

To Romp in Heaven: A Translation of the *Hōsa kyōshaden* (Biographies of Nagoya Madmen)

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In premodern Japanese poetry, Nō plays, confessional ‘recluse literature,’ and the iconography of painting, reclusion and deviant behavior have long stood as expedient means of acquiring moral currency.² Deviance had little intrinsic significance of its own; its literary interest lay in its utility for actualizing the detachment necessary for proper Buddhist practice. Works like the *Hosshinshū*, for instance, a collection of *setsuwa* usually credited to Kamo no Chōmei (1153-1216) about pious individuals seeking inner purity through seclusion from society, align the strange and the mad with Buddhist salvation. Following the Chinese practice of including biographies of recluses in official dynastic histories, several such works were produced in early Tokugawa Japan, such as the monk Gensei’s *Fusō in’itsuden* (Biographies of Japanese Recluses, 1664) and the *Kindai yasainja* (Modern Stylish Recluses, 1686) compiled by Ihara Saikaku’s disciple, Sairoken Kyōsen.³ Such works were the antecedents of a genre of

biographical writing on eccentric individuals that enjoyed a sudden revitalization from the late eighteenth century.

This essay introduces the *Hōsa kyōshaden* (1778) as a means of elucidating the intellectual traditions that grounded Edo period biography. Revisiting intellectual contexts is especially important because of the dramatic reorientation of that genre that resulted from the considerable commercial success of Ban Kōkei’s (1733-1806) *Kinsei kijinden* (*Biographies of Eccentrics of Recent Times*, 1790) and his introduction of the term *kijin* 畸人 – using the character 畸 rather than the more common 奇 – which thereafter became the signifier of choice for biographers wishing to attach moral currency to their subjects. (While in early modern and modern Japan the label *kijin* (eccentric) has commonly been attached to any strange, deviant individual, the 3rd century B.C.E. text *Zhuangzi* deploys it to signify voluntary reclusion, extraordinary talent, and a detached, aestheticized lifestyle. There are also numerous possible translations of *kyōsha* 狂者 (mad person⁴) or *kyōjin* 狂人. As discussed below, translators of Confucius, Mencius and Zhu Xi have opted for wild, ambitious, impetuous, or ardent. The meaning of *kyō* 狂 is unspecific or context-specific, but in the context of the Confucian classics it generally connotes unrestrained, egocentric, or self-absorbed behavior. In early modern Japanese usage, the *kyōsha* is a reckless, aloof person who occupies a self-made world in defiance of the moral economy. Simple translations of the terms *kijin* and *kyōsha*, in other words, belie the numerous, nuanced meanings that underlie their actual use. Rather than digress into lengthy etymologies, below I will use the vague terms eccentric and madmen to reflect the vagueness of the terms *kijin* and *kyōsha*.) This sudden attention on the *kijin*, invariably emphasized as a Daoist word, has eclipsed the Confucian precepts that had long validated reclusion and deviant behavior as themes in Edo period biographies. In order to appreciate these developments it is important to know the context in which they

¹ The author wishes to thank Chia-Lan Chang for her assistance with Chinese sources and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions.

² Overuse of reclusion in some literary genres, on the other hand, has caused reclusion to be judged as contrived and thus patently immoral. This loss of credibility is largely the result of a discourse coming from China positing that urban recluses are more authentic than those in the wilderness, for more on which see Alan J. Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement: The Practice and Portrayal of Reclusion in Early Medieval China* (Stanford UP, 2000).

³ Lawrence E. Marceau, *Takebe Ayatari: A Bunjin Bohemian in Early Modern Japan*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 17-18.

⁴ The reader is reminded that this term does not connote the modern meaning of insanity or mental illness.

emerged, and so we begin with a brief discussion of Kōkei and his *kijinden*. We then move on to consider the *Hōsa kyōshaden* as an example of how Confucian thought permeated the theme of reclusion within biographical writings.

Kōkei is credited with pioneering biographical writings on eccentrics, and indeed most of the numerous *kijinden* produced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries invoke his work as a matter of course. Not only is Kōkei's book – together with its sequel, the *Zoku kinsei kijinden* (1798) – considered the progenitor of a genre of biography writing and the literary monument by which that genre identifies itself, it is also central to the codification of the early modern eccentric identity. Though the signifier *kijin* was a well known term from the *Zhuangzi*, and perhaps from other lesser known imported works such as Mateo Ricci's *Kijin jippen* (*Ten Chapters on Eccentrics*, 1608), it was absent from native Japanese print culture until Ueda Akinari's *Ugetsu monogatari* (1776). It is natural, perhaps, that Tokugawa period readers and interpreters of the *Kinsei kijinden*, published during the height of the Kansei Reforms (1787-93) and the same year as the Prohibition of Heterodox Studies, would see in this invocation of Daoist values an enticingly risqué spirit of resistance against orthodox ideology. Though Kōkei probably had no such intention, the popularity of his works thus had the effect of attaching Daoist trappings to eccentricity. It also had the effect of eclipsing historical inquiry into the construction, expression, and terminology of eccentricity prior to 1790.

The *Kinsei kijinden*'s deployment of the term *kyōjin*, for example, has gone virtually unnoticed. Unlike *kijin*, the labels *kyōjin* and *kyōsha* had acquired cultural currency earlier in the Edo period as writers and intellectuals discovered a means of satirizing society within a number of 'mad' literary genres. Stirred in part by the recent popularity of Wang Yangming and Daoist teachings, they turned to idiosyncratic styles of cultural production – *fūkyō* (poetic madness), *kyōka* (comic tanka), and *kyōshi* (comic Chinese poetry) – that expanded potential for self-expression. Nativist thinker Masuho Zankō (1655-1742) and eclectic scholar Hiraga Gennai (1728-1779), for instance, converted the spirit of

kyōgen (comic Nō farce) and *kyōka* to humorous, satirical prose through earthy motifs and fashionable colloquialisms. The popularity and quality of this *kyōsha no bun*, or *kyōbun* (comic Chinese prose), helped give credibility to *kyō* as both an aesthetic and a form of conduct, thereby elevating writings of and about *kyōsha* above the plane of lowbrow entertainment. Cultivation of the *kyōsha* identity through experimentation in 'mad' literary genres was thus a license to challenge social norms.⁵ "Kyō was a declaration of detachment from the world order, a space in which the mind was free to play uninhibited," writes historian Takahashi Hiromi, and in the restlessness of the eighteenth century the will for uninhibited play was becoming pervasive.⁶ Indeed, the madness of cultivated inhibition and intuitive, unfettered living was not the exclusive realm of the restless literatus. *Kyō* was an identity trait that extended across the boundaries of status and occupation.

The above remarks provide context for reading the *Hōsa kyōshaden* (Biographies of Nagoya Madmen), translated below. Authored by the Owari domain samurai, *kokugaku* scholar and poet Hotta Kōzan (1709-1791) under the sobriquet Rikurin, the work is a compilation of displaced, cast out, and otherwise marginalized individuals from the present-day Nagoya area. Rikurin composed the work in 1778, about the time when *kyōshi* composition was at the height of its popularity, clearly intending to take advantage of the cultural currency enjoyed by the aesthetic of *kyō*. The following year the literatus Kinryū Keiyū added a preface. From a purely literary standpoint, the *Hōsa kyōshaden* is a shorter, less ambitiously compiled precursor to the *Kinsei kijinden*. It assembles accounts of twenty-five local individuals occupying the social margins, all of whom the author claims to have observed. As Rikurin never published the manuscript, it was generally unknown until 1941,

⁵ Haruo Shirane, ed. *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600-1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 532-33.

⁶ Takahashi Hiromi, *Kyōto geien no netto-waaku* (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1988), 183.

when it was rediscovered and printed by Nagoya Onkokai Sōsho. An annotated reprint then appeared in the 2000 publication of the *Shinnihon koten bungaku taikei*. In that this text predates the *kijin* phenomenon triggered by Kōkei, its reappearance forces a careful reassessment of early modern representations of eccentrics.

The *Hōsa kyōshaden*'s numerous references to Chinese historical texts and figures leave little doubt that Rikurin had considerable knowledge of how the discourse on *kyōsha* had developed on the mainland. By privileging Chinese over native traditions, a practice popular among eighteenth century *bunjin* (independent literati⁷), Rikurin demonstrates his own erudition while bringing cultural prestige to his text. In addition, given that the text's success hinges on his ability to recast skid row dropouts as moral or enlightened beings, comparing them with those eminent poets, recluses and deviants from Chinese history is a failsafe means of imbuing them cultural currency. This means of contextualization, as well as Keiyū's references to Confucius and Mencius in the preface, make it clear that by invoking continental culture Rikurin is drawing on a prestigious tradition well known to himself and his peers.

Collectively, the text's various subjects – the recluse, the deprived, the deformed, the crippled, the alcoholic, the idiot, the prophet – are meant to embody a set of themes which, separately or jointly, indicate madness. These recurrent indicators of madness invoke the very tools of play long recognized in the Daoist sage: drinking, singing, dancing, poetry composition and recitation, wandering, world rejection, and nature appreciation. It is fitting that Rikurin uses allusions to Zhuangzi and known Daoist tropes to flesh out the non-conformist aestheticism of his

own subjects. Several appear to be modeled after Zhuangzi's hunchback, Zhili Shu,⁸ whom Rikurin mentions lest the comparison escape our attention.

In light of the text's undeniably Daoist overtones, and considering the prevalence of nineteenth and twentieth century biographies on eccentrics that invoke Ban Kōkei's *kijinden* while privileging only the more heterodoxical notions contained in that work, Keiyū's invocation of Confucius and Mencius in the preface may come as a surprise. The misconception that Daoism was the tradition of choice for nonconforming individuals carries with it the danger of overlooking the fact that the mad or wild (*kyō*) are discussed thoroughly in the Confucian canon. From Confucius through Wang Yangming, Confucian thinkers have consistently expressed guarded admiration for the madmen of their time. As Zhuangzi aligns the *kijin* with the Heavenly realm, in other words, Confucian theorists have also taken a positive, though qualified, position on the *kyōsha*.

This discourse exists within the context of human character, potential, and proximity to the ideal middle way of the Confucian gentleman. For Confucius and his interpreters, those occupying the extreme margins are closer to the middle way than those masses occupying no particular position at all. One such extreme is *kyō*; the other is *ken* 狷 or *kan* 簡: being fastidious and aloof from mundane matters and material pursuits. The respective talents and intentions of *kyō* and *ken/kan* are not intrinsically subversive; they merely lack the regulation and guidance to be socially constructive. The extremism of madness, then, is a wasted resource for which the Confucian answer is regulation. Confucius has the following to say on the matter: "If you cannot manage to find a person of perfectly balanced conduct to associate with, I suppose you must settle for the wild 狂 or the fastidious 狷. In their pursuit of the Way, the wild plunge right in, while the fastidious are always careful not to get

⁷ 'Persons of letters' and 'literati' are the most common translations of the term *bunjin*, though in using the latter term we must take care not to confuse *bunjin* with China's class of scholar-officials, also called literati. Marceau, who prefers the rendition 'independent, free artists,' has shown that the term is often used ahistorically to signify a disparate group of individuals who in any case never identified themselves as such. See Marceau, pp. 2-7.

⁸ The severely deformed Zhili Shu thrives on the margins of society using his handicap to curry special treatment and dodge social obligations.

their hands dirty.”⁹ Here Confucius asserts that those overcome by either impetuosity or caution are preferable to those lacking such qualities. Even a gentleman who follows the middle way is easily corrupted by the world’s disorder, but the wild and fastidious follow their own principles with the ambition of gentlemen. While they cannot conform to the orderliness of society and are consequently relegated to the margins, their intentions nonetheless support the potentiality of virtue.

Mencius extends this graded view of human worth based on actual and potential proximity to the middle way. The gentleman is closest, followed again by the wild and the fastidious. These individuals on the margins carry within their ambition a potentiality lacking among the common lot, whom Mencius calls “the thieves of virtue.”¹⁰ Extending Confucius’ hopeful view of the mad and elaborating on precisely what separates them from the masses, Mencius here redeems *kyō* and clarifies the relationship between the deviant identity and the middle way.

Zhu Xi (1130-1200) also takes up this discourse on the wild and fastidious, suggesting that although they are distinct from and inferior to the sage, they at least complete their endeavors thoroughly, either achieving their ambitions or withdrawing to maintain their integrity. This conscientiousness allows them to be regulated by the sage and, potentially, to return to the middle course. Those able to tread the middle course, Zhu Xi maintains, are rare because they have the motivation of the ambitious but behave more cautiously; they also have integrity or know how to regulate themselves so as not to become overly detached.¹¹

Though the *Hōsa kyōshaden* contains little direct reference to Wang Yangming’s (1472-1529) thought, it does affirm Wang’s central tenets of

intuitive action and self-reflection. Wang himself was far from silent on the matter of *kyō*, and his followers in China and Japan made important contributions to the critique of Neo-Confucian orthodoxy and its support of moderation and self-regulation. Wang’s declaration: “There is *kyō* within me. Don’t run and hide from my words,” and his successor, Wang Longxi’s assertion that “The path to sagehood lies in the hands of *kyōsha*,” were inspirational to Edo period heterodox thinkers, who maintained that *kyō* and *kyōjin* were unfettered by internal conflict and therefore more advanced, progressive, and socially useful.¹² This view also positioned *kyōsha* closest to the way of the Sages, providing Wang’s followers with an impetus to distance themselves from orthodoxy. Confucian scholar Hattori Somon (1724-1769) switched his allegiance from the Sorai school to Wang Yangming, referring to himself specifically as a *kyōsha*, and *bunjin* like Akutagawa Tankyū (1710-1785), Ike Taiga (1723-1776), and others who would later be labeled as *kijin* also subscribed to this school thought.

Clearly, the Confucian intellectual tradition held qualified support for *kyō*, seeing it as a set of personality traits that brought the *kyōsha* closer to heaven or sageliness. After the Kyōhō period (1716-36) Daoist thought became more prominent, bringing the idea of *ki* 氣 as defined by Zhuangzi alongside that of *kyō*. Historian Nakano Mitsutoshi has posited that Wang Yangming’s take on social deviance approached the thought of Laozi and Zhuangzi to the extent that what the former were calling *kyō* the latter had called *ki*, and that the values these two terms shared – individualism, intuitiveness, and detached aestheticism – informed the early modern *bunjin* approach to art.¹³ In the mid-eighteenth century, therefore, intellectual support for individualism, nonconformism, and self-determined spirituality converged from disparate intellectual orientations and traditions. The esteem that madness had long received from progressive

⁹ *The Analects* 13:20. Edward Slingerland (trans.). *Confucius Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2003, 149.

¹⁰ See Mencius VII:B:37 for this passage.

¹¹ Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi sishu youlei* (The Words of Zhu Xi: The Four Books), vol. 3, bk. 43 (Shanghai: Kuchi chubanshe, 1992), 1109.

¹² Nakano Mitsutoshi, “*Kyōbun ishiki no haikai*.” *Bungaku gogaku* 54 (December, 1969): 47.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 48.

Chinese thinkers disposed Japanese individuals to take it up with relative peace of mind.¹⁴

Kyō was therefore a mature and distinguished discursive tradition in China well known within Japanese scholarly circles at the time Hotta Rikurin wrote the *Hōsa kyōshaden*. Kinryū Keiyū's preface displays this Confucian orientation most

¹⁴ Ibid., 48. The Chinese discourse on *kyō* is not limited to Confucius, Mencius, Zhu Xi, and Wang Yangming. It was also taken up by a number of Song and Ming Dynasty authors, though it is unclear if and to what extent they were known in early modern Japan. It was further extended, for example, by Song Dynasty hermit Wan Shi (d. 1157) in his 100-chapter book, *Kuangjian ji* (Collection of the Wild and the Fastidious). In the preface Wan Shi accepts personal responsibility for transmitting Confucius' teachings to later generations, thereby self-identifying as a Confucian instructor and equating himself with the madmen his book anthologizes ("Tuo Tuo Song Shi" (Song History), in *Sibu beiyao, Shibu* (The Collection of History), book 457, Biography 216, part 1 (Reclusion) (Taipei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1971), 14042-3). A further addition to the *kyō* discourse includes the ten-volume *Kuangjuan caizhong* (Regulating the Wild and the Fastidious in the Middle Course) by Ming scholar Yang Shijuan, of whom little is known. This book records Yang's comments on loyal, filial, and righteous people from the Warring States period to the Yuan dynasty. The preface warns that taking an undeserved reputation and making bold claims is inferior to behaving in a manner consistent to one's own nature. Therefore, none are more wild or fastidious than those who are ambitious, humane, loyal and filial (Li Xueqin and Lu Wenyu, eds., *Siku dacidian*, vol. 1 (Changchun: Jilin Daxue chubanshe, 1996), 1522). The three-volume *Kuangfu zhiyan* (The Words of a Madman) and its two-volume sequel written by the Ming scholar Chen Jiru (1558-1639), finally, compile and comment on unusual, heterodox individuals, carrying the Confucian discourse on *kyō* into to a genre of biographical writing on eccentrics (Chen Jiru, *Kuangfu zhiyan* (Taipei: Iwen, 1965).

directly by revisiting "the wild and the fastidious" from the *Analects* and the *Mencius*. "These individuals have admirable intentions, but their deeds do not correspond to their words," he recounts. "Some move ahead with their plans; others hide and protect themselves against intrusive outsiders. Yet the world looks down on them, and only Confucius has been disposed to see their worth." Keiyū goes on to describe Rikurin's role as Confucius' surrogate in his willingness to step forward and redeem local *kyōsha*. This, he assures us, is a particularly urgent endeavor given the declining state of the world and the fact that moral degeneration has caused a scarcity of these individuals. Keiyū's closing admission that this state of affairs has triggered within him extreme, uncontrolled grief, finally, posits Keiyū himself as a *kyōsha*.

The preface, written in Chinese, thus locates the text within a canonical discourse and attaches it to Chinese interpretations of *kyōsha*. In situating itself within this esteemed tradition it thereby presents itself, an ostensibly popular work, as a philosophical treatise. This reorientation of high and low is matched by an identical attitude toward hierarchy and human worth. As repositories of spirituality and moral virtue, the figures in the *Hōsa kyōshaden* live with one foot in society's gutter and one in the heavenly, a condition that transcends the logic of social class. Despite the conspicuous absence of samurai in this work – and it is understandable that Rikurin would not openly indict his family and lord by including the warrior class in the text – the work is notably egalitarian. It arranges and discusses outcasts (Sōsuke), pious monks (Goranbō), tea masters (Hechikan), townsmen (Ishimawari), and transients (Odoribaba) together without distinction. To this group Rikurin includes the blind, the odd-looking (Kōsuishi), the mentally challenged (Ogosa), and the crippled (Shinrokubō). Class is rarely mentioned or missed, for it is usually irrelevant to the narrative. "All people are born with a Buddha nature, the potential for enlightenment," Rikurin reminds us, "so why make distinctions?"

Rikurin's parallel assertion that "even a mad person's ravings can serve to praise Buddha" proposes that the subjects of his book are especially equipped for this purpose. This proposi-

tion is more than a nod to egalitarianism; it is an overt indictment of the class system. Deprived of status and wealth, his subjects are unencumbered by the vanities of social position and worldly affairs and thereby enabled to access a superior moral realm. The dim-witted Ogosa's deluded chatter, for example, emanates from an unfettered heart and thus is superior to the self-serving ambitions of common people. As his intentions are innocent, he is not to be chastised for divulging delusional fantasies. "For him," Rikurin assures us, "doing so is superior to those foolish, errant thoughts of common men." This reiterates a familiar Buddhist ontology, but one that Tokugawa literature had rarely delivered through outsiders and the outcastes.

These egalitarian sentiments appear at a time when a number of progressive thinkers were elaborating on Ogyū Sorai's (1666-1728) historicist observations by issuing criticisms of the class system as a politically motivated economic structure that was counterintuitive in its placement of producers at the bottom and consumers at the top. The stigma attached to outcastes, however, was more deeply embedded. Even the empirical Kaihō Seiryō (1755-1817), one of the more brazen critics of the hierarchical order, harbored an exclusionary attitude toward outcastes, considering them to be "like animals" utterly lacking in morality.¹⁵ From Rikurin's perspective, of course, voiding oneself of morality is precisely the point; it is the very course by which one achieves "a state of no-self, no-mind, of escaping the shackles of the self to romp in Heaven."

In sum, we should resist the temptation to equate the subversive potential of madness with the subversive potential of heterodoxy. The *Hōsa kyōshaden*'s use of Confucian values, in other words, is as essential to its construction of *kyōsha* as its use of Daoist allusions and Buddhist morals: the beggar Sōsuke demonstrates humanity and a proper sense of entitlement by accepting only what alms he needs, even if it is less than what is offered; the Robin Hood figure Goranbō, who deplores his family's wealth and turns over

to the poor whatever donations he collects, exemplifies benevolence and frugality; and the alcohol abusing beggar Kihei embodies humility in his ability to recognize and accept honestly his moral frailties. One imagines that invoking such Confucian values was the perfect loophole for Rikurin and Keiyū to avert suspicion while they celebrated this potentially subversive cohort, and that this strategy of elevating untouchables to moral untouchability would have enticed many other writers to follow suit. Indeed, it was twelve years later that Ban Kōkei's pioneering work attached the same egalitarian and moral ideals to his representation of *kijin*.

This text thus reveals that social critics were experimenting with this genre of writing before the *kijinden*'s existence, and that even after the latter's appearance the *kijin* was only one of multiple existing representations of deviant personae. The notion that madness and eccentricity did not preclude intrinsic human worth indicates an escalating desire to judge people more for their talents, virtues, or idiosyncrasies than for their pedigree. Such were the attitudes and values that were to guide nineteenth and twentieth century biographers as they constructed their own representations of the eccentric and the mad.

The translation and many of the annotations below are based on the 2000 reprint in *Shinnihon koten bungaku taikei*. To the translation I have added subheadings that in the original text appear in the form of a table of contents. In the title I use Nagoya instead of Hōsa, which is a Sinitified pseudonym for Nagoya meaning to the left of Mt. Hōrai.¹⁶

¹⁵ Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Village Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 292.

¹⁶ Tanemura explains that Nagoya is located to the left of Mt. Hōrai, one of the three sacred peaks, as viewed from Shanghai. According to legend, the mountain was revered as the home of a plant which bestowed immortality (Tanemura, 208). Nakano Mitsutoshi relates that orienting Nagoya's location in this way actually confuses Mt. Hōrai with the Atsuta Shrine.

Hōsa kyōshaden (Biographies of Nagoya Madmen)

Preface

Long ago in the state of Lu there were many madmen (*kyōsha*).¹ These were people like Qin Zhang, Zeng Xi, and Mu Pi.² As a consequence, when Confucius was in Chen he lamented that the mad and unpolished there did not know good judgment, and this was the very reason that he repeatedly sighed, “Let us return.” In Owari,³ as well, there have been more than a few madmen, but their stories have not been told and regrettably they have since vanished from history without a trace. The madmen of recent times are of Ogosa’s⁴ ilk, cold and distant⁵ and engaged in arbitrary self-seeking along disparate paths. How sad that their ambitions isolate rather than unite them. Hotta Rikurin has collected and recorded the words and deeds of those madmen, and there are places in his text which call for deep reflection. His subjects have admirable intentions but their deeds do not correspond to their words.⁶ Some move ahead with their plans, others hide and protect themselves against intrusive outsiders. Yet the world looks down on them and only Confucius has been disposed to see their worth. Now, like Confucius, Rikurin has stepped forward to tell their stories.

Time has passed and these days the Way is in

¹ As explained above, Keiyū’s use of the term *kyōsha* invokes *The Analects* (13:20) and the *Mencius* (VII:B:37).

² Qin Zhang, Zeng Xi, and Mu Pi appear in the *Analects* as Confucius’ disciples.

³ Owari is the name of the feudal domain surrounding Nagoya.

⁴ Ogosa is the subject of the first entry in this collection.

⁵ “Cold and distant” is from the same passage (VII:B:37) in *Mencius* in which Confucius complains that “good men from the villages” malign the *kyōsha*.

⁶ This phrase is taken from the same passage wherein *Mencius* explains that the mad are styled as such because their actions do not correspond with their words.

decline. It is difficult to find gentlemen who return to the Middle Way. But madmen are equally hard to find. Nowadays there are many who only try to please others and in following worldly customs become corrupt. Deeply dismayed by this, I weep and write this preface.

Kinryū Dōjin Keiyū, Summer, An’ei 8 (1779)

Biographies of Nagoya Madmen

There is one who roams through the wetlands in Sawabe reciting poetry like Qu Yuan.⁷ “People treat him like dirt,”⁸ and yet he is unwavering. From ancient times to the present, so many accounts of such individuals have been duly transmitted that they can hardly be counted. Ever since I can remember, I have run across such types in and around this province. Then, as now,⁹ there are few who know anything about *kyōsha*, so I take it upon myself to write a little about them.

Ogosa

Near the end of Hōei (1704-1711) or the beginning of Shōtoku (1711-1716) there were three madmen: Kuhei, Otatsu, and Mantoku – though I was so young at the time that I don’t remember much about them. There was a certain Kosaburō, though, who lived in Suginochō around the

⁷ Qu Yuan (340-278 BCE) was related to the imperial family and enjoyed a successful career as a statesman and minister. He was banished when jealous officials who opposed his counsel to the Emperor slandered him, and he spent his remaining years wandering the countryside and composing tragic poetry, finally drowning himself as protest against political corruption.

⁸ This phrase (*J. kuzu no matsubara*) is from a poem in Saigyō’s (1118-1190) *Senshūshō* and refers to someone whom society disdains yet who marches on defending their own principles.

⁹ The phrase is *ima wa mukashi*, an invocation of the 12th century *setsuwa* text *Konjaku monogatari*.

same time. Although he was born to a formerly wealthy family, the household fell into decline after his parents' death and he thus survived only through the attentions and generosity of his wet nurse. From birth he was stupid and had a weak constitution. When he was about thirty years old he wore the same set of dirty, vertically striped clothes all seasons of the year and a fur wrap during even the hottest month. Though virtually bald, he had sparse wisps sticking out in all directions. Morning 'til night he drifted directionless around the village, and when the children saw him they would holler, "Ogosayo! Ogosayo! Alley cat! Alley cat!"¹⁰ Without understanding the meaning, he would become entranced by the rhythm of the chanting. It was a condescending joke for locals of that time to call such a dim-witted man "your lordship."¹¹ "Whose lordship?" "Why, his lordship!" For, calling someone a lord who is so far from being one is like calling him "your stupidity." What's more, if you exchange the first character of his name, *ko*, with the honorific character *o*, you get Ogosō from Kosaburō.¹² No one knows who started calling him that, but soon everyone just called him Ogosō. This is the reason that these days it is said of fools: "he's quite an Ogosō," and that's the origin of the term.

Where people worshiped before Buddhist statues and preached Buddhist doctrine, at shrine festivals and other crowded places, whether near or far, wherever people congregated Ogosō invariably appeared. Or, drawing water at roadside teahouses, he washed pots and cleaned pipes without being asked, scrubbing like a busy bee. People would ask, "Ogosō, why haven't you been around lately?" He would say, "For a long spell I've been working on that land reclamation pro-

ject, making new paddy fields and turning the bay into a stretch of Tōkaidō roadway running to Kuwana. The whole thing's going to cost about a million *ryō*, so I've also been out finding sponsors for it." Or with a straight face: "I live up-town now. I bought a house for three thousand *ryō* with an entrance sixty *ken*¹³ long. I've also had my hands full putting up five or six warehouses and so haven't come around much." Or as if dreaming, he would reply: "I had incense-smelling functions," or, "I had flower arrangement gatherings to attend."

In their hearts, most people don't really know what satisfaction is. In the tediousness of sleepless autumn nights, they let their minds wander to thoughts of finding a wad of money, building a house, and having luxurious food and clothing. Finding one hundred *ryō* is not enough; one thousand wouldn't be either. At dawn they arise with a confused heart, ashamed of dreaming of money and detesting the sinfulness of such errant thoughts. But for Ogosō there is nothing sinful about disclosing his grandiose thoughts and ambitions. For him, doing so is superior to those foolish, errant thoughts of common men. How much happiness it brings to the heart.

In Ogosō's time there was a *kyōsha* of about the same age named Kume. He was an illegitimate son of a good family. With his hair tied up in back, pointing toward Heaven like Zhili Shu's,¹⁴ he drifted around from village to village, hounded by children. A short sword in his left hand and an opened fan in his right, he danced, singing, "The first foal of spring...."¹⁵

Odoribaba

In the mid-Kyōho Kyōhō (1716-36) years there was a dancing woman who went from gate to gate asking: "Shall I pen a letter for you? Or

¹⁰ "猫出せ、猫だせ" *neko dase, neko dase*. Tanemura notes the use of 色子 *neko* as a colloquialism for 色男 *irootoko* (handsome man; paramour). The children's taunt may be viewed as combining the images of a stray cat and a dashing lady-killer (Tanemura, 209).

¹¹ *Dono* 殿 (Lord) is the suffix added to the individual's name.

¹² With this substitution, Kosaburō 小三郎 becomes Ogosō 御小三.

¹³ As one *ken* is about 1.82 meters, a sixty-*ken* entrance would be 109 meters long.

¹⁴ Zhili Shu is a hunchback in the Zhuangzi who finds peace and enlightenment in his uselessness. See footnote 9 above.

¹⁵ These lyrics are from the popular song *Harukoma*.

would you prefer a small song and dance?" She would sing part of an old song, displaying notable cultivation. Give her a small donation and she'd make funny little gestures while singing and dancing to *Mt. Miyoshino*, again revealing her classical refinement. Without being asked she mentioned that when she was young she broke up with her sweetheart and traveled west. She wept and laughed without embarrassment at Sei Shōnagon's story of the nun who sang *Tsukubayama koishi* and seemed to have adopted the latter's visage for herself. This is what one person wrote as the lyrics to that dancing woman's short song:

The willow planted by the gay quarters
gate, dripping in spring rain. Only my
dusty hands for a pillow, I embark on a
trip,
Leaving my hut in the green morning.
The willow in spring, the willow in spring.
I sip from a small wine cup and extend it to
you, I sip from a wine cup.
My slanting shadow faces west. Across
the Akama strait,¹⁶
When have my traveling companions be-
come so scarce?
When have my traveling companions be-
come so scarce?¹⁷

She sang this three times as her hands awkwardly mimicked koto plucking.

¹⁶ Akama is an alternate name for the Shimonoseki strait.

¹⁷ An illustration in the manuscript depicts the *odoribaba* beneath a willow tree. The accompanying poem, titled *Yōkan sanjōkyoku* (C. *Yang-guan sandie qu*) and written by Wang Wei (701-761) reads:

Spring rains in Xianyang moisten the earth
By the inn, budding, a verdant weeping
willow, verdant weeping willow
I extend to you another cup of wine, a cup
of wine
In the East one leaves Yang Guan,
Leaving old friends behind, leaving old
friends behind.

Then, too, there was Yojirō. At every house in town, he sang: "Hey, I am Yojirōhei. I just felt like dropping by!" while keeping time with his hands. For a donation of food he'd perform a *kyōgen* play.

Prophets on the Street

In the Shōtoku period (1711-1716) there was a frail, old Buddhist priest who wandered the streets. He gave his ink paintings of bamboo to the children, and the beauty and vitality of his brushstrokes rivaled the works of Huang Pinlao and Zhang Changsi.¹⁸ It is said that you can tell one's fortune from the character of their painting. In Fushimichō there is a curious person named Satō something-or-other. One day he decided to have his fortune told the next time the priest wandered by. People from the neighborhood gathered around, and one by one they wrote a single character or signed their names on slips of paper. An outcaste sandal repairman happened to pass by the gate at that time and so they had him write a character, as well. They also took a writing sample from a nobleman and mixed them all together. Presently the fortune-teller came by, whereupon they presented him with their collection of paper scraps. Carefully reflecting on them, the priest picked out the nobleman's paper, gently placed it in his hand and had him lay it at the seat of honor. He then proceeded to display inexplicable powers of divination by foretelling the auspicious and inauspicious fortunes of each onlooker, one after the other. He had never been wrong in the past so everyone trusted his predictions. When he got to the outcaste's paper he immediately blew it out of the pile onto the ground. "This is contaminated! It shouldn't be with the others!" he shouted angrily. Everyone applauded in awe as if he were a supernatural being. They asked his name, catching at his sleeve as he tried to leave, but he did not answer.

¹⁸ Huang Pinlao and Zhang Changsi are Song Dynasty artists celebrated for their bamboo paintings. Reputedly, Zhang did his best work only after becoming drunk.

In Jōsai Biwajimabashi¹⁹ there is a blind priest who comes out every day and sits with his cane beside him. Passersby give him coins, ask whether the day will be lucky, and he tells their fortune from the sound of their voice. Whether bright or ominous, prosperous or penurious, fortunate or unfortunate, he accurately foretells each person's prospects every time. When he has enough money in front of him, he treats himself to a cup of saké at the Tiger Tavern, then leaves, singing merrily: "Gently blowing wind; the Yi river is cold."²⁰ Nobody knows where this urban recluse²¹ goes, making them all the more curious about who he really is.

Kawarake was a mad child from that same area. And around that time and place there was the madman Ōkōbe, who was always racked with fever. One day he was sprawled out on the sandy banks under the bridge when an unexpected flood came and swept him far downstream. People in the village where he washed ashore took pity on him and fished him out. He had swallowed so much water and his stomach was so swollen that he didn't look human. From that day, though, his fever abated and he enjoyed good health. The will of Heaven rules over the events of life and death.

The Stone Seller of Yadamura

Every day in the area of Ōzone, Akatsukachō, and Uwamachi, east of Nagoya castle, Sakunouemon came out to sell stones that he had gathered and hauled from the riverbed in Yada-

mura. Walking along calling "Flints! Flints!" in a hoarse voice and looking cold in his ragged, short-sleeved robe, he was a portrait of foolishness. Life feels as if it passes like the spark from a flint. Loitering around the public square, he would preach from memory about the fleeting vicissitudes of human life, the strange twists of karmic fate, the biddings of Heaven and Hell, and, one time, the teachings of the five ethical commandments.²² Once he had earned enough money to tide him over for the day, he dumped his remaining rocks on the roadside and returned home. The next day he would be back at the riverbed gathering and selling rocks, and then would dump the leftovers the same way. There was a basket maker in ancient times who also used to throw away his unsold baskets every evening. Only those who truly understand can envy such people as these, they who live as if entrusting their fate to the whims of the four winds.

Ishimawari

There was a man who had taken the peculiar nickname Ishimawari. As the only son of a certain merchant, he inherited the family business, but as he often became ill his relatives were obliged to take over the work. Thus it came to be that he lived off of their good graces. He liked arithmetic but did not grasp its usefulness. He mentioned to the apprentices in his house: "Even if you learn the abacus, what can you do with it? In general, calculation is of no use, you know." Though he eventually did learn how to use an abacus, he never understood what it was used for. He was that stupid. When he went out he usually stuck his finger in a knothole in a post at the front door as he walked by. If his finger didn't go into the hole on the first try he would go back inside, come out, and try sticking his finger in again. If it worked the second time he continued out the gate with a satisfied look

¹⁹ Nishi ward in present-day Nagoya.

²⁰ This is from a famous verse by the assassin Jin Ke as he stood by the Yi river before his failed attempt to kill the Emperor of Qin.

²¹ The notion of urban recluse as superior to recluse in mountains and forests was first articulated by the Eastern Jin (317-420 AD) poet Wang Kangju and subsequently became a popular trope within the discursive tradition of recluse in China and Japan. Later, Bo Juyi (772-846) refined this classification by adding the notion of middle recluse. See footnote 60 below.

²² These five Confucian virtues are benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and faithfulness.

and turned south.²³ His actions were swift and effortless, as if he were riding on the wind.²⁴ Before the Wakamiya gate in Suehirochō there is a particular rock that he would walk around three times. There is also a stone in front of the Niō-mon gate at Ōsu Kannon temple that he used to walk around. After circling these two rocks, he would return home with a joyful look on his face. He had no intention of doing anything besides this.

Sōsuke from Atsuta

Long ago in Kyōhō times was a strange, crazed monk who would screech clamorously in a hideous voice: “I am Jikaku from Atsuta!” He was a monk who had forsaken the world, like a wandering poet noticed only by playful dogs.²⁵ I once saw him go to Nagoya castle and receive alms.

In the same place around Mt. Dambu there was a fellow named Sōsuke who was supremely filial to his mother. When she was alive he came to the Inari shrine but refused to cross the Ōkido gate between Nagoya and Atsuta. When one asked him why, he replied, “I receive generous alms when I go to Nagoya but I can’t travel that far now because Mother is waiting.” If I bought a rice cake for him he wouldn’t receive it, saying: “I am a beggar, not someone you should buy things for.” If you offered him a bite of something half-eaten, though, he would take it happily. Or, if an itinerant peddler gave him a *sen* he would refuse it and scold him: “How wasteful! Don’t spread your money so thinly.” By contrast, he never refused alms from even lower samurai, always intoning his humble gratitude. When returning home from Ōkido gate, he helped other travelers by pulling their carts or carrying their loads free of charge.

If they offered compensation he would say, “that’s too much,” and keep only five or six *sen*.

After his mother died, he sometimes came to Nagoya. Someone asked him: “You were filial to your mother in life, but why don’t you perform Buddhist services for her now?” He replied: “My mother and I have always been outcasts. There are no Buddhas or deities for us beggars. For us, the only Buddhas and deities are public officials. It’s thanks to them that I was able to look after Mother while she was alive. So what’s the point of performing Buddhist services?” He never desired a wife, either, and dismissed anyone offering to make an introduction. “No. A wife is for having children, and the fewer beggars in this world the better. They only darken future prospects.”

I read of these accounts in a book called *Hikagegusa* by a great writer from Edo. Through this book Sōsuke is now known as an oddball in other domains, as well. He passed away at the beginning of the Meiwa reign (1764-1772), and local people mourned him and erected a memorial on Mt. Dambu. Someone there wrote:

One caring nothing for affairs of the world
Leisurely treads a way different than others
Ask them why and they’ll say
That we live a butterfly’s dream²⁶

According to talk in the street, in the spring of the third year of Meiwa (1766) Sōsuke was reborn on a large hill in a land to the north.

Kihei from Furuwatari

In Furuwatari village south of the castle was a cutler named Kihei who had fallen onto hard times. Summer and winter alike he was clad in only a short, coarse robe. He walked around

²³ South is an auspicious direction according to Yin Yang theory.

²⁴ Riding on the wind is a further allusion to Zhuangzi and Daoist immortals.

²⁵ This is a reference to a phrase in passage 89 in Yoshida Kenkō’s *Tsurezuregusa*.

²⁶ This is a reference to the famous parable in the *Zhuangzi* in which Zhuangzi awakes unsure if he had been dreaming about a butterfly or if he was then living in a butterfly’s dream. Nakano Mitsutoshi points out that the poem posits Sōsuke as a reincarnation of Zhuangzi.

town with a small box slung over his shoulder calling, "Razor and knife sharpening! Scissors and tweezer repair!" When he acquired a small sum he spent it on saké, whereupon he would croon sorrowful tunes as if nobody else were around. He looked very cold when I called him into my house to sharpen something one day. I asked: "Why don't you stop drinking? For your own sake, why don't you tend more to your daily needs?"

"Long ago I had a livelihood fitting to one of my status, but by some turn of fate I lost it all and was cast out into the elements to fend for myself. As I have an ill elder brother and an old mother I must work morning to night to keep them fed. This is the type of shameful person I've become." Remembering that when Fan Ju²⁷ was cold his employer took pity and offered him new clothing, I gave Kihei enough money for a layer of clothing. He took it, left, and never returned. One day my servant saw him in the street and asked, "Why didn't you ever come by again?"

"Because I immediately spent your master's money on three cups of saké. I betrayed him and don't have the face to go back there," he replied, and turned away. It is heartening to know that there are people who are so ashamed of themselves.²⁸

The Wheelchair

In the final years of Shōtoku, an old, crippled man with bent arms and legs could be seen riding in a wheelchair in front of Ōsu Kannon Temple. In a feeble voice he read aloud a book of stories about karmic causation, explaining that doing so helped atone for his sins. Those who heard him felt pity and offered him alms.

Later there was a similar person called Shin-

²⁷ This anecdote is from *The Biography of Fan Ju* in Sima Qian's (c.145 BCE – c.90 BCE) *The Records of the Grand Historian*.

²⁸ Rikurin is paraphrasing a passage in the *Mencius* which praises one who is ashamed of one's own wickedness and detests the wickedness of others.

rokubō who also used a wheelchair. He was in better health than the former man, and rode his chair on a pilgrimage to the Western countries²⁹ and to far-off Nachi. At the foot of Mt. Nachi he suddenly stood up, straightened his back, and began to move his legs. The purpose of the pilgrimage being realized, he left the wheelchair as an offering at the Tanigumi Kannon Temple. Kannon most surely possesses the power of salvation.

Nobō

There was once an odd monk called Nobō. According to one explanation, this nickname was an abbreviation of Kawarake Nobō, but it is unclear whether they are one and the same person. He was also called by the strange name, Odadabu. When he was about twenty years old he contracted an illness that caused his face, arms and legs to swell into an unsightly form. Though a laughingstock among the neighborhood children, he accompanied their jeers by blowing on his flute and feigning a Shinto song and dance. This was his only livelihood.

At about the same time, south of the castle in Hisayachō, there was a madman named Nisaku who every morning appeared from nowhere and at nightfall went off home to some unknown place. When he was feeling good he sang loudly, though he was ignorant of both Kanze and Komparu³⁰ chanting techniques, and cleaned in front of townspeople's gates every morning. Each house awaited his arrival and set out their dirty clogs or sandals at the gate entrance. Even if they set out brooms, each time he would conscientiously repair and clean them. He did not collect money, but would be pleased to receive a piece of paper from each house. The townspeople acquired an affection for him and gave him food and clothing, yet he received only enough to

²⁹ This pilgrimage around the Kinai plain and present-day Gifu Prefecture was a circuit of thirty-three temples devoted to Kannon, the Buddhist bodhisattva of compassion.

³⁰ Kanze and Komparu are two schools of Nō chanting.

fill his stomach. The clothing he received he passed on to haggard vagrants, although his own clothes were tattered. Day after day he swept the village streets, but there were two or three houses that he didn't clean. When asked: "Why don't you attend to those dwellings?" he answers, "That land is in Miyachō. My home is Hisayachō, so why should I sweep up other towns?" There were many occasions when he appeared angry and hurled abusive language at people. Sometimes he yelled at people from their front gates, unleashing a tirade of things which should never be uttered. But people did not reproach him for this, for soon enough he settled down and moved on, smiling and singing. After he had been there for several years he gradually stopped urinating and defecating in town. Nobody knew where he was doing it because nobody ever saw him do it. He habitually wore a towel wrapped around his head and at times carried a thick cane. He had physical strength and would stand guard over the town in the face of anything. It is not known what became of him.

Hechikan

Long ago in Kyoto there was a peculiar tea master named Hechikan who walked about carrying his various tea utensils in a leather bag slung over his back. He was liable to unload his utensils and enjoy a cup whenever and wherever, seemingly unaware of being on the street. In those days, "Hechikan's leather bag"³¹ was a saying describing a good-for-nothing. This was an [intentional] mispronunciation of "a leather bag for sponge cucumbers,"³² the expression still used today to refer to useless things. The 'hechi' in Hechikan's name was from 'hechi-hotsu' – curving from right to left; curving from left to right. From his name it strikes one that his was a heart that did not lead straight ahead.

Here in Nagoya it is said that a "hechimono" is a crooked fellow. On a back street south of the castle there was a certain fellow called Hechimono. He ran a small store of used books

and other items but didn't make much effort to sell them; he too was self-absorbed and cared nothing for the affairs of the world. Day and night he coveted saké; through the mountains in spring, by the river's edge in autumn, he strolled wherever his heart led him. He always carried a saké bottle and upon his return at nightfall he would throw down the empty bottle, smashing it. The day of his next outing he would locate a new bottle but then smash it on his way home. Someone queried about this curious habit, whereupon he replied: "Why? Saké is my friend so we have to be together every day. That's why I have to carry a bottle with me when I go out. When I return, why should I trouble myself to carry a bottle if my companion is gone?" A friend once admonished him, saying: "You'll need someone to take care of you when you get old; why not take a wife?" He replied, "True. And that'd be fine if she helped me, but if she fell ill what a burden she would be." He was single throughout his life, and his words and deeds were always commendable. Regrettably, I have forgotten them so can't recount them here.

(Headnote): Hechikan remained in reclusion in Awataguchi outside Kyoto.³³ From behind the blinds of a hermitage he extends a dipper and one by one passing cart-pullers and traveling porters fill it with scoopfuls of rice. For him, one full dipper was enough for that day's meal. Once Hechikan summoned old Sen no Rikyū³⁴ and Imaōji Dōsan³⁵ to his house; extending hospitality, he prepared tea. Dōsan said playfully, "you should change the character 貫 (*kan*) in your name and use 桓 (*kan*) instead, which you can rearrange to make *nihon ichi*, best in Japan."

³³ Awataguchi is a suburb east of Kyoto.

³⁴ Mention of tea master Sen no Rikyū (1522-1591) here helps us date Hechikan but invalidates Rikurin's claim to having firsthand knowledge of every *kyōsha* in the work.

³⁵ Imaōji Dōsan (1507-1594) was a physician from Kyoto and an acquaintance of Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

³¹ *Hechikan ga kawa no dabukuro.*

³² *Hechima no kawa no dambukuro.*

Goranbō

The monk Goranbō was born to a wealthy family and though accomplished at various arts he was extremely malcontent in the world. Upon careful consideration, he concluded that the best way to distance himself from the corruption of worldly affairs was to be a beggar. Every day he shuffled about, pretending to be a beggar, accepting food and alms, though his parents, brothers and sisters admonished this behavior. Upon his nightly return, proffering his bowl, Goranbō shared with the outcastes all that he had accumulated in alms that day. Even now, his house with the purple shop curtain is famous, so I'd better not divulge anything further.

Kōsuishi of Gosebō

Kōsuishi from Gosebō was a shriveled old monk whose Chinese style calligraphy was highly acclaimed. His appearance was strange, so when he went out [as in the case of Ogosa, mentioned earlier] people called him Lord Kōsuishi and laughed condescendingly. He left the housework to his children and went out at the crack of dawn to roam the town streets. Brandishing his cane, he would stroll far and wide, but would then stop, salivating, in front of the liquor shop, looking unable to resist. Then, fumbling through his pouch for change, he'd disappear lickety-split behind the shop curtain. He always threw down fifteen *sen* by the fireside and then set to swigging from a jug, happily chuckling to himself. In time he would totter his way out. On those days when he was penniless the best he could do was pick up a discarded wine cask cork and sniff at it as he moped home.

At crowded events, near or far, whether it was theater performances, the unveiling of Buddhist images at temples, or flower viewing, wherever a dozen people were gathered he was sure to be among them. To this day his form is visible in Montai's³⁶ painting of a large crowd at Ryūsenji Temple, as well as in the crowd painted on the folding screen in Manpei's³⁷ house.

³⁶ Unidentified.

³⁷ Unidentified.

When he grew old and was facing death he summoned his progeny to his bedside. "For seventy years I have represented myself as an utter fool and thereby lived effortlessly in the world," he professed. "People have always sneered and called me stupid, and I never disputed it. In return, I played with lies, deceiving them by displaying the façade of an imbecile; isn't it actually they who are the fools to be laughing at me? I am amused by those who laugh. I have deceived thousands, and only I enjoy knowing so. Since being born into this fleeting world, bringing many people amusement has been my long-cherished desire. In my life I have made fools of thousands, and amidst the world's confusion I alone have remained aloof. You all must do the following during your sojourn through human society: under no circumstances, if you are smart, will you behave wisely." Thereby revealing all, he expired. Thus, it is as they say: "A bird sings true on its deathbed." When I heard this story sweat stood out on my face from embarrassment, as I had been one of those deceived.

The Monk Okikubō

From what I've heard, Wankyū from Naniwa was acclaimed for his rendition of "Matsuyama, that fountain of woes."³⁸ Endō Musa's unrequited love for Kesa Gozen³⁹ finally forces him to reject the secular world and don a monk's robe. One cannot help believing strongly that choosing the wrong road ends only in disaster.

One currently finds the monk Okikubō, born to a formerly wealthy family, wandering around the town square. Disregarding public censure and his parents' admonitions, he fell in love with the wrong woman and ultimately encountered

³⁸ These words – *sue no matsuyama omoi no tane yo* – are lyrics from the bunraku play *Wankyū sue no matsuyama*, which debuted in 1710.

³⁹ As told in the late Kamakura period (1185-1333) text *Gempei seisuiki*, Endō ultimately kills Kesa Gozen and renounces the world to become a monk.

only a “fountain of woes.” His heart broken, he was thrown into confusion. Since, he has rejected the world, believing it a fleeting place, and forgotten himself and his home. These days he variously finds himself engrossed in cherry blossoms, chasing after the moon, reproached by a barking dog on a snowy evening, or bitten by mosquitoes on a cold, wind-blown bridge. Yet he does not consider these disheartening things. In broad daylight, face down in the street, he loudly chants lines from a puppet play in the *Gidayū-bushi* style.⁴⁰ It has been so long since a razor touched his head that his unkempt hair now falls around his shoulders in a state that would surely arouse the ire of his old mother.⁴¹ He wraps himself in a straw mat, invoking pity as once did that poor soul atop Mt. Kataoka.⁴² Once he stopped before someone’s front gate, but did not beg the way people do normally; instead he called out the owner’s name, saying, “Hey, don’t you know it’s lunch time? Why haven’t you set out a meal?” A maid brought out a meal and chopsticks, but he glared up at her fiercely. “You treat someone to a meal but give them old chopsticks?” he accused, and threw them to the ground. “This household has really gone to hell. It looks like you’ll be living off cold rice before long.”

He once ran into an old friend on the street: “Hey, was your name *Tarō* or *Jirō*?” he said, and proceeded to reminisce about past events. At times he laughed and at others he cried. On the

occasion that alms were being distributed by the public office, someone asked: “Hey, *Okikubō*. Why don’t you go receive alms?” As often happened, he became angry. “What do you think I am? I’m not a beggar, I’m an urban recluse,”⁴³ he said, and left.

Of those rogues whose stories are compiled in this book, few still tread gracefully through the world. Society does not hesitate to condemn them, but, not letting this bother me, I undertook the foolish endeavor of writing this book anyway. All people are born with a Buddha nature, the potential for enlightenment, so why make distinctions? Clogs, fried *miso* – all things are different yet the same in essence. This is to say that while “there are many roads at the foot of the mountain,”⁴⁴ they all merge into one at the summit. If I showed this book to *Suketomo* in the *Tsurezuregusa*⁴⁵ he would wryly present me with his most contorted bonsai tree, knowing I would like it. One cannot compare disparate things [like clogs and fried *miso*]. It is said that even a mad person’s ravings can serve to praise Buddha. That being the case, perhaps even my poor rhetoric can do the same.

“There is nobody else in the world like me,”⁴⁶ or so goes the lament of those who complain of society’s uniformity. Among them are those who ask why there are no others like them. By the same token, there are souls who never enter-

⁴⁰ *Gidayū-bushi* is a school of *bunraku* chanting popularized by *Chikamatsu Monzaemon* (1653-1724) and others during the *Genroku* period (1688-1704).

⁴¹ This phrase echoes a verse from the *Gosenwakashū* (951), a *waka* anthology commissioned by Emperor *Murakami* (r. 926-927).

⁴² In the *Nihon Shoki* (Book 22), *Shōtoku Taishi* encounters a starving man at the top of Mt. *Kataoka* and offers him food and clothing. Though the man perishes the next day, his tomb was later found empty, evidence that he had been a divine being (W.G. Aston, *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*, vol. 2 (Rutland, VT and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1998), 144).

⁴³ According to *Bo Juyi*’s “Middle Reclusion” (*C. Zhong yin*), recluses in cities and at court are superior to those who keep to the mountains, whose reclusion tends to be disingenuous.

⁴⁴ *Nakano Mitsutoshi* attributes this phrase to the *Tatoezukushi* and finds a similar phrase in *Ikkyū*’s (1394-1481) *Gaikotsu*.

⁴⁵ In section 152 in *Yoshida Kenkō*’s *Tsurezuregusa*, *Hino Suketomo* (1290-1332) mocks the idea that something is venerable merely because it is old and decrepit.

⁴⁶ This phrase is from section 124 of the *Ise monogatari* and expresses the speaker’s sense of isolation. It implies that since nobody exists who can truly understand me, I might as well keep my thoughts to myself.

tain such grievous thoughts. Some complain of isolation, others do not, but in fact there is no meaning in asking if there are kindred souls in the world. If there isn't meaning in asking it, neither is there meaning in saying it. People's whims are as individual as their faces.⁴⁷ One cannot allow one's heart to become fixated on loss and gain; one must release it to play to its own content. The old man who said: "my body resembles Chikusai's"⁴⁸ did not say that his heart resembled Chikusai's. He knew that one can speak only of appearances. That being the case, how can I know who is like me?

From the outset I have recounted the exploits of madmen, but now they are past memories and only Okikubō remains.⁴⁹ In their own day they followed their hearts, finding sanctuary from the encumbrances of court,⁵⁰ and from their place of quiet retreat they became consumed by a strange poem or a game of Go, losing track of day and night. All those souls, the down-and-out, blown by the cold wind of society, resemble each other. They all resemble Okikubō, shivering in the biting wind. Yes, they surely do, but their hearts are not alike.

Beckoning to a friend from a pine branch,
he'll come
Though lying flat, Okikubō continues prattling.⁵¹

⁴⁷ This is a citation from the *Hōbutsushū*, an early Kamakura period compilation of didactic Buddhist tales.

⁴⁸ The old man is Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694), who, in verse, compares Miwa Chikusai to a withered tree. Chikusai was a fellow poet.

⁴⁹ Okikubō dies in 1782.

⁵⁰ Though here Rikurin uses the term 蘭省 (J. *ranshō*), language alluding to responsibilities accompanying a position in the Chinese government, this is merely an inflated reference to affairs of the mundane world.

⁵¹ An illustration in the manuscript suggests that it is an owl which calls to Okikubō. The second line refers to the account of Okikubō laying face down in the street chanting lines from a puppet play.

Hooting in the pines, hiding among orchids and chrysanthemums, *kyōsha* occupy the margins like those possessed. Theirs is a state of no-self, no-mind, of escaping the shackles of the self to romp in Heaven. Like those transformed into Hotta Rikurin,⁵²

Eleventh month, An'ei 7 (1778)

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⁵² Rikurin signs the work simply as *Kyōin* 狂隱, "Mad recluse."

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