considered to be ritually impure during the period of mourning after the death of a relative.

思ひやれすぎにし秋の露に又
 涙しぐれてぬるるたもとを
*Omohi yare suginishi aki no tsuyu ni mata
 namida shigurete nururu tamoto wo*
 Please consider my sleeves wet with the past
 autumn dew,
 And now tears falling like early winter rain

He returned a poem:

かさねける露のあはれもまだしらで
 今こそよその袖もしほるれ
*Kasanekeru tsuyu no aware mo mata shirade
 ima koso yoso no sode mo shiworure*
 Until now I was not aware that the dew of sadness
 had accumulated
 And my sleeves too have become wet

When I returned to the palace in the early part of the eleventh month, I felt that the world should have changed in the meantime. I could not forget the face of my father, the Dainagon, here and there in the palace. I was, without knowing why, conscious that my life would be difficult and felt that Nyoin [the dowager empress] would not let up on me. I felt despondent about many matters.

The former emperor told the Hyōbukyō¹⁷ and Zenshōji: “Continue with your care for Nijō just as you did when the Dainagon was alive. Prepare her robes by using those presented to the court.” Even though his words were very considerate, I wanted to give birth and regain my usual shape quickly. I quietly lived in the palace and thought only of praying for the repose of my father’s and mother’s souls and parting from the six illusory worlds.¹⁸ At the end of the month, I again left the former emperor’s palace.

¹⁷ Hyōbukyō: Shijō Takachika, Nijō’s grandfather and head of the Hyōbushō (Military Affairs Ministry).

¹⁸ See “Tannishō,” footnote 14, in this issue.

Mountain Temple in Daigo

I went to stay with Shingan-bō, the abbess of Shōkutei-in convent in Daigo, who was related to my family, to listen to Buddhist texts. Those living there in the winter broke twigs off of the trees simply to make smoke.¹⁹ Water could not continually flow through the bamboo pipes. The preparations for the New Year were moving along with a speed that left much to be desired. When the moon was coming up on just about the twentieth, the former emperor came to visit me in secret. He came surreptitiously in a humble oxcart with the Zenshōji riding in back.

I heard him tell me, "I have been staying at the Fushimi Palace recently and came here because I can't get you out of my mind."

I wondered when my whereabouts had been revealed to him. That night he talked to me with particular affection and departed as if urged by the temple bell announcing the dawn. The moon still remained in the west and clouds passed across the face of the eastern hills. The snowflakes that fell to the ground like fluttering blossoms, here and there hiding the earth from view, seemed to look like they felt as I did. The former emperor was wearing a casual robe that was dark and patternless and loose trousers of the same color, a color that went with my mourning robes. This showed his sympathy for my sad plight.

The nuns on their way to the dawn service were not aware of what was happening. They wore shabby robes with humble stoles thrown over their shoulders. They were walking about calling, "You're late for the dawn service. Nun So-and-So and Amida So-and-So, where are you?" How I envied them.

The nuns saw all of the low-ranking samurai attendants in their dark formal robes pulling the oxcart forward. They finally expressed an understanding of what was happening and seemed to be running away to hide.

¹⁹ To keep from being lonely. A reference to a *waka* by Lady Izumi written around the 11th century.

The former emperor said, "I'll see you again." Then he left. This parting remained in the tears on my sleeves. I felt as though his perfume had been transferred to mine when they had overlapped, and now it permeated my robe. I was listening thoughtfully to the sound of the dawn service. The voice reciting the sutra, "Even though the Rinnō's²⁰ rank is high, he in the end must not yield to the three devil roads," haunted my ears. I regretted that the service was coming to an end.

When it became light a letter arrived. The former emperor wrote, "Parting under the moon this morning made me feel as I never have before." The poem I returned to him read:

君だにもならはざりける有明の
おもかげのこる袖をみせばや
Kimi dani mo narahazari keru ariake no
omokage nokoru sode wo miseba ya
Not only you have had this experience;
if you look at my sleeve
There you will see the momento of the moonlight

One evening, when only about three days remained in the year, I was even sadder than usual. When I was with the abbess, she said, "Things will never be quiet like this again, will they?"

Thinking that I was bored, the abbess decided to have some old stories told. She gathered together some old nuns who told the old stories. The water that flowed from the bamboo pipe to the wooden basin was frozen. It was so melancholy. Even the sound of an ax cutting down wood on the nearby mountain made me feel like the folk tale had come to life. How overwhelmingly sad. It was already dark, and the light from each lantern could be seen distinctly. After the midnight service, we were talking about going to bed when someone stealthily tapped on the wooden door nearby.

²⁰ Also Tenrinnō (Sanskrit: Cakravartin). A universal monarch found in various Buddhist sutras.

“How strange. Who could it be?”

And then, there he was.

“This is very upsetting. Loose behavior here would be shameful before the eyes and ears of others. Moreover, since this is how I feel, I am devoting myself to Buddhist practices and keeping my heart pure. When the former emperor calls on me, there is nothing I can do. If I abandon this, then I will be polluted, and how would that be. Would you mind leaving!” Such were the appalling words I used to him.

Since snow had already begun to fall heavily, a cruel wind was blowing, and a real blizzard had apparently begun, he said, “This is too unbearable. Would you mind letting me step inside? The snow may stop soon.” And thus we quarreled.

I don’t know whether the abbess and the other nuns heard or not, but the abbess said, “How curt and hard-hearted you are. No matter who he is, he has come here intentionally. How can you act like this when the bitter cold wind is blowing down from the mountains?”

And, with these words, the abbess unlatched the wooden door and stirred the fire. So, finally, he came in just as he was. The snow fell heavily, continually piling up on both mountain peaks and the eaves of the houses. Since the noise of the blizzard blowing throughout the night had been terrible, I could not get up at daybreak. His intimate actions made me feel horrible, but I didn’t know what to do. I had become very upset.

When the sun was high in the sky, two retainers arrived with various things that had been prepared. While I was looking at everything in its most difficult light, the retainers offered all of these everyday things they had prepared to the abbess and nuns.

The abbess said, “The cold in the wind blowing at the year’s end can now be forgotten.”

Even though I thought that the stoles and robes given to the nuns had been dedicated to the Buddha as offerings for the memorial service, the nuns responded, “A ray of light has finally dawned along

this fence deep in the mountains.” And in this vein they conversed with one another.

Except for the arrival of saints, nothing should have been more welcome than the visit of the former emperor. However, there had been no one to even see him off with regret or ceremony. It goes without saying that such a matter should never have happened. But now every single person was overwhelmed with the splendor of the donations. How trying are these worldly customs.

The gift for me was a robe for the coming spring. It was not gay but light blue with many layers, one on top of another. Three white casual dresses were also donated. I was worried that someone would hear about all these goings on.

That whole day and even the whole night was spent in drinking. When the next morning dawned, he left, thinking that he could not stay here for a long time. He urged me over and over, “Would you mind at least getting up and seeing me off?”

Finally, when I got up, I saw white snow on the mountain peaks shimmering in the faint light at daybreak. While I was looking at this startling white, I saw two or three retainers in dark formal robes. At the same time that I was overcome by having to part from him and by having to keep everything a secret, I berated myself for this very feeling.

On New Year’s Eve, my nurse and her family came to take me to their house, saying that living deep in the mountains was not good for me in my condition. Against my will, I returned to the capital, and so the new year began. (*To be continued.*)

