

ORIENTAL HUMOUR



MAN PLAYING THE SAMISEN

This is part of *Kyokugeizu Byōbu*, 曲藝圖屏風, some screens portraying acrobats, the artist being unknown. The picture belongs to the beginning of the Edo Period. The player here is dressed as a warrior. It was customary to play the samisen during acrobatics, partly to punctuate the various crises of the tumblers, contortionists, pepper-eaters, conjurers, tight-rope walkers, sword-swallowers, and so on. The pattern of the samisen, the two swords, the folding stool, and the outspread legs; and the harmony of the face and the samisen makes this a worthy example of early ukiyo-e. The plectrum is comically small for a large hand, but the best thing is his face.

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Dedicated
(as all my books should have been)
to
DAISETZ SUZUKI
who taught me that I knew

PREFACE

By "Oriental Humour" is meant that of China, Korea, and Japan. As far as China is concerned I have to thank two persons for the Chinese humorous stories in Chapter VI. First, Mr. Maeno of Kyōiku University. He most kindly and willingly lent me his manuscript, in Japanese, a chronological anthology of Chinese comical tales, so that I was able to choose from it what I thought the best ones. At the same time I came across a book published in Shanghai in 1956, *A Historical Collection of Comical Stories*, 歷代笑話集, by Wang Lichi, 王利器. From these Mr. Chen Yih-hsiung, a post-graduate student of Waseda University, selected and translated some of the most interesting and characteristic. While the present book was in the press I came across *Chinese Wit and Humour*, George Kao, Coward-McCann, 1941. Like Lin Yutang's *The Wisdom of China*, Michael Joseph, 1944, it is somewhat nationalistic in tone. As for the Korean humour, the memories of the fourteen years of my life in Korea, together with various Japanese books given in the list of reference books, emboldened me to do what I could. I am afraid my old Korean friends will be displeased, but I thought that something was better nothing to express my gratitude for all that I learned in their land. I must also thank Mr. Y. T. Pyun, former Prime Minister of South Korea, and former Prince Li, for their help.

I have to thank Miss Toshiko Chiba for even more help than usual with the Japanese part of this book. My former student, Miss Tatsuko Yamada, gave me overall assistance, and Miss Misako Himuro, a post-graduate student of Waseda University, corrected numerous historical, literary, and typographical blunders. (The misses saved me from many a miss.)

The amount of space devoted to each country does not indicate

the amount of humour created by it, but only my knowledge of it. In the case of Japan I feel on firmer ground, having already written a book on Japanese humour. In this part are given translations of the best of the old senryu, so far unpublished, and various other typical aspects of humour found in proverbs, games, caricatures, ghost-stories and so on.

India should be included in this survey, but without a knowledge of the language it is absurd to try to deal with the speakers or their writings. However, in the Introduction something is said about India as the chief origin of world humour. In conclusion I would like to say that this book will hardly give the reader an accurate idea of the national character or way of thinking of the present-day Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese. The book intends to do something quite different and far more important, to show how certain peoples have seen and seen into the world of man and of nature, and to enable us to see what they saw. The purpose of life is to know the purpose of life; the purpose of life is to laugh with the infinite eternal laughter of the gods.

R. H. Blyth
Tokyo
1st April 1959

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INTRODUCTION

When we deal with humour chronologically, and in literature, we go back, as we must in so many spheres, to India. However, the Indian mind does not strike us (Europeans) as particularly humorous. There is no clash, no conflict between the powers of good and evil that we see in the Faustian and Zoroastrian view of the world. There is little humour because there is little humanity, just as in Greece there was little humour because there was too much humanity. The Greeks had their ideals, but they were too low, or shall we rather say that many men approached too closely to them. It is only when we come to the (Chinese) idea that *mayoi* (illusion) and *satori* (enlightenment) are one thing that we get the cosmic humour of Zen that shows us what we really laugh at in the poorest mundane joke.

The Indian feeling of personality is weaker than that of both European and Chinese and Japanese peoples. One of the most ancient and almost the greatest of all religions, Hinduism, was the realization that I am not-I; my soul and the Over-Soul are one; there is no duality of the knower and the known. But Zen went beyond this in asserting that though I am not-I, I am also I. There is here a doubled and (intellectually) unresolvable contradiction, so that if we admit that the basis of humour is paradox, we must say that humour is the very essence of all things.

Not the religious, but the ordinary practical people of early India produced the fables of the *Hitopadesa*. The section of didactic or sententious stanzas of the *Hitopadesa*, which is the "Father of all Fables", is said to be later versions of early myths, and this religious origin of these *humorous* stories suggests once more to us that the universe is indeed a divine comedy. Further, even in the specifically religious Indian writings we find some humour cropping out, for

example *The Rigveda*, which was composed from about 1000 B.C. onwards. There are some satiric verses on professions, showing how we all welcome calamities that are profitable to ourselves:

The carpenter desires cracks;
The doctor wants broken bones to cure.

IX 112

There are also verses among the hymns, satirising wealthy people and women, for example:

You cows make even the thin man fat,
Even the ugly man you make handsome.

VI, 28.6

Like the Anglo-Saxons, the ancient Hindus were fond of riddles, and they are found in the *Rigveda*. Also found, in the *Atharva-Veda*, are charms to secure the love of women, or to prevent rivals from gaining it.

The fairy tales and fables that are thought to be the origins of European fables seem to have derived from Buddhist fables. The *Panchatantra*, or Five Books (earlier than the *Hitopadesa*), is the work of the Brahmins. The stories use jackals to teach Machiavellianism, crows and owls to show the danger of new friendships, a monkey and a crocodile to reveal the insidious power of flattery. As in the Toba-e of Japan animals are used to ridicule the hypocrisy of Brahmins, and the frailty of women. Here is a fable from the *Panchatantra* showing the folly and indeed the danger of trying to teach people anything:

A herd of monkeys was once shivering in the cold rain, and some of them collected the red gunja berries, which look like sparks, and began blowing them to make a fire to warm themselves. A bird called Needlebeak seeing their foolishness said to them, "Hey, you nit-wits, they are not sparks, they are gunja berries. You'd better go somewhere out of the wind and rain.

The storm is getting worse." An old monkey retorted, "Mind your own business." Another cried:

A man of sense regards his fame,
And never speaks a word to him
Whose work has often been disturbed,
Or gambler who has lost the game.

The bird did not listen, but kept on saying to the monkeys, "You are wasting your time." He kept on until one of the monkeys, irritated by their lack of success, seized him by a wing and dashed him against a boulder.

So it is said:
Stiff wood is not the bending sort;
To cut a stone a razor does not seek;
Give heed, you Needlebeak!
Who will not learn cannot be taught.

We may compare this to one of Stevenson's fables, *The Citizen and the Traveller*:

"Look round you," said the citizen. "This is the largest market in the world."

"Oh, surely not," said the traveller.

"Well, perhaps not the largest," said the citizen, "but much the best."

"You are certainly wrong there," said the traveller. "I can tell you"

They buried the stranger at the dusk.

The humorous similes of the verses are the greatest charm of the book. In them we are told not to want to hurt others unless we are able to do so, for "the pea when fried will not break the pan by jumping up and down." A woman will be weary of her power over men only when the fire is tired of burning wood, the rivers of flowing into the sea, death of destroying life. The Introduction tells us the

object of the book, which is, never to be defeated, even by the King of Heaven himself. The humour of wisdom, the wisdom of humour, is indispensable for a life beyond danger. The aim of the *Panchatantra* is happiness, not blessedness, and in this it may seem that humour is inferior to poetry or music or art, which live and move and have their being in a transcendental region; but humour belongs to this very contrast between the real and the ideal. Happiness is the ideal, lack of it the real, humour the two compared, and this is blessedness.

To understand the reason for the use of animals in fables is important for the origins of humour. The most poetic and tragic (pathetic) and comic things in the universe are stones; the least poetic and tragic and comic are the gods. Between these is an ascending or descending series of creatures. Humour and pathos decrease as we rise in the scale of being, but to bring out the comic or poetic elements of any class it is convenient to use the one below it; for the upper is the lower disguised. Primitive men, in their humility, wore animal masks, their real faces. Modern men are only masked animals, and fables simply take off the masks. We then see the weakness and power, the folly and cunning of ourselves as men.

The relation between morality (of the transcendental type) and humour may perhaps be seen in the *Jatakas*, Buddhist Birth Stories, which already existed as a collection in the 4th century B.C. For example, there is the tale of King Cibi, who gave up his life to save a pigeon for a hawk; the story is often represented on Buddhist carvings. The preposterousness of it shows that religion must have something paradoxical and above reason and probability in it. It may be true to say, combining Tertullian and Oscar Wilde, that the only thing we can possibly believe is the impossible.

There is a book of fairy tales in verse, exceedingly long, called *Katha-sarit-sagara*, "Ocean of Rivers of Stories"; the author Soma-deva composed it about the time of the Norman Conquest. As



PLATE I

CARICATURE OF INDIAN SAGES

The original is in the Art Museum at Lahore. In the Takli Language is written, over or under the figures, from left to right, Prem Das, Gharib Das, Tulsi Das, Kesur Singh, Raj Singh, Ram Sing. Of these, Tulsi Das, the fat gentleman on the left, was the greatest poet of the Middle Ages in Hindustan. He made a version of the *Ramayana* in the literary dialect of Eastern Hindi, Awadhi, "The Lake of the Deeds of Rama." He also wrote other long works, and composed hymns and prayers dealing with Rama. Who are the others?

found all over the world, there is much satire on women, their changeableness and general untrustworthiness, for example the following, XXXVII, 43:

A moment lasts all women's love,
Like hues of eve or dawn that shine above:
Like winding streams, like snakes that creep in dust,
A lightning flash; in such there is no trust.

What Buddha and Christ thought of humour is not recorded. Some suppose that Christ founded his Church upon a pun in Aramaic; Buddha seems to have used fables and parables for his easier teachings; but neither strikes us as conspicuously a humorist. As far as Buddha is concerned, his disciples, like those of Christ, and indeed all disciples, were deficient in humour, and Asvaghosa the great Buddhist of the end of 1st century A.D. tells the story of the life of Buddha in the *Buddhacanta* like this all through:

How foolish is the man who sees his neighbour grow sick, and old, and dead, and yet remains of good cheer; nor is shattered by fear as, when a tree bare of flower or fruit falls or is broken, the trees around are heedless of its fate.

This is the very antithesis of humour, which teaches us to laugh at sickness, old age, and death,—most of all at the last. To know one's fate, yet be heedless of it, is to "overcome the world."

The earliest secular classical Sanskrit literature was apparently epic, and like *Beowulf* and *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, and *The Aeneid*, like the *Commedia* and *Paradise Lost* the poems of Kalidasa have little humour in them. The epic and the lyrical drama require a dignity and romantic sentiment which can be attained only by the omission of all or most that the humorous poet wishes to include. However, in ancient Sanskrit literature there is an almost unbelievable amount of punning. Puns were the delight of a small number of great men with unsolemn minds; they felt that the universe was humorous, that

the words which express it have some "metaphysical" correlation and parallelism with it, so that mere rhyme itself reveals or rather hints at occult relations unsuspected by the solemnities of common sense and the logic of philology in prose. So with Lear's verse:

There was an Old Person of China,
Whose daughters were Jiska and Dinah,
Amelia and Fluffy,
Olivia and Chuffy,
And all of them settled in China.

It is only a rhyme, but what rhymes on earth may well rhyme also in Heaven. In the prose romances of Dandin, Subandhu, and Bana, perhaps from the 6th century A.D., there is an excessive amount of playing on words, and in the former two a great deal of sexual joking, bringing out one more important relation, that of humour and sex. This sexual element is very strong of course in the popular tales, for example *Sukasaptati*, the seventy tales of a parrot, which exemplary bird prevents its mistress from betraying her husband in his absence by telling an interesting story every night, in the manner and the spirit of the *Decámeron*. It is interesting to see that in the *Rigveda* the chanting of the Brahmins is compared to the croaking of the frogs. The same thing comes in the Japanese Toba-e of the 11th century, where the frogs act the part of priests in the Buddhist service. One of the best stories in the *Panchatantra*, more political and moral in its application than appears on the surface, is the story of The Onion Thief. He is caught red-handed, and has a choice of one of three punishments, paying a hundred rupees, receiving a hundred lashes, or eating a hundred onions. He chooses the last, but after six or seven he asks, with streaming eyes, for the lashes, but finds this also too painful, and pays the fine.

The Indian theories of poetry are many and elaborate, but based on the idea of emotion or sentiment, but later the poetic "feeling" was compared to the enlightenment of the apprehension of unity with

the universe attained in religious meditation. In the *Brhadaranyaka Aparishad* it is compared to the sexual orgasm,¹ reminding us once more of the connection between religion, poetry, and sex. Onomatopoeia, in the sense of indivisibility of sound and sense, was also appreciated. The *Panchatantra* came to Europe in the 13th century in Arabic and Hebrew translations, one of the first being the Latin *Directorium Humanae Vitae*, about 1270, translated from a Hebrew translation of an Arabic translation of a Persian translation of the Sanskrit. In 1570 Sir Thomas North translated into English an Italian translation of the German translation of the *Directorium*. So devious are the ways by which humour travels unhindered at last all over the world.

Satire is one half of humour, the cruel half. Some striking examples of early Indian satire are found in the *Mahabharata*, Book XII:

The last word of social wisdom is, never trust.

12, 80, 12

Whoever desires success in this world must be prepared to make deep bows, swear love and friendship, speak humbly, and pretend to shed many tears.

12, 140, 17

Humour has no pity. "Wise men feel no pity either for what dies or for what lives." *Bhagavadgita* 2. 23.

We may find humour where it is not intended, as in the following from Egypt, England, China, and India. First, the case of St. Macarius, originally a confectioner in Alexandria. We are told of him, in Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, that he once killed a gnat which had bitten him, and hastening to the marshes of Scete, whose huge flies madden even the wild boars, he mortified himself there for six months, at the end of which time his body was a mass of putrifying sores, and he could be recognised only by his voice.

1. "Just as a man fully embraced by his beloved wife does not know anything at all, either external or internal, so . . ."

Another example, even more cruel, may be taken from Evelyn's *Diary*, under March 28, 1684;

There was so great a concourse of people with their children to be touched for the evil, that six or seven were crushed to death by pressing at the chirurgeon's door for tickets.

Coming now to China, an eight-year old boy of the Chin Dynasty whose parents had no mosquito net, went to bed early and allowed all the mosquitoes of the house to gorge themselves on him so that when his parents retired to rest they should be able to sleep in peace. Is not true morality also transcendental, that is, humorous?

Last of all, India, and a modern example:

Even today two men may sometimes be seen carrying a light bed between them. They stop outside the house of Jaina believers and cry, "Who will feed the bugs?" A window opens and money is thrown out from a window. One of the men lies down on the bed, which is alive with bugs, and allows himself to be sucked by his fellow insects.

The sublime teachings of Jainism are said to have been found in India in the 9th century B.C. We can hardly congratulate ourselves on our moral progress since them. More important, the transcendentalism of the *Upanishads* has humour latent in it. The *Chandogya Upanishad* tells us that in the empty space within a fig seed, in the salt which cannot be grasped in salt water, is "the finest essence, Reality, Atman. That art thou." This absence of self-nature, the absolute inter-identity of all this is expressed in Emerson's *Brahma*, in which the cosmic humour is yet more evident. But the parody of it, of which I still remember some lines, has far more "truth" in it than the original, or even of the *Upanishads* themselves:

I am the batsman and the bat . . .
The umpire, the pavilion cat.

PLATE II

A PERSIAN ELEPHANT

This Persian picture, of about 1250 A. D., was painted by Ibn Bakcheesh, and copied by Manafi al Hayawan, and is said to belong to the Abas Court School of painting. The manuscript contains many sketches of animals, all of which have something characteristically humorous about them. It is interesting to compare this ornamental Persian style, in which the birds look like butterflies and the elephant like a circus animal, with the severities of Byzantine art, and its humourless symbolism of the animals representing the four Evangelists. Remembering the Egyptian animal caricatures, the Chinese animal statues and statuettes, it seems as if every nation must have had, and lost, animal caricatures, which are really man's still better caricatures of what God had already caricatured in the zoo.



In his *Philosophies of India*, Zimmer quotes from the *Taittiriya Ananyaka*:

The blind one found the jewel;
The one without fingers picked it up;
The one with no neck put it on;
And the one with no voice gave it praise.

He says that such stanzas are reminiscent of nursery-rhymes. However, most nursery-rhymes that look like nonsense are really riddles with a possible solution, for example:

I went to the wood and I got it;
I sat me down and I sought it;
I kept it still against my will,
And so by force home I brought it.

The answer is "a man with a thorn in his foot." But is it perhaps that such verses were very ancient riddles whose solution was afterwards forgotten? Would it not be a joke indeed if all the profoundest Indian religion and philosophy, much of the culture of China and Japan, neo-Platonism, the poetry of Wordsworth, and the transcendental movement in America, were derived from the forgetting of the answers to riddles composed by equally forgotten races three thousand years ago!

Much closer to the transcendentalism of the *Upanishads* is the nonsense of Lewis Carroll, for instance:

He thought he saw a Rattlesnake
That questioned him in Greek:
He looked again, and found it was
The Middle of Next Week.
'The one thing I regret,' he said,
'Is that it cannot speak!'

Summing up, we may say that Indian humour is of two kinds, perhaps deriving from the two ethnological origins of the Indian

people. These are the religious and the popular. From the latter we get the fables and tales that must have pleased the common people. From the former came Hinduism, Buddhism, Yoga, and Tantra, which was a going beyond all sense and reason, a continuing of the state of bliss which is only momentary in laughter.



This is The Golden Spirit, from a Turkish manuscript, 1582, with two magic diagrams by which He may be invoked. Near East demonological humour stands between that of the Far East and the West.

PART ONE

CHINA

CHAPTER I

Chinese Humour

The connection between the humour of India and that of China can be seen ocularly in the paintings found in the caves of Tunhuang, which were used as temples and Buddhist warehouses from the 4th to the 17th century A.D. Especially in the 11th century, pictures and, sutras were hidden here during the war, but the works of art date from the time of the Kingdom of Ch'in, c. 220 B.C., so that we see also the art of China long before Buddhism arrived there. Cave 285 especially, of 538-9 A.D., shows the influence of India. The building style is Indian, but the stories illustrated are from Chinese mythology, painted (apparently) in the Indian style. We see the angels of the Heaven of China as described by Ch'u Yuan, 屈原, idealist prince who committed suicide in 295 B.C. The influence of Indian art on Chinese continued up to the time of Sui 隨, 581-617 A.D. Gradually painting changed back to the Chinese style, so that by the T'ang Period, Chinese art was once more purely Chinese.

The caves of Tunhuang are on the route between Persia and India. When we look at the ancient works of art of Irak and Iran, the massive sculptures and bas-reliefs and even the figurines and painted earthenware, we feel that it is all without a spark of humour. Indeed humour is alien to the heroic, the aristocratic mind. A monarch may not laugh, let alone be laughed at. Humour, as distinct from wit, arises among the common people, and if we just

glance at a few of the ancient proverbs of Persia we can see what an extraordinary comic wisdom the old Persian farmers and merchants must have had. "I speak to the door, but the wall may listen." "Injustice all round is justice." "If you have no door, why have a doorman?" "Wherever there is a stone, a lame foot will find it."¹

If the above facts are correct, it will be difficult to show examples of Indian humour passing through Persia on its way to China and Japan,—in art. Persian influence is seen however in the patterns and designs of vases and tapestry and so on in the repository of ancient arts, the Shōsōin, that is to say, it seems as if the Buddhist art of India had humorous elements in it which the Persian did not, but what influence the humour of the common people of Persia, as well of those of India, had upon China,—this will perhaps be one of the many unsolved mysteries of history.

It is not always easy to tell whether the apparent humour of another culture, different in time and place, is due to the (more or less conscious) will of the original creators, or to the tendency for any culture to look odd and even bizarre to people of another culture. Nevertheless, what is obviously grotesque, like the devil masks of Africa, is clearly imbued with some kind of humour, and when we look at many of the figures on the walls of the caves of Tunhuang, we feel in the swirling (Indian) drapery, the attenuation of the legs of the horses, the goblin eyes of the human beings, the freedom and élan of the spirit, that the practical, earthy Chinese are being affected by the more mobile, spiritually sensual Indians. The Iranian influence is included here, and perhaps the ancient tales and Persian proverbs somehow or other played their part in maturing the humour of China.

To speak about the national psychology of such an enormous country as China, with a history of more than three thousand years, itself a kind of comical impudence. Again, in regard to

1. From *Persian Proverbs*, Elwell-Sutton.

humour, many Chinese characteristics may be seen externally, from the European point of view, as absurd and amusing, but this would belong to European not Chinese humour. What we want to know is, what the Chinese have thought odd and inexplicable about the world, this "humour" then being the very centre and essence of the personality. Dr. A. H. Smith¹ suggested further that a foreigner who really understands the Chinese mind is in danger himself of not being understood by other foreigners. It is said with truth that nothing in the Chinese classics needs expurgation or Bowdlerising as do Chaucer and Shakespeare. This is the grand defect of Confucianism as it is of Buddhism and Christianity. In China the common people, together with their polytheism, pantheism, and atheism, have always lived a life of indirection, "flexible inflexibility", and resignation, without logic, without any object of life, indifferent to all but the present moment.

The Chinese character like that of almost every nation may be considered as the resultant of two strongly contradictory elements, of practicality and idealism; what causes different national types is the realm in which these two elements display themselves. There are three forms of life and art, the violently romantic and idealistic, for example, that of Laotse, Chuangtse, Pindar, Shelley, El Greco, Byzantine art, Klee, Milton, Berlioz; the resolutely practical and realistic, for example, Confucius, Hogarth, Goya, Da Vinci, Handel, Haydn, Crabbe; and, what is perhaps the most satisfying and highest of all, a combination of the two, Li Taipo, Bashō, Wordsworth, Mozart, Bach, Eckhart, Thoreau. Humour is the collision between the first and the second, and thus belongs to the third, but it does not resolve the discord as do the poets and artists of the third group. It leaves the contradictions as they are; the symphony never ends; the picture has no frame; the freedom is unlimited. The

1. *Chinese Characteristics*, Shanghai, 1890; a good because humorous portrayal of the Chinese mind seventy years ago.

idealism of the Chinese people, seen in Laotse and Chuangtse, contrasts with the practicality, the this-worldness of Confucianism, and Chinese humour may be described philosophically, that is, unhumorously and foolishly, as the clash between the moral and the non-moral, the wished-for and the attainable; more grandiosely as the interaction between the absolute and the relative.

Humour is rather latent and suppressed in Chinese literature. Humorous stories and verses and sayings abound, but laughter is kept out of poetry and belles lettres, being relegated to popular literature, chap-books and so on. In addition, or what is perhaps the same thing, the Chinese felt that love should be kept out of verse, unless of a sentimental-tragic variety; religion also; and thus there is practically no satire in the European or Japanese sense of the word. However, Chiang Tzuya, 姜子牙, or Chiang T'aikung, 太公, who died about 1048 B.C., is said to have composed the following:

青竹蛇兒口。黃蜂尾上針。
兩般猶自可。最毒婦人心。

The mouth of the snake in the green bamboos,
The dart in the tail of the yellow hornet,—
The most deadly thing is the mind of a woman.

The humour of every country is conditioned by its language, or to speak more exactly, the nature of the language is determined by the kind of humour latent in the national soul. The Chinese produced the pictorial, poetical, intuitive Chinese characters, and these in turn enabled them to express their sense of humour in a terse, epigrammatic, antithetical way. The Chinese love puns, as do the Japanese, and as did Shakespeare, Lamb, Thoreau, Hood, Sidney Smith, and the present writer. They love also what we now call debunking, historical allusions in a satirical vein, the bringing together of wholly different things. In the ordinary Chinese, there is something of Sam Weller, with his "as the man 'said who" There is also a humour, "*un humour noir*," which is seen for

example in the saying:

修橋補路，雙瞎眼。
殺人放火，得長命。

A builder of bridges and repairer of roads will become blind
in both eyes;

A murderer and incendiary will live long.

The fact that Chinese language is quite often ambiguous as written and very often as heard is not merely an assistance to the would-be humorist; it is an expression of the Chinese mind, which sees the universe *sub specie facetiarum*, as something paradoxical, indeterminate, incoherent, significantly insignificant, in a word, humorous. Again, in the Chinese language nouns have no number or person or gender or case; verbs have no voice, no mode, no tense, no number, no person; "part of speech" itself has no meaning. That is to say, it is highly transcendental and flexible, a kind of democratic language that comes from and lends itself to the comic spirit, which knows better than any other how difficult it is for one human being to communicate itself to another, and that it does so best in laughing at that difficulty.

The "humour" of Chinese poetry is almost always of the cosmic kind. There is an undercurrent of bitterness even in the romantic sadness that sometimes gives it a depth not often attained to by European verse, with its background of Christian optimism.

As said before, the Chinese language lends itself more than any other to puns, cryptograms, proverbs, and parody. One example begins in this way:

李翠蓮，要吃齋。
他丈夫，勸他開。

Li Ts'uilien would keep her vow of fasting;
Her husband urged her to break it.

Li T'suilien was a famous Buddhist woman of the T'ang Dynasty,

whose husband strove to make her desist from her asceticism. After a final domestic quarrel she hanged herself. The first lines of the book relating to her martyrdom were turned into children's nonsense rhymes. Puns in other, unknown languages are not very interesting, but just bear with this one:

和尚你吃肉不吃肉。

"Priest, do you eat meat?"

僧不吃。

"Priests do not eat it."

(written or heard 生不吃, it means "I do not eat it raw.")

和尚你喝酒不喝。

"Priest, do you drink wine?"

最不喝。

"I certainly do not!"

(punned into 醉不喝 it means "I don't drink when drunk.")

Chinese characters are often used as what we may call "pictorial puns", for example 缺字壓人頭. "Debt oppresses man," literally, the character 缺, (chien), presses on the head of 人, (jen). Like life itself, humour is based on sex, eating, defecation, urination etc., and many Chinese proverbs use these basic things as illustration of less important events, thus relating them to the very muscles and nerves and vital organs of the universe. I don't know whether such proverbs as the following existed in the European tongues but the Chinese were clever enough to use them freely and universally:

見人屙屎嚙喉癢。

When you see someone defecating, you feel an itch to do the same.

The Marquis de Sade studied this kind of thing in its psychological aspect. According to D. H. Lawrence, even writing a book is a

kind of bowel evacuation. Another proverb, in which the metaphor is expressive from its grossness:

屙屎不揩屁股.

To evacuate the bowels, but not to wipe the arse.

One more, which is also equally true of Christ and Buddha:

別人屁臭.

自己屁香.

Other people's farts stink;

One's own smell sweet.

Indeed it is quite impossible to conceive of any being of whom this is not true.

The fable does not seem congenial to the Chinese character, but there is one very interesting fable said to have been spoken to the King of Ch'u by Chiangyi, 江乙.

A fox was overtaken by a tiger who was about to kill her, when she said she had power over all other animals and asked him to go with her to view the awe in which she was held. The tiger followed the fox, and of course all the other animals fled, and the tiger became afraid of the fox, not realising that the animals were fearful of *him*. Further, the other animals began to think that the tiger also was afraid of the fox.

This is called 狐假虎威, "The fox borrowing the tiger's power."

There are many sayings in Chinese that are references to well-known historical incidents or stories. A rather philosophical joke:

梅先生拔烟袋.

不得已而為之.

The teacher Mei stealing a tobacco pipe, "done because it must be done."

When caught he quoted the phrase from Mencius. The humour here is in quoting Mencius for such a contemptible crime,—but after

all, why should it not apply to a sneak-thief just as well as to anyone else? Here is another of these sayings:

黑熊買狗又活了。

Heihsiung selling a dog; it came to life again.

Heihsiung was a servant of a rich family, and when the dog died they gave him the body so that he could get some money for himself by selling it at the dog-flesh shop. On the way there, however, the dog suddenly came to life again, and Heihsiung honestly brought it back, saying, "It came to life again." This became a proverb, implying success after an initial or apparent failure.

The Chinese have a genius for parody and tall stories, and the most famous example is the *Travels in the West*, 西遊記, a romance of the 13th century based on the *Travels in the West*, 西域記, an account of the journey of Hsuantsang, 玄奘, to India between 629 and 645 A.D. The former book has been called the *Chinese Pilgrim's Progress* because of its supernatural elements, persons with symbolical names, and events of allegorical significance. Sun Wukung, 孫悟空, is a kind of monkey-man, born from a stone; he represents the boastful, disturbing, and self-deceiving elements in man. He was able to turn a somersault for eighteen thousand *li*, but Buddha told him he could not even jump out of his hand. The monkey declared he could do it, and rushed away to an enormous distance, reaching indeed the confines of the universe, where he found five huge pillars. Upon one of these he wrote that he, the greatest and holiest person in the world, had arrived at this point, and then was back in no time with the Buddha, telling him what he had done. The Buddha opened his hand and showed him the writing on one of his fingers; the monkey had been in the Buddha's hand all the time.

Compared to other nations the Chinese are or were not so much excessively as minutely superstitious, and it is refreshing to know that even in the first and second centuries B.C. there were people who

could use their heads. One day the Han Emperor Wu Ti, 武帝, was talking to his counsellor Tung-fang Shuo, 東方朔, born 160 B. C., about the art of physiognomy. He said, "I have read in the books dealing with this science that if the raphis, or groove in the upper lip, 人中, is an inch long a man will live for a hundred years. Mine is one and two-tenths, so I shall live to be more than a hundred." The counsellor burst into loud laughter, and the Emperor, surprised, asked him what the joke was. "I am not laughing at your Majesty," replied Tung-fang, "I was only thinking that the groove on the lip of Peng (the Chinese Methuselah) who lived 880 years, must have reached from his chin to the top of his head!"

Here are two famous Chinese humorous stories, with morals easily supplied by the reader.

A certain doctor advertised his skill in curing curvature of the spine; even if a man's back was bent like a bow, even if the head touched the feet he could make it as straight as a ramrod. A man went to him for treatment, whereupon the doctor put him between two boards, and bound them tighter and tighter together, the man yelling with pain. At last he got him quite straight, but he was also quite dead. When the relatives made a fuss, the doctor said, "I guaranteed to straighten his back, not that he should live through it."

A very religious old woman was reciting the name of Amita Buddha, and suddenly called out, "These ants are all over the place; bring some fire and burn them all up!" Then she continued with her chanting. Once again she called out to the servant, "Clean out to the ashes under the stove, but don't use our ash-pan, borrow the neighbour's."

The humour of the Chinese people is not remarkably different from that of Europe. In early times of course it had the same coarseness, the same healthy earthiness and lack of intellectual subtlety, the kind cruelty of nature and man. There are fools and

knaves, there is innocence and cunning; hypocrisy, humbug, wise folly, foolish wisdom are no different. Only occasionally we are not quite sure what the Chinese readers were laughing at. These stories need especial thought and care, for in them we feel our own human deficiency, for we must not lose a single grin, a single flicker of a smile on "the human face divine".

CHAPTER II

The Chinese Classics

In the whole of the Chinese Classics there is nothing that could "bring a blush to the cheek of any young female person". But when we omit sex the baby is thrown out with the bath-water. We have to look rather carefully then to find the humour that of course always creeps in unawares. The *Book of Odes*, however, is full of a certain rustic humour that was later overlaid by unhumorous, antihumanistic, and political interpretations from at least the time of Confucius. M. Granet has shown that these odes were not mere popular songs, spontaneous ebullitions of simple and animal feelings, but religious in origin. Thus the sexual element is not mere vulgarity, but something that would have gratified D. H. Lawrence in his wish to see sex and religion as one thing again. "Religious" has not so much the superstitious or philosophical meaning as that of a spiritually united society, a kind of practical communal animism or mysticism that expressed itself most strongly at the time of the spring festivals. What is humorous in this is the friction between men and women, between romance and reality. What is also on the other hand comic is the lack of humour on the part of Confucius and the Confucians. Under-sexed and over-sexed men brought about the same condition which the senryu writer saw repeated two thousand years later in Japan:

律義ものまじりまじりと子が出る。

The man of principles,—
Secretly
He makes many children.

From this condition arises the other extreme, prostitution, which is

not merely a economic phenomenon, but the providing of a maximum of the sexual pleasure, in opposition to all the social forces which try to reduce it to a minimum. Humour is against both, against the man of principle as being a humbug at best and a monster at worst; and against the sexual hedonist as putting the cart before the horse and as compelled to deceive and be deceived all his life long.

Coming back to the *Book of Odes*, we have some humorous verses when the course of true or untrue love does not run smooth; for example:

彼狡童兮。不與我言兮。
維子之故。使我不能餐兮。
彼狡童兮。不與我食兮。
維子之故。使我不能息兮。

“Nasty creature! Won’t talk with me!

Because of you I won’t be able to eat, do you think?

Nasty creature! Won’t eat with me!

Because of you I won’t be able to sleep, do you think?”

This is taken as spoken by a woman, usually as by a dissolute woman, but any jealous or envious woman will do, that is to say, any woman.

The Analects are not notable for their humour, except as we may smile throughout Chapter X, with its debunking of a great man by triviality of detail:

食不厭精。膾不厭細。

He did not dislike white polished rice, nor to have his meat minced fine.

Such incompetence of flattery reminds me of a remark in the newspaper concerning Queen Victoria which enraged my grandmother in her youth: “She plays the piano a little, and likes it.” The following confession of failure by the Superior Man is reassuring to us inferior men:

子曰。唯女子與小人為難養也。

近之則不孫 遠元則然。

Confucius said: "Women and underlings are the most difficult to deal with. If we are familiar to them they become impudent; if we are distant to them they resent it."

And one more utterance of despair which suggests a deep truth latent:

子曰。已矣乎。吾未見好德如
好色者也。

Confucius said: "It's no good! I have never yet seen a man who loves virtue as much as he loves beautiful women."

Confucius should have noted that the very Chinese character for "like" or "love" contains the symbol for woman. What is deeper and stronger in human nature is what is better, and there is no need to groan over our preference for the beauty of woman, symbol of nature, and mother of the god.

The writings of (or concerning) Laotse are full of the contradictions and paradoxes essential to humour. To these we may add hyperbole, also a form of the comic, and a figure of thought as much as of speech. To bring out the humour of Laotse in all its implications it is best to read once more the comments upon him by Legge, who may have been, for all I know, the man with the smallest sense of humour in the world. He quotes, "He who has in himself abundantly the attributes of the Tao is like an infant. Poisonous insects will not sting him; fierce beasts will not seize him; birds of prey will not strike him," and then comments:

Such assertions startle us by their contrariety to our observation and experience but so does most of the teaching of Taoism. What can be more absurd than the declaration, "the Tao does nothing, and so there is nothing that it does not do?" And yet, this is one of the fundamental axioms of the system.

What was wrong with Legge was that he was not startled enough.

Later he says, "we can laugh at this." The trouble was that he couldn't.

There is of course little downright humour in Laotse. The nearest he gets to it is in Chapter IX, when he says:

治大國，若烹小鮮。

Ruling a great country is like frying a small fish.

The less you fool about with it the better. But there is much in Laotse that reminds us of the attitude of the humorous man. For example, in Chapter V:

天地不仁，以萬物為芻狗。
聖人不仁，以百姓為芻狗。

Heaven and Earth are ruthless, and treat all things as straw dogs; the Wise Man is ruthless, and treats the people as straw dogs.

Again, the lack of all principles that characterises the comic philosopher is adumbrated in Chapter XI:

埴埴以為器。
當其無，有器之用。

Turning clay, we make a vessel; but it is the empty space inside that gives it its use.

The attitude of the true humorist is Shakespearean:

聖人無常心，以百姓之心為心。
善者吾善之，不善者吾亦善之。

The sage has not his own heart; he makes the heart of others his own. I think the good Good: I think the bad Good too, and thus make them (all) Good.

The writings of Chuangtse have not merely a witty and light tone throughout them, they contain a large number of anecdotes and proverbial sayings. In addition to these, and in spite of, or rather just because of Chuangtse's transcendental intentions, there is much

practical wisdom which makes us smile because of its originality and surprising truth. For example, in Chapter XIII:

直木先伐。甘井先竭。
子其意者。飾知以驚愚。修
身以明汗。昭昭乎如揭日月。
而行故不免也。 (外篇山木第二十)

A straight tree is the first one to be cut down; a well of sweet water is the first to be exhausted. Your¹ idea is to extend and elaborate your knowledge and astound the ignorant; to improve yourself so as to show up the deficiencies of others. You emit a radiance as if you were carrying the sun and the moon with you. So of course you cannot escape the fate of the straight tree and the well of sweet water.

Virtue is not the aim of life. What is it? In the words of Li Po:

笑而不答。心自閑。

I smile and do not answer: my mind is of itself undisturbed by the question.

The account in Book XVIII of Chuangtse's behaviour on the death of his wife shows him to have been in every sense of the phrase "a laughing philosopher":

莊子妻死。惠子弔之。
莊子則方箕踞鼓盆而歌。
惠子曰。與人居。長子老身。
不死哭亦足矣。
又鼓盆而歌。不亦甚乎。

When Chuangtse's wife died Huitse went to offer his condolences, but found him sitting on the floor, singing and beating time on a water-vessel. Huitse remonstrated with him saying, "You lived with her; she brought up your children; you have grown old together. When she dies, you not only do not mourn, but drum on this vessel and sing; isn't this going too far?"

1. "You" is supposed to be Confucius whom Chuangtse is attacking for his moral and humanistic ideals.

Chuangtse said that at first he felt like everybody feels on such an occasion, but, thinking it over, he realised that her death was simply a small example of eternal change, so we may weep at a birth or laugh at a funeral. It is said by the way, that Voltaire's *Zadig* was influenced by this anecdote.

The ideal man of the Taoists was like Wordsworth's poet on whom while still living he wrote an epitaph, a kind of madman, whom we laugh at, but with some envy. So with Tsantse.

三日不舉火。十年不製衣。
正冠而纓絕。捉衿而肝見。
納屣而踵決。與縱而歌商頌。
聲滿天地若出金石。

(雜篇讓王第二十八)

For three days he would not light a fire to cook. In ten years he never had any clothes made. If he tied his hat on right, the strings broke; if he took hold of the lapel and adjusted his garment his elbows poked out. When he put on his shoes the heels split. But dragging these very shoes along he intoned the Odes of Shang in a loud clear voice that filled all Heaven and Earth like the sound of a gong or a stone drum.

We may compare one of Lear's characters:

There was an old person of Hove,
Who frequented the depths of a grove;
Where he studied his books,
With the wrens and the rooks,
That tranquil old person of Hove.

Occasionally Chuangtse says what is not true, and draws (quite properly) a false conclusion from it.

介者移画。外非譽也。(雜篇庚桑楚第二十三)

A man who has lost a leg does not make use of beautiful clothes, since he is beyond praise.

This is not so. Both physical and moral cripples make themselves as presentable as possible, and this suggests that there is something fundamental in self-ornamentation. This we see clearly in the character of women. Chuangtse, like all philosophers, omits half humanity from his consideration, and in addition, all that is feminine in the character of man. But otherwise what he says is both true and witty. Take as a last example the end of Book XIX. Pientse has been portraying the perfect man to Suntse, but afterwards he feels he has been trying to put a square peg in a round hole, and describes his own foolishness by a parable:

昔者有鳥止於魯郊。
魯君說之馬具太牢以饗之。
韶九奏以樂之。鳥乃始憂悲眩視。
不敢飲食。此之謂以己養養鳥也。
若夫以鳥養養鳥者。宜棲之深林。
浮之江湖。食之以委蛇。
則平陸而已矣。

Long long ago, a certain bird came down in the outskirts of Lu, and the ruler was delighted. He put it in a big cage, gave it a great feast, and had the Chiu-shao's¹ played to amuse it. From the beginning, its eyes grew dim, it dared not eat or drink, and after three days it died. This is called "Feeding a bird as you feed yourself." But if you feed a bird as a bird should be fed, you must let it dwell in a deep forest, or swim in a river or lake, or walk on the dry ground, and find its own food there naturally.²

In other words, don't try to teach the unteachable; don't tell your funny stories to solemn and humourless people. The result will be as Lear tells us:

There was an old person of Dundalk,

1. A piece of music said by Confucius to be the height of virtue and beauty. We might replace it by the Art of Fugue.

2. The same story is told in more detail in the previous chapter.

Who tried to teach fishes to walk;
When they tumbled down dead, he grew weary, and said,
"I had better go back to Dundalk."

Unlike Confucius his master, Mencius, 372-289 B.C., had some sense of humour; we feel it everywhere in his writings as we do in Thoreau, though more faintly. Above all things a humanist, he knows the poverty of average human nature,

How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good,

but it is the foolishness rather than the wickedness of man that grieves him, their indifference to IT:

孟子曰。人之所以異於禽獸者幾希。
庶民之去。君子存之。(四。二十九)

Men and animals differ in little. Ordinary people throw it away. The superior man treasures it.

Mencius often teaches by giving examples. The King asks him why, in spite of all his thought and care for his subjects, they do not increase. Mencius tells him not to worry about quantity but quality, asking him, "If some soldiers run away in a battle, may those who run fifty paces laugh at those who have run a hundred?" (五十步笑百步). Mencius is not so much ironical in himself as the cause of irony in others. For example, we read in Book IV, Chapter xii:

不誠未有能動者也。

One without sincerity can never move the hearts of men.

How about Hitler? In Book I Chap. v Mencius quotes an old saying:

仁者無敵。

The benevolent man has no enemy.

How about Christ?

Since Hsuntse, who died about 235 B.C., proclaimed the innate badness of man, 性惡, we might expect to find a good deal of raillery at the expense of human nature, or at least a Schopenhauer-like mordant irony, but such is not the case. The reason for this lack of humour, or rather a concomitant of it, is Hsuntse's emphasis upon the ceremonialism of Confucius, and his concept of the authority of orthodoxy. The inner light, extreme doctrines, all the Chinese philosophers except Confucius, are heretical, one-sided and wrong. This may be so, or not; but humour loves this unbalance and conflict. It is its very life. Hsuntse says;

欲為蔽. 惡為蔽. 始為蔽.
 終為蔽. 遠為蔽. 近為蔽.
 博為蔽. 淺為蔽. 古為蔽.
 今為蔽. 風萬物異.
 則莫不相為蔽.

Desire causes prejudice; evil, novelty, familiarity, distance, nearness, profundity, shallowness, the ancient, the modern, cause prejudice. All that is unorthodox causes prejudice.

For humour, all these things which cause prejudice are truth, not in that, as Blake said, "Every error is an image of truth," but in the profoundest sense of that most difficult of all Zen sayings, "Illusion is enlightenment, enlightenment is illusion."

Han Feitsu, who had to commit suicide in 230 B.C., was a strange combination of criminal lawyer and Taoist. He was far from having a humorous mind, but some of the admonitory stories he tells in Chapters XXII and XXIII are amusing in their way. Someone presented the King of Chin with the elixir of life. A sentinel drank it all up and was sentenced to death by the enraged monarch. But the sentinel said to the King, "What was presented to you was the elixir of immortality. If Your Highness kills one who has drunk this, it will show that it was not really the elixir of eternal life but a drink of death. This will insult him who presented you with it."

The King allowed him to live. The following is highly ironical:

鱸似蛇。蠶似蠋。人見蛇驚駭。
見蠋則毛起。漁者持鱸。婦人拾蠶。
利之所在皆為貴諸。

Eels look like serpents, silkworms resemble caterpillars, people are frightened at snakes; their hair stands on end at caterpillars. But fishermen catch hold of eels, and women pick up silkworms. Where there is profit, everybody becomes like Meng Pen and Chuan Chu (i.e. as brave as they).

The following also seems to me to have wit as well as sense, and both lead to a sort of kindness.

揚朱之弟揚布。衣素衣而出。
天雨解素衣衣緇衣而反。
其狗不知而吠之。揚布怒將擊之。
揚朱曰。子勿擊也。子亦猶是。
使女狗自而往黑而來。
子豈能毋怪哉。 (二十三)

Yang Chu's younger brother Yang Pu went out in white clothes. It came on to rain, so he took off the white clothes and changed into black ones. His dog didn't recognise him and barked at him. Yang Pu got angry and was going to beat the dog. His brother said, "Don't beat it. You would do the same as the dog. If you saw it go out a white dog and come back a black dog, you'd be alarmed too, wouldn't you?"

There is some unintentional humour in the *Book of Rites*, of the first century B.C.

吊喪不能賻。莫問其所費。
探病不能遺。莫問其所欲。

In a case of family mourning, if one cannot contribute anything, he should not inquire into the expenses; in a case of severe illness, if one has nothing to present, he should not ask what would be relished.

CHAPTER III

Chinese Poetry

Chinese (classical) poetry is pervaded by a kind of cosmic irony which is beyond even a sad smile. It is a bitterness that remains after man's lot on this earth has been accepted. The beginning of the 15th of 19 anonymous poems of the Han Dynasty, 202 B.C. to 220 A.D., sets the tone for the whole of Chinese verse:

生年不滿百。常懷千歲憂。

The years of a man's life do not reach a hundred,
But his griefs are those of a thousand years.

Tao Yüanming (Tōenmei), 陶淵明, like Wordsworth, lived his life in a region which is beyond comedy and tragedy. He says at the end of the second of two poems on *Moving House*, 移居, that "ploughing with might and main will never deceive us", 力耕不吾欺. If Burns had known this, his life would have been less tragic. But actually Tao Yüan-ming had the gift that Burns desired, to see himself. At the beginning of the sixth of seven "Miscellaneous Poems" he says:

昔聞長者言。
掩耳每不喜。
奈何五十年。
忽已親此事。

Long ago I heard the injunctions of my elders,
But stopped my ears, so disagreeable were they.
Now, after fifty years and more,
I suddenly find myself saying the very same things.

Though Tao Yüanming has no humour whatever, all his poetry is pervaded by a deep sense of the irony of fate, but he is not, like

Pascal, afraid of the infinite; only he regrets the shortness of time we have to survey the timeless. He feels also that the world is getting worse and worse, that is to say, more and more unpoetical. This was no more and no less true in China of the fourth century A.D. than it is now. At the end of the third verse of *The Revolution of the Seasons*, 時運, he says, speaking of the days of Confucius and his disciples, when the old nature festivals and rites were being held:

我愛其靜。
寤寐交揮。
但恨殊世。
邈不可追。

I love that quietness;
Awake or asleep, I long to be with it.
I simply regret living in this, a different age;
So distant is it, I can never attain it.

The sixth of twenty Drinking Poems, 飲酒, begins with this expression of the faith of a cosmic satirist:

行止千萬端。
誰知非與是。
是非苟相形。
雷同共毀譽。

All we human beings do is infinitely various;
Who can tell the right and wrong of it?
And when this right and wrong have mutually created each other,
Praise and blame go endlessly repeating themselves.

Li Po, who died in 762 A.D., was too self-centred for satire, let alone for humour; he is a poet rather than a man. But even he was moved by the crimes and disasters that must go with any age of glory. When we read the latter part of his 戰城南, (the title is taken from the first three words of a similar poem of Han times, "Fighting South of the Ramparts") we feel we are looking at Goya's

Desastros della Guerra or Rousseau's *La Guerre*.

野戰格鬪死。敗馬号鳴向天悲。
鳥鷲啄人腸。銜飛上挂枯樹枝。

On the field of slaughter, men grapple and die,
Wounded horses scream their agony to heaven.
Ravens and kites peck human entrails,
Then fly up with them and hang them on the withered
branches.

Much more typical of Li Po's humour is the fifteenth *Composed at Ch'inp'u*, 秋浦吟.

白髮三千丈。綠愁似箇長。
不知明鏡裏。何處得秋霜。

A white pigtail of thirty thousand feet,
Thus long, thus white with grief and care!
And yet, before this clear mirror, I can hardly tell
From whence this autumn frost has come.

The thirty thousand feet is a humorous hyperbole, and also humorous is the way in which he gives the reason for the length and whiteness of his hair, but then declares he does not really know the cause of it. We feel in this verse the irrationality of humour and poetry.

Like Shelley, Po Chü-i, died 846, wished to reform the world, or at least China, and a quarter of his poems are didactic. He reproaches Tu Fu and Li Po with writing too little political and satiric verse. Po believed that it was the duty of poetry to attack the eunuchs, the Taoist and Buddhist extravagances, the rapacity of the war-lords, excessive taxation, prison conditions, and so on.

Po Chü-i's criticisms of Chuangtse and Laotse are too well known to quote again, but they illustrate the fact that though Po Chü-i had no indiscriminately destructive tendency, he left nothing unshaken which could be shaken. He follows his intuition, and when he gets a certain peculiar uneasy feeling, whatever the matter may be, it is immediately subjected to a probing, indeed a sort of mild attack.

This is the Comic Spirit.

Po Chü-i has something of Juvenal in him, though his indignation is a sorrowful one. He most resembles Dr. Johnson, whose satires are indeed Chinese in mood, just as Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* is in spirit not remote from the mildly critical. But Po Chü-i's satire is more profoundly ethical than that of the Roman, more truly Christian than that of the Englishmen. For example in the poem entitled *Buying Flowers*, the old countryman who happens to see the peonies being sold at such a fantastically high price,

低頭獨長歎。此歎無人論。
一叢深色花。十戶中人賦。

Lowers his head and sighs to himself,
A sigh whose meaning no one understands:
"The price of a pot of these crimson flowers
Would pay the taxes of ten ordinary households."

Juvenal groans, Johnson mourns, Po Chü-i only sighs, but sighing is the more effective, spiritually speaking at least. In the following, Po Chü-i attacks the Buddhism he was so attracted to.

兩朱閣。刺佛寺寢多也。

兩朱閣。
南北相對起。
借問何人家。
貞元雙帝子。
帝子次簫雙得仙。
五雲飄飄飛上天。
第宅亭台不將去。
化為佛寺在人間。
粧閣妓樓何寂靜。
柳似舞腰池似鏡。
花落黃昏悄悄時。
不聞歌吹聞鐘聲。
寺門敕榜金字書。
尼院佛庭寬有余。
青苔明月多閉地。

比屋齊人無處居。
 憶昨平陽宅初置。
 吞併平人幾家地。
 仙去雙雙作梵宮。
 漸恐人家盡為寺。

The Two Red Towers

A Satire on the Gradual Increase of Temples

Two Red Towers rise facing each other,
 One to the north, the other to the south.
 Whose dwelling places are they, I would like to know?
 Of two Princes of the Cheng Yüan period.
 They played on the pan's pipes, they learned the Taoist arts,
 And floated up to heaven on five-coloured clouds,
 But they could not take with them their halls and mansions.
 These changed into a temple, and remain among us.
 How quiet now the rooms of adornment; the chambers of the
 ladies-in-waiting are silent.
 The willow trees bring to mind the dancing, the lake recalls
 the bright mirrors.
 But as the flowers fall through the lonesome evening,
 No voice of song is heard, only the sombre sound of bells
 and gongs.
 A notice-board stands at the temple gate, inscribed in letters
 of gold.
 The Nunnery is grand, the Buddhist gardens extend far.
 Many are the stretches of green moss, many the vistas of
 moonlight,—
 But poor people can hardly live, all crowded together.
 I grieve to think how many houses, how much land of the
 people
 Was swallowed up, just as at P'ingyang when they first began
 to build.

After these two Princes were translated, the place itself turned
into a Buddhist temple.

I fear that all the people's houses may be turned into temples.

It is said that in the 14th century the church owned a quarter of the
land of England.

The following is an attack on human nature of any time and
place, its desire for material profit that always leads to spiritual loss,
the obedience to authority that results in abuse of power.

黑潭龍

黑潭水深色如墨。
傳有神龍人不識。
潭上架屋官立祠。
龍不能神人神之。
豐凶水旱與疾疫。
鄉里皆言龍所為。
家家養豚漉清酒。
朝祈暮賽依巫口。
神之來兮風飄飄。
紙錢動兮錦傘搖。
神之去兮風亦靜。
香火滅兮盃盤冷。
肉堆潭岸石。
酒潑廟前草。
不知龍神享幾多。
林鼠山狐長醉飽。
狐何幸。豚何辜。
年年殺豚將餒狐。
狐假神龍食豚盡。
九重泉底龍知無。

The Black Dragon Pool

A Satire on Greedy Officials

The water of the Black Dragon Pool is like ink;
People say (without knowing) that there is a Dragon Spirit in it.
Over the pool an official altar has been built, with a roof,

to sacrifice to the Dragon.
The Dragon could not be a god, but they made him one.
The villagers all say that the Dragon is responsible
For good harvests and bad, floods, droughts, and epidemics.
Each house feeds pigs and makes wine,
And offers them morning and evening to the god,
Obedient to the words of the wizard.
Then the god comes! the wind sighs,
Paper money is offered, embroidered umbrellas wave.
When the god departs, the wind drops,
Incense sticks go out, cups and plates become cold,
The meat is littered over the boulders of the tarn,
Wine drips on the grass round the shrine.
How much is eaten by the Dragon god?
The wood-rats and mountain foxes are gorged and drunk with
it all.
Why should the foxes be so lucky and the pigs as unlucky?
Year after year pigs are slaughtered and fed to the foxes;
The foxes take the place of the god and eat up the pigs;
Does the Dragon of the Nine-fold Deep know aught of this?

There is no doubt, from what Po Chü-i himself says, that this poem is a parable, an attack on avaricious persons of office, but it is also a not less useful attack on superstition as such, and I am inclined to think that this is the more valuable and necessary aspect of it. The lower the attack the better, in both physical and spiritual matters. It is the small stupidities which gradually make mountains of molehills. The salvation of the world lies in the primary schools. Returning however to Po Chüi, his sympathy with the pigs killed for the foxes to eat is not feigned for the purposes of the parable. This fact is brought out in the following poem, *Redeeming Chickens*, 贖鷄, which in the last few lines has something that we may call "humour" in the modern sense, used here to disinfect the sentiment of all sentimentality.

贖鵝

清晨臨江望。水禽正喧繁。
 鳬雁與鷗鷺。游颺戲朝暾。
 適有鸞雞者。挈之來遠村。
 飛鳴彼何樂。窘束此何冤。
 喔喔一四鵝。罩縛同一樊。
 足傷金距踣。頭搶花冠翻。
 經宿廢飲啄。日高詣屠門。
 遲迴未死間。飢渴欲相吞。
 常慕占人道。仁信及魚豚。
 見茲生惻隱。贖放雙林園。
 開籠解索時。鵝鵝聽我言。
 與爾鑑三百。小惡何足論。
 莫學銜環雀。崎嶇謾報恩。

When the sun rises over the River, the water-birds fill the air
 with their cries.

The wild ducks and geese, the gulls and herons sport in the
 sunbeams.

There once came a dealer in chickens who brought them from
 some far-away village.

What must be the pleasure of those water-birds, as they soar
 up with a loud crying!

To be shut up like these chickens, what a difference!

Fourteen chickens clucking faintly, all stuffed into the same
 basket.

Their legs were painful, their spurs having been cut off;

Their heads being exhausted, the combs were dropping.

From early morning they had drunk and pecked nothing
 whatever;

By midday they would be in a butcher's shop.

While being carried about they had not yet died,

But they were starved and thirsty.

I had always followed the way of the old masters,

Whose religious goodness reached out to fish and pigs too.

Looking at the chickens, loving-kindness was again born in
 my heart;

I bought them and let them loose in the Buddhist garden.
As I opened the basket and unbound the chickens,
I told them to listen to what I had to say.
"I gave you 300 cash, but it was a trifle, not worth mentioning.
Don't imitate Kwan's sparrow,
And go out of your way to recompense me unduly."

The anecdote on which the last two lines are based is the following. In a book called *Hsüchihsiehchi*, 續齊諸記, Yang-pao, 楊寶, when he was 9 years old, went to a certain mountain, and saw a "Yellow sparrow" drop from the claws of a *ch'ih hsiao*, 鴞梟, a kind of owl. He took it back home with him and fed it on yellow flowers for a hundred days, by which time it was full-fledged, and it then flew away. But that evening a young boy in yellow clothes appeared, bowed, and said to Kwan, "I am the messenger of the Western King's mother." He gave him four white rings and said, "You and your descendants will flourish like these rings."

I leave Po Chü-i with reluctance. He is the Montaigne of China, with more indignation but not less pity. He has every kind of humour, even that called "English", a laughing with, as well as laughing at. I like Po Chü-i better than anyone else in the world.

CHAPTER IV

Ghost Stories

The connection between ghosts and humour is obvious, yet as mysterious as both. Psychologically speaking, fear and sex are related; Wordsworth tells us that he himself, when young,

too exclusively esteem'd that love,
And sought that beauty, which, as Milton sings,
Hath Terror in it.

Fear, within limits, is one of the chief causes of pleasure. But pleasure is not humour, and we must look more deeply and philosophically into the matter. Both ghosts and humour are related to death. Humour is at bottom the secret wish, the will that all should be destroyed, be transcended, be absolute, and death is one of the ways by which this may fulfilled. But in addition to this, ghosts make death itself ridiculous.

Ghost stories are an expression of our desire for another world, where cause and effect do not operate; where love and hate are forces, not moral qualities; where beauty is ugliness, and pain is pleasure. We come once more to the all-important fact that that what man really wills is poetry. Poetry is will. Science is the will not to will. Ghost stories are not concerned with so-called fact, or with so-called fiction. They are the expression of the will of man, which is poetic, humorous, and deathly.

The Chinese, as befits a great race, produced excellent ghost stories in early times. One of the first is *Soushênchi*, 搜神記, said to have been selected by Kanpao, 干寶, of the Chin Dynasty, 265-419 A.D. The book itself is no longer extant, but many stories are known to have come from it. Here are a few of them.

The Woman with a Flying Head

At the time of the Ch'in Dynasty, 秦, 221-206 B.C., there was a race of people in the South called Falling-head People; their heads kept on flying about. A certain general, Chuhuan, 朱桓, by name, had a servant whose head, while she was asleep, went off out of the house through the hole in the door for the dog, or from the window. It seems to have used its ears as wings. A woman who slept beside her felt something odd was going on, and examined her one night with a lamp, and found the body had no head on it. It seemed that the body was a little colder than usual, so she put the bedding over the headless body. The head came back at dawn, but it was hindered from joining itself onto the body again. It jumped about on the floor, the breath was quick and painful, and it seemed as if she were going to die, so the other hastily took the quilt away, and the head got back to the body safely. This kind of thing went on almost every night, though she looked quite an ordinary person in the daytime. However, as it was a rather unpleasant habit the master dismissed her at last.

This story is well told, with an undramatic tone that is proper to ghost stories. After all, it is the ordinary which is ghostly, not the abnormal.

A Lute Devil

In the 3rd year of Chihwu, 赤烏, in Wu, 吳, a farmer of Kouchang named Yangto was on his way to a place called Yuyao when he was overtaken by darkness. Just at this time a boy with a lute asked Yang for a ride on his waggon. After he got on, he began to play some music and Yang listened with much pleasure. But as soon as the music ended, the boy changed into a devil, with angry eyes and a long tongue; it frightened Yang dreadfully, and then disappeared.

A few miles further on, someone else came along, this time an old man, who also asked for a ride. Yang had been taken in

already once, but he felt sorry for the old chap and let him get on. As they went along Yang told him of the terrible experience he had just had. "A devil rode on my waggon and played the lute. I heard the music of a devil for the first time; it had a melancholy tone." "Really? I play the lute too." As he said this, the old man's face changed into the same face as that of the boy. Yang shrieked out, and fainted.

This seems to me an excellent story. The humour is of several kinds, the most important being the way in which we do things knowing full well that they are going to cause us an infinity of trouble.

Mr. Tsung's Mother

At the beginning of Huang, 黃, of Wei, 魏, the mother of a man called Tsung, 宗, went one day to take a bath, but didn't come out of the bath-room for a long time. The people of the house wondered what had happened, and peeped into the room at last. There was only a big turtle floating on the surface of the water of the bath-tub. Everybody began to shout and rush about and a lot of people collected there. Then they saw the mother's hair-pin on the head of the turtle. "Mother's turned turtle!" they screamed, but nothing could be done about it, and they just stood round the turtle and wept. The turtle seemed to wish to go off, but they wouldn't let it, and watched it in turns for several days. However, one day the person on duty was careless, and the turtle disappeared. They raised a hue and cry, and rushed after the turtle but it gave them the slip and escaped into a near-by river. After some days, the turtle appeared once more and walked round and round Tsung's house, but soon went off and hid itself in the water again. The neighbours told Tsung to put on mourning clothes, but he would not; he insisted that his mother was still alive, even though her form was changed.

It will be noted that the Chinese already were well aware of the effect

of verisimilitude in bringing about the "willing suspension of disbelief". In the following story also, exact details are given, as in Defoe and Swift, of times and places where the alleged events took place.

The Blue Bull

At the time of Ch'in there was a big catalpa tree in the shrine of Nute, 怒特. In the 27th year of Wen Kung, 文公, of Chin, he ordered the tree to be cut down. However, a storm always arose and the tree was blown up again, and joined together again. Many days passed, but though the workers were increased to forty men, still they couldn't cut it down, and everyone was dead tired. One of the workmen hurt his foot and couldn't go home that night, and slept under the tree. At midnight someone seemed to have come on a visit to the tree; there was a sound of voices. "The struggle must be awful." "No, no, not so bad." "But if Lord Wen Kung keeps it up, what will happen in the end?" "It's just a matter of endurance." "But suppose he brings up three hundred men, with their hair hanging down, in red clothes, and has a red rope tied round you, and puts ashes on the stump, what could you do then?" The tree became silent.

The man who had been sleeping under the tree heard this, and told it to Lord Wen Kung, who did all that was suggested. The tree was cut down, and a blue bull jumped out of it, and plunged into the river Feng, 灋水.

The next story is interesting in two ways. First it reminds us strongly of the struggle between Beowulf and Grendel, the tearing off of the latter's arm, and the following of the bloodstains to where the monster lay dead. Second, the insouciance of the man supposed to be frightened. This variation of the ghost story is always intriguing; it reverses the action and makes a fool of the ghost.

The Limb of the Deer

Hsieh Kun, 謝鯤, of Chen, 陳, prefecture retired from the world

and lived a solitary life. One day, while travelling, he lodged in an empty house in which a monster was said to live, and which had already killed several men. Taking no heed of these stories he lay down and fell asleep. In the middle of the night someone called from outside, "Yu-hsing! open the door!" (Yu-hsing, 幼興, was his personal name). He thought it must be the monster, but answered stoutly, "It's too much trouble to unbar the door. If you have any business with me put your hand through the window." A long arm came through the window; he grasped it and tried to pull him in. The one outside tried not to be pulled in, and they both pulled with all their might until at last the arm was torn off and remained in his hands. When day broke, the arm was seen to be that of a deer. Outside the window blood was found, which when followed led to a huge deer lying wounded. After he killed the deer no more was heard of a monster in that house.

Another collection of ghost stories, said to have been selected by T'ao Yuanming, 陶淵明, is the *Soushenhouchi*, 搜神後記. Both this and the former book were brought to Japan in early times and exercised a profound influence upon Japanese literature. One of the best stories is the following. We feel here something amusing in the resoluteness and moral defiance of the hero. There is the same contrast as between the Greek heroes and the Greek gods.

Abusing the Thunder

A man named Chang Chu, 章句, of Wuhsing, 吳興, went out to dig in the field in early spring. He would take rice-cakes with him for his meal, but they kept on disappearing before he had time to eat them, so one day he kept watch, and found that a huge snake came and ate them. He got very angry and slashed it with his sickle, and the snake fled into a hole on a slope. While he was wondering what to do next, he heard a voice crying, "He cut me! What shall I do? Shall I ask the lightning to strike him dead?" While the snakes thus consulted

among themselves, the sky became dark, and the sound of thunder approached overhead. But Chang Chu was a very strong-minded man. He jumped about and cried, "Heaven made me a poor man, and I have to work hard every day. Is it wrong for me to try to kill an evil creature that robbed me of my food, of my very existence? Who is wrong, I or the snake? The answer is obvious, and if you want to punish me unreasonably, I have something to say about it. Come on, if you dare, thunder away!" He stood there threateningly, and whether afraid of the man, or admitting the reasonableness of what he had said, the thunder withdrew from him, and the lightning fell on the hole the snake had entered. After the weather cleared up, he found many dead snakes lying there.

During the Tang Dynasty appeared *Hsiyangtsatsu*, 西陽雜俎, which was also brought to Japan, the stories being translated or adapted in various ways. The author was Tuan Ch'engshih, 段成式, famous for his wide reading and encyclopaedic knowledge. The following amusing story is also interesting from its resemblance to the first part of *Gulliver's Travels*, which it antedated by nearly a thousand years. Is it possible that Swift heard of the story, or was it only necessary, as Dr. Johnson said, to "think of small men"?

Liliputians

During the T'ang Dynasty, in the last year of T'aiho, 太和, there was a certain gentleman of Sungtzü, 松滋, prefecture living at the villa of one of his relatives. On the first day he read books late into the night by the light of a lamp. A very small man entered, about an inch tall, but dressed in fine clothes, with a noble appearance, carrying a cane. He suddenly said, in a voice like that of a big fly, "You have arrived here today, and it must be lonely for you, with no one around." The gentleman took no notice of the small man and continued reading. Very much displeased, the other cried, "Who do you think you are?"

Where are your manners? Don't you know how to treat a visitor?" But the man still paid no attention to the little chap, who now climbed up the desk, peeped in his book, and then began to abuse him. The gentleman remained calm and indifferent and the little fellow became more and more irritated, and at last went on the rampage and upset the ink-bottle over the book. This was too much, and the other got angry and struck him with a big writing-brush. The small man fell to the floor, and with a cry, disappeared.

After a while several women appeared, young and old, but all about an inch tall, and approaching him they cried, in voices louder than their bodies warranted, "Our Master sent his young prince to teach you the secret principles of study, as you were studying hard by yourself. But you behaved in an unseemly manner, and injured the prince, and for that you shall be punished." At that many small men gathered like ants, climbed up the desk, and began to beat him. He felt like a man in a nightmare, and could not drive them off.

He was taken to a great palace, and scolded by the King and then sent back to his room where the light was still burning. The next day, he tried to find out how the little creatures got into the house, and found a small hole under the steps where wall-lizards were going in and out. Realising they were the culprits, he destroyed them and their dwelling, and nothing strange happened after that.

One more story from the *Hsiyangtsatsu* is both comical and instructive from the medical point of view. It can hardly be called a "ghost" story.

A Human-faced Boil

Fifty or sixty years ago a merchant of the Eastern River had a boil on his left arm. It looked just like a human face, but there was no pain. One day he poured some wine into the mouth of the boil as a joke. It swallowed it all up and the face of the boil became red, as if drunk. When he gave it some

food, it ate nearly all of it. When he gave it too much, the muscle of the arm swelled up and looked like a belly. When he gave nothing to it the elbow became numb and would not work. A certain clever doctor told him to feed it with all kinds of medicines, and mineral, ligneous, herbal, and petrous substances, so he did so, and found that when he gave it a certain herb called "Shell-mother", *peimu*, 貝母, the boil knitted its brows, shut its mouth and refused to eat. That was the right medicine for it! He forced the mouth of the boil open and poured into it the juice of that plant through a slender reed. After several days, a scab formed, and it was soon cured.



A yehkuei,
a houseless spirit.

CHAPTER V

Liehtse

Liehtsu, that is to say the book of the author of that name, was called Ch'unghsüchênching, 冲虚真经, Sutra of Fullness and Emptiness by the Emperor Hsuan Tsung of the T'ang Dynasty in 742 A.D. Liehtsu is mentioned, or invented, by Chuangtse in Chapter I, and was supposed to have lived about 400 B.C., and to have been a disciple of Laotse, but the book is apparently a conglomeration of forgeries and compilations by some one who believed that Liehtsu was a real person, when it seems that he was only one of the fictitious persons upon whom Chuangtse fathered his own extravagances. Here are some of the most comical, but all the stories are "queer."

Dreaming

Once a man in Cheng was gathering firewood on a moor when he came across a frightened deer and shot it. Fearing that someone else would see it, he hid the carcass in a dry ditch and covered it with brushwood. He was so overjoyed at his good fortune that he forgot where he had hid it, and came to believe that he had dreamed the whole thing, and went home mumbling about it to himself. Another man, however, overheard him, and followed up the story and succeeded in finding the deer. When this second man got home he told his wife about it. "There was a woodcutter who got a deer in his dream and did not know where it was, but I found it. He dreamed of reality." His wife said, "Maybe you are only dreaming about the woodcutter's deer? Was there really a woodcutter? You now have a deer, really; is your dream also a dream of reality?" The husband retorted "Anyway, I have a deer, so what does it matter whether

it was he or I who was dreaming?" The woodcutter could not reconcile himself to having lost the deer, and that night dreamed of where he had actually hid it, and also of the man who had found it. Early the next morning he went to the man he had dreamed of. He demanded the deer, and they went to court about it. The judge said to the woodcutter, "You really got the deer at first, but foolishly supposed it to have been all a dream. Then you dreamed of the reality, found the deer, and foolishly called it reality. The other got the deer in reality and is contesting your claim for it. His wife says that he only dreamed of finding someone else's deer. According to her, there was no real man who got a real deer. But here we have a deer, so I will ask you to go halves with him." The Lord of Cheng was told the story, and said, "Alas! isn't the judge only dreaming of dividing a deer between two people?"

The Chinese and the Japanese have always seen something profound in forgetting.

The Man who Forgot how to Forget

There was once a man, Yangli Huatsu of Sung, who when he was in the prime of life suffered from a peculiar illness, that of forgetting everything. He would receive a thing in the morning, and forget all about it in the evening, or would give a thing in the evening and forget it in the morning. When in the street he would forget to walk on, and when in his home he forgot to sit down. He could not in the present remember the past, and in the future he could not remember the present. His family were very annoyed with him and consulted a necromancer, but he could do nothing about it. They asked a wizard to exorcise it, but he got no better. The doctors were of course no good at all. But there was a Confucian in Lu who claimed he could cure him, so the family promised half their property. The Confucian said, "This is not something connected with fortune-telling, prayer, or medicine, so I shall cure his mind and change the

direction of his thoughts, and I hope that will effect a cure." So he tested Huatse by making him naked, whereupon he asked for clothes, and making him fast, when he asked for food, and shutting him in darkness, so that he asked for light. The Confucian was pleased and told the family, "His illness is curable! But my method must be kept secret, and I want nobody to know anything about it." He kept him in a room for seven days away from the other people. The family did as they were told, and nobody knows what happened in the room. Lo and behold, the malady of many years standing was cured in a very short time.

Hua-tzu, cured, flew into a great rage, turned his wife out of the house, beat his children, and drove the Confucian away with a spear. Someone asked Huatse what the meaning of all this was, and he replied, "When I was in the world of forgetfulness, I was in a vast realm of vagueness, knowing nothing of the existence of heaven and earth. Now I am awake to all that happens, existence and non-existence, profit and loss, sorrow and pleasure, liking and loathing, all the emotions in all their confusion. And these emotions will disturb my mind in the future also. Can I never again get even a moment of forgetfulness? That is why I drove them all away."

This has an obvious human application, but also a cosmic one. God must often regret having disturbed his own timeless serenity when he created the universe, not because men are so foolish and wicked, but because Nothing is always better than something.

The Man who Saw the Gold Only

There was a man of Ch'i who very much wanted gold. One clear morning he went to the market all dressed up, and proceeded straight to the gold-dealers, snatched up some gold, and walked off. The police arrested him immediately, and asked him, "Why did you take the gold, when everybody was there?" He replied, "When I took the gold, I did not see any people;

I saw only the gold."

This is perhaps the psychology of much so-called "crime", and also of the folly which makes up the major portion of our life. The moral is: when you look at a flower, do not forget the universe; when you look at the universe, do not forget the flower.

Give a Dog a Bad Name

A certain man lost his axe. He suspected the boy next door, and his walk showed he had stolen an axe, his appearance showed he had stolen an axe, his way of speaking showed he had stolen an axe, his gestures and manner all showed he had stolen an axe. Some time after, however, when he was digging in the valley the man happened to find the axe he had lost. And when he looked at the boy next door, nothing in his attitude or manner showed he had stolen an axe.

This is perhaps the best story in the present book.

How to Deal with a Bandit

Niu Chieh was a great Confucian of Shangti. He once went down to Hantan and met a bandit at Ousha. He was robbed of all his clothes, and his cow-cart, but walked off. He looked quite cheerful; there was no sign of sorrow or regret on his countenance. The bandit ran after him and asked why he looked so. Niu Chieh replied, "A wise man does not harm the thing which must be fed (the body) for what feeds it (the clothes and ox-cart). The bandit was full of admiration, "How wise you are indeed!" But he thought to himself, "If I let this wise man go back to the Lord of Chao, he will interfere with what I am doing; I had better kill him now." So he ran after Niu Chieh again and killed him. A man of You heard of this, and gathered his kinsmen and warned them, saying, "Do not be like Niu Chieh of Shangti when you meet a bandit!" They all realised what he meant. His younger brother soon after

happened to have to go to Ch'in, and there met a bandit when he came down to Kuanhsia. He remembered his brother's warning, and fought with the bandit, but in the end he was defeated and robbed. But he meanly ran after the bandit and asked him to give some of his things back. The bandit became angry, and cried, "It was from generosity that I let you live, but now you come pertinaciously after me, and it will be made known where I am going. I am a robber; how can you expect kindness from me now?" and he killed him and several of those who were travelling with him.

This is not exactly a comical story, but shows how a lack of wit ruins us. We must not reveal our wisdom to others as Niu Chieh did, for wisdom is power, and power is hated. We must not "ask for more" as Oliver Twist and the younger brother did. There is a limit to morality, even the morality of robbers. Humour sees and admits this limit.

Shame

There was once a poor man in Ch'i who was always going around the town begging. The townspeople thought he came too often and nobody gave him anything. At last he went to the stable of a farmer and became the hanger-on of a horse-doctor working there. A townsman said to him teasingly, "Aren't you ashamed of eating, just following a horse-doctor?" The beggar said, "The most shameful thing in the world is to beg; I was not ashamed of begging; how can I be ashamed of following a horse-doctor?"

Christ says, not without some humour, "He who would be master must be the slave of all." God himself, in his loneliness, begs for our love.

What is Good?

A man of Hantau offered a dove to Chientse on New Year's Morning. He was very pleased and rewarded him well. A

visitor asked him about it, and he said," It shows our mercy if we let a living creature go free." The guest said, "If your people know that you are going to free them, they will compete in catching them, and many doves will die on account of it. If you really want the doves to live, the thing is to prohibit the people from catching them. To catch and then free them will not make good the evil." Chientse agreed.

It is said that at one time during the 19th century it was customary in Rome for certain rascals to beat dogs in front of foreign visitors, especially English people, in order to get money to stop. Whether this is true or not, morality must never be paid.

What is Given, is Received

Lord Wen of Ch'in was on the way to a meeting to decide on attacking the neighbouring state of Wei. Kungtzu Ch'u laughed and laughed at this, his mouth open to the sky. The Lord asked him what he was laughing at. He replied, "This is why I was laughing. The man next door saw off his wife when she was going to her native place. One the way he saw a woman gathering mulberry leaves, and pleased with her appearance, spoke to her. But when he suddenly turned round to his wife he saw someone making signs to her. This is the reason for my laughter." The Lord understood what he meant, stopped the attack, and took the army back to his own country. Hardly had he arrived when he was attacked by the country to the north.

The wisdom of life is to see the analogies, and the farther apart the two things are the more significant is their common factor,—and the more humorous.

Suspension of Belief

Lichtse was in difficult circumstances, and looked hungry. A certain man who stayed with Tzüyang of Chên said to him,

Liehtse is a man of the Way, and is now leading a poverty-stricken life in your land. If you do nothing about it, it may seem that you care nothing about really great men." So Tzü-yang had his officers send him some millet. Liehtse received the messenger, bowed, and refused the millet with the utmost courtesy. His wife beat her breast, and said to him reproachfully, "I have heard that the members of a family of a man of the Way all lead a pleasant and comfortable life. We, on the contrary, are always hungry, and now when we are presented with some food you don't accept it as you should!" Liehtse laughed and said, "The Lord does not know me himself, but presented me with some millet, acting only in accordance with someone else's words. In the same way, he may punish me according to someone else's words. That is why I did not accept the millet." At last people rose in revolt against the Lord, and killed him.

Much of the misery and all of the wars of the world come from this acting on the instructions of others.

How to Weep

A man of Yen was born in Yen, grew up in Ch'u and when he was going back to his native place in his old age, passed through the country of Chin. Another man, who accompanied him, played a trick on him and said, pointing to a castle, "This is the castle of Yen." The man was touched, and his countenance changed. The other pointed to a shrine, and said, "This is the shrine of your own village!" The man sighed deeply. The other pointed to a house and said, "It is where your father used to live." The man shed tears. Last, the other pointed to a hill and said, "That is the grave of your father." The man lamented and groaned. The other laughed and said, "I have been deceiving you. This is still the country of Chin." The man was quite ashamed of himself. When they actually got to Yen, and he saw the castle and the shrine and the real house

and grave of his dead father, the emotion and grief were not so deep.

I had the same experience as this, though the deceiving was done by myself. When I first came to Japan I wanted to see Mt. Fuji very much, very Lafcadio Hearnically. On the way to Numazu I was sitting in the train waiting to see the world-famous mountain when it suddenly came in view. I shed tears to think that a poor boy born in London could have the opportunity of seeing this far-off sacred mountain. After wiping away my tears, I settled down again,—when lo and behold! after a few more minutes the real Mt. Fuji came in sight. I was so crestfallen and confused I could not squeeze out a single tear for the real thing, though I had wept copiously for the false one. In any case, our emotion must be as deep as possible, but not too deep.

Wisdom with Monkeys

A certain man in the country of Sung kept monkeys; he loved them, and had a great many. He understood well the feelings of the monkeys and they understood his. He reduced the number of the people in his house so as to feed the monkeys properly. But he became poorer, and wanted to give the monkeys less food, but was afraid they might revolt against him. So he used guile, and said, "I will give you three portions of millet in the morning and four in the evening; will that be all right?" All the monkeys got angry and stood on their feet. But he hurriedly said again, "No, I will give you millet, four in the morning and three in the evening. How about that?" All the monkeys prostrated themselves and were overjoyed.

The difference is not in substance but in the feeling. The really wise man treats the fools as fools, but never lets them suspect this for a moment. This humorous kindness is the highest virtue, and is what makes the world go round.

Which is Nearer?

Confucious was wandering in the Eastern regions, and saw two children arguing about something, and asked what. One of them said, "I think that when the sun rised it is nearer to people, and at noon it is farther away." The other child thought it was nearer to people at noon and farther away when it rose. The first child said, "When the sun first appears, it is as big as a wheel, but at noon, it is about the size of a tray. Isn't that because what is far away looks small and what is near looks big?" The other child said, "When the sun comes first, it is cool, but at noon it becomes as hot as touching boiling water. Isn't that because what is near is hot and what is far away is cool?" Confucious could not tell them which was right, and the children laughed at him, and said, "Who decided that you were a wise man?"

Why is butter soft and iron hard? People say it is because of the density of the molecules, but why are the molecules of iron closer than those of butter? The following story also asks an unanswerable question.

For Whom does the World Exist?

T'ientsu of Chi held a farewell party in his garden, a thousand guests being present. One of the party presented him with some fish and geese. T'ientsu said admiringly, "How mercifully Heaven thinks of its children! It increases all sorts of grain, and produces fish and birds so that people may live on them." All the guests agreed with this; there was a sound of universal approval. The son of Pao was present there, only twelve years of age. He came forward and said, "Nothing of the kind. The things of this world are ourselves and the other creatures; there is no high or low among the species; only they fight and eat each other according to their size or wisdom. Nothing is born for another's convenience; man happens to be

able to catch and eat other animals. They were not made for the purposes of human beings. So Heaven did not make us for the sake of mosquitoes and other flies, though they bite us, or for wolves and tigers, though they eat us."

This reminds us of the ironical, anti-catholic lines of Pope in the *Essay on Man*:

Has God, thou fool! worked solely for thy good,
Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food?

How Not to Die

There was once a man who said he knew how to live for ever. The Lord of Yen sent someone to learn the method, but as the messenger did not go immediately and swiftly, the man who knew how not to die died. The Lord of Yen was very angry with the messenger, and was going to punish him, but his favourite retainer advised him saying, "A man is afraid of nothing more than death, values nothing more than life. But he himself lost his own life, so how can he prevent your Highness from dying?" So the Lord did not punish the messenger.

There was a man called Chitzu, who wanted to learn the Way (not to die) and when he heard of the death of the man who knew how not to die he regretted it exceedingly, beating his breast and lamenting. Fushih heard of this, and said, laughing, "He wants to learn how to live for ever, but the teacher is already no more. Yet he is regretful. He evidently does not know what to study (the Way) is." Hutzü said, "What Fushih said is wrong. There are people who know how, but cannot do it. There are also those who can do it but do not know how. There was a man of Wei who was good at mathematics and at his death taught the secret of his art to his son. The son wrote it down but himself could not do it. Another man asked him about it and the son told him what his father had said. The other performed the art according to the father's words and was

able to do it as well as the father. So you cannot say that a man who died could not teach others how not to die."

This seems to me clever, witty and true. What the chief priests said was perhaps right: "He saved others; himself he cannot save."

Leaf-making

A man of Sung made some leaves of a kind of mulberry tree for the King with jade, completing the work after three years. The tip of the leaf, its stalk, the hair on the leaf, its glossiness, all was so well made that no one could distinguish it from the real thing even if placed among actual mulberry leaves. For his art and skill he was pensioned by his country. Liehtse heard of this, and said, "If it took nature three years to produce some leaves the trees would have very few. So a sage thinks much of the power of nature, little of human wisdom and skill."

All the works of man have a littleness, an unnaturalness, a labour that make them comical.

Who is Crazy?

A man of Ts'in, named P'ang, had a son who was clever when young, but when he reached manhood he became afflicted with a disease that we may call "error". When he heard someone singing he thought it was lamentation; he saw white as black; fragrant incense smelled bad to him; sweet things tasted bitter; unjust deeds seemed to him right. Whatever he experienced in heaven or on earth, in the four directions, of water or fire, cold or heat—all he took upside down. A man called Yang told his father, "The wise man of Lu (Confucius) knows many kinds of arts. He may be able to cure your son. Why don't you go and see him?" The father went to the country of Lu, but he passed through the country of Ch'en, where he met Laotse, and told him all about his son. Laotse said, "How do you know that your son is in a state of illusion? All the

people in the world are in this same state of illusion about right and wrong, profitable and unprofitable. There are many maladies of this kind, but scarcely anyone is aware of it. Moreover, the illusion of one person cannot affect a family, nor that of a district the whole country, nor that of a country the world. And if the whole world is deluded, who can change it? If all the people of the world were like your son, you would be thought wrong. Sorrow and joy, sound and colour and smell, right and wrong, —who can be sure about these things. And what I am saying about these matters may be deluded too. And the wise man of Ch'en is the very one who is most deluded; how can he cure the illusions and delusions of others? I recommend you to go back at once."

This attitude, which was that of Socrates and Montaigne and many lesser men is not only the right one, it is the curative one. Calling people criminals only makes them worse. "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone", is itself too moralistic. It implies degrees of goodness, and the point of the story is the varieties of goodness. Morality is a kind of joke, or shall we say that laughter is the only really moral activity.

When the Heavens Fall

In the State of Ch'i there was a man who was worried lest the sky should fall and the earth be crushed and he have nowhere to live. Being so worried he could neither eat nor sleep. There was another man who was worried about this worried man. He went and said to him, "Heaven consists of piled-up air or vapour. There is no place without this vapour, and everybody is sitting and standing, moving and breathing and resting in it all day. So it is not necessary to worry about the sky falling." But the nervous man said, "If heaven is really but piled-up vapour, the sun and moon and stars cannot but fall." The other said, "The sun and moon and stars also exist

in the piled-up air, only they shine. So if they fall they won't be broken or break other things." The first man said, "How about the earth breaking up?" The other said, "The earth is only a mass; it fills all the emptiness; there is nowhere that you do not find this mass; however far you walk and go, you are still on the earth all the time, proceeding or standing. So you need not worry about its breaking up." Everything became quite clear to him and he was happy and relieved. When Chang Lutsu heard of this he laughed and said, "Rainbows, clouds, mists, wind and rain and the four seasons are born in heaven by the piling up of vapour. Mountains, and hills, rivers and seas, metals and stones, fire and wood,—these are born on the earth, and are piled-up forms. When we know that heaven and earth are but piled-up vapour and accumulations of matter, how can we say, "They won't break"? As you know, heaven and Earth are but tiny things in Vast Emptiness, and also in them is Something Enormous, difficult to exhaust, to end, to fathom, or to understand. This is the condition of these things, not to be measured, not to be known. This is the nature of them. So to worry about the earth's being broken into pieces is far from rational, but then again, to say it won't break is a mistake. If heaven and earth must break, they must break, and if we are alive at that time how can we avoid worrying about it?"

When Lichtse heard this he laughed and said, "He who says that heaven and earth will break is wrong, but he who says they won't is also wrong. As to whether they will break or not,—this is beyond our knowledge. But there is this opinion, and there is that opinion. Life does not know Death, nor Death Life. Coming does not know going, going is ignorant of coming. How can I trouble my mind about whether they will break or not?"

This story has some faint, far-off, almost indiscernible resemblance to the story of Job. The first says, they won't break, don't worry; the second says, they won't but they may, so worry; the third says,

—what does he say? The first is the romanticist, the second the realist; what is the third? The third is, to express it in a particular way, the view that nothing is serious enough, tragic enough to worry about. Lichtse said, laughing,—this laughing is all important. Christ said, laughing, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Confucius said, laughing, “Heaven knows me! Heaven knows me!”

How to Catch Cicadas

Confucius went to Ch’u and saw a humpback in the wood gathering cicadas as easily as though picking them up. Chung-ni said, “You are extraordinarily good at it. Is there any special way of doing it?” The humpback answered, “Yes, I have a Way. In May or June, if you can put a ball on a ball, then you can beat the cicadas, with a few failures. If you can put three balls one on another, you will fail only once in ten times. If you succeed in putting five balls on top of one another, you can get cicades as easily as picking them up. I stand like a stump, my arms extended like the branches of trees. Heaven and Earth are vast, and full of a multitude of things, but I know only the wings of cicadas. I do not change position or budge; I do not take anything instead of the wings of cicadas. So naturally I can catch them.” Confucius said to his disciples “If your will is on one thing, that is to say, cosmically concentrated, you will be like this old humpbacked master.” The old man exclaimed, “You are a Confucian of big clothes; how is it you did not know the answer of your own question? Complete and perfect what you are now doing, then speak about higher things!”

All teachers are comical, because if they really knew what they pretend to they would have no energy to teach. All real teaching is self-teaching; the rest is simply repetition of that (successful or unsuccessful) self-teaching. So it is that the war-mongers always speak of peace.

Shooting Well

In olden times Kanying was good at shooting. When he shot an arrow, birds fell, and beasts dropped to the ground. He had a disciple named Feiwei, who having learned archery from Kanying became even more skilful than his teacher. A man named Ch'ichang learned shooting from Feiwei, who said "You must learn first how not to blink you eyes, then you may speak of shooting." Ch'ichang went back to his home, and lay down under his wife's loom and made his eye touch one of the levers. After two years even if the end of the lever fell on his eye he did not blink, and he told Feiwei so. Feiwei said "Not yet. You must learn to watch. Come again after you are able to see the small as though large, the dim as though clear." So Ch'ichang hung a louse from a hair at his window and watched it from the south. In ten days it looked bigger, and after three years it looked as big as a cartwheel, and when he looked at other things they all looked as big as hills and mountains. So he tried to shoot with a bow and arrow. He shot the louse in the centre of its heart, and still it hung there. He told Feiwei about it, and was very glad; he beat his chest and said, "Now you have got it!" Ch'ichang had already learned all the art of Feiwei and thought he was the only rival he had in the world, and planned to have a duel with him. They met in a field, and shot their arrows at each other, but they met in the air and fell to the ground, raising no dust. The arrows of Feiwei were already used up; Ch'ichang had one left, and shot it at Feiwei, who defended himself from it with a thorn. Both threw their bows away, weeping, and, bowing to each other, agreed to become father and son, and swore not to reveal the secret of their art to others.

There are stories like this in Fennimore Cooper, made fun of by Mark Twain, but perhaps the implicit meaning is similar to the Chinese story, the possible absoluteness, the infallibility of even human beings. Humour is the clash between the possible and the

impossible, and what is human life but this?

Tho Two Robbers

In the country of Ch'i lived a rich man named Kuo; in the country of Sung a poor man named Hsiang. One day Hsiang went to ask Kuo how he managed to become so rich. Kuo answered, "I am a very skilful robber. After robbing for one year I had enough to eat; in two years I was well off; in three I was rich, and now I give away money to all the poor people in my district." Hsiang was very pleased. He understood quite well what robbery was, but not the principle of it in the case of Kuo. He at once began climbing over walls and robbing houses, and grabbed hold of all that his eye could see or his hand could reach. Unfortunately, very soon the things he stole led to the detection of his burglaries, and he lost even what he originally had. Hsing explained all he had done; "Why!" said Kuo, "You understood the principle of robbery so little? I will explain it to you. It is this. Heaven has its seasons, Earth its productions; I steal these two. I use the wetness and fecundating power of the clouds and rain, the productiveness and fostering of mountains and marshes. These make my corn grow and ripen my harvest, build my houses and walls. I rob the land of animals and birds, the water of fishes and turtles. This is all theft, because corn and harvest, earth and trees, birds and beasts, fish and turtles are all produced by Heaven, not by me. But this robbing of Heaven is not followed by retribution. However, gold, jewels, precious stones, food, silk, wealth and property are all gathered together by men; they are not given by Heaven. If you rob people of these things, and are punished, you have but yourself to blame." Hsiang was bewildered by all this, and he thought Kuo was deceiving him a second time.

Carpe Diem

Yang Chu said, "The living only differ from one another; the dead are all alike. When alive, a man is wise or stupid,

noble or base; thus the living are different. But dead people all stink, all are corrupt; all decay until nothing remains; in this way they are all the same. Man cannot control these two facts; they are not the results of any human activity. Some people die at ten, some at a hundred. The wisest men and the greatest die no less than the lowest and most villainous . . . What is the difference between the foul bones of a dead saint and those of a dead rascal? Let us then be busy about the affairs of life when we are alive, and leave what happens afterwards."

This again is Montaigne long before his time. A humorist inclines to this attitude perhaps, but he may also take the whole affair tragically as well as comically, and as deeply as he pleases.

Long Life

Yen P'ingchung asked Yuan Chung, "How can we have good health?" "By doing just whatever you like, without any let or hindrance, that's all." "Please tell me in more detail," said the other. "It is simplicity itself," said Yuan Chung. "Whatever your eye wishes to gaze up, look at as much as you will; what your eye wants to listen to, your nose to smell, your mouth to speak your body enjoys, your heart desires to do, enjoy them all!"

He goes on to say that to wait quietly for death in the unrestricted enjoyment of life is the right method of attaining and preserving health. This is somewhat like Oscar Wilde, only Wilde would have thought (rightly enough) that it was vulgar to think about such a thing as health at all, particularly one's own health. On the other hand it must be observed that this ancient doctrine, a rather low-class kind of Epicurianism, is thoroughly in accord with the modern theory of strain as the one and only cause of disease. In other words, we must say that humour is the cause, effect, and visible sign of mental and physical health.

The following story shows us morality as the enemy of not merely health and humour but of life itself.

Virtuous Profligacy

Tzu Ch'an, the prime Minister of Cheng, held dictatorial power over the State for three years, and during this time good people followed his reforms, and the bad feared his rebuke. The country of Cheng, thus administered, was respected and feared by all other principalities. However, Tzu Ch'an had two brothers; the elder, Chao, loved wine; the younger, Mu, loved women. Chao's house contained a thousand *chung* of wine, yeast was piled up everywhere mountains high, and a hundred paces from the gate the smell of wine-dregs assailed everyone's nose. Dissipated and immersed in wine, of the world, its safety or dangers, public affairs and their wise or unwise administration, the life and death of his relatives, or even whether any of the forms of death were about to fall on him,—of all these things he knew nothing, and cared less. As for Mu, he filled twenty or thirty rooms of his inner courtyard with his concubines, the most sexually attractive possible. He too had nothing to do with his relations and friends, never left his courtyard, prolonged the pleasures of the night into the day, left the house only once in three months, and that unwillingly. If there were a beautiful maiden in some hamlet, he would tempt her with money, or have a procuress abduct her and would stop trying only when it was absolutely impossible to get hold of her.

Their brother, the Prime Minister explains to them the dignity and value of life, and the dangers and ill-fame of vice. The two redoubtable brothers tell him to go to Hell with his rectitude and decorum, saying that they cared nothing for reputation and had no wish to feign virtues they did not have. They said they were too busy with their mouths and stomachs and other organs to worry about health or glory or money.

These two Rabelaisian gentlemen are not at all masochistic in

their pleasures. They know nothing of the pleasures of self-denial, the luxury of insufficient food and clothing. Like Falstaff also, honour is but a name, and a name that will lead to an early grave and an eternity of nothingness no different from that which we came from. To "scorn delights and live laborious days" at least supposes a fairly long life. And what, for example, is the sense of struggling for enlightenment if the day after we get it (and perhaps the day before) we die? We must get something *this* moment, in a world in which every next moment may be our last. Of course, if writing a book gives more satisfaction than drinking or promiscuity, it is obvious which we should choose, but if you can't write a book and don't want to read one



PLATE III

TWO CHINESE GENII

This is a mud-wall picture in a grave at Eichangtzu, 榮城子, in Lushun, 旅順, and belongs to the first two or three hundred years A.D. It represents two spirits, guardians of the gate, Tu-yu, 荼與, (or Shentu, 神荼) and Yu-tieh, 鬱堊. One has a pronged and the other a barbed halberd. The picture is apparently unfinished; it has crude strength in it, and though far from witty has something slightly comical in it to our eyes. It brings out the truth, to parody Confucius, that energy and simplicity, ferocity and directness are not far from humour.

The story of the two genii is this. There was a mountain, Tushuo, 度朔山, in the Tunghai district, on which grew three thousand peach trees. At the north-east of the biggest of these trees there stood a gate through which passed many spirits. The two genii lived on the gate, examined the spirits, and gave the bad ones to the tigers to eat. It is said that it was the Yellow (Huang) Emperor who began the practice of painting their pictures on a plank of peach-wood and hanging them at the gate at the end of the year.

These Door-Gods seem to have been replaced, from Tang times, in some districts of China, by Yu Chih Kung, 尉遲恭, 585-658, and Ching Shuh Pao, 秦叔寶, two body-guards of the Emperor Tai Tsung, 太宗, who, when he was bothered by a kind of poltergeist which threw brickbats about the palace, stood guard and protected him. The Emperor had their portraits painted commemoratively on the doors, in armour, and carrying battle-axes. These last, by the way, contrary to the illustration, must always face away from each other, to guard in all directions. There is a saying: "If the door-guards are wrongly posted (pasted), there will be trouble to the right and to the left," 反貼門神左右爲難.

CHAPTER VI

Proverbs

A proverb has been called a universal major premise, and with this opinion the Chinese would agree, but in Europe at least, proverbs have rather fallen from their former high estate. To quote Lord Chesterfield, who never laughed after he had reached years of discretion (and very seldom, we may suspect before that time) "a man of fashion never has recourse to proverbs and vulgar aphorisms". This is now true of almost all men. These proverbs of immemorial wisdom, which existed long before books did and which once were heard daily in Athens, Rome, and London, are now relegated to the latter part of books of quotations, together with the least-forgotten verses of the Bible. Why are proverbs now so seldom heard? It may be that human beings weary of hearing the truths that they are unwilling or unable to put into practice. The Japanese treated this proverbial wisdom with their accustomed insouciance, and turned many of them into a kind of game. The Chinese have been more respectful to the wisdom of their ancestors. They feel perhaps that brevity is the soul not only of wit but of wisdom, and we see this brought out in English translations of Chinese. In the *Analects*, Book I, Chapter IX, Confucius is reported as saying:

愼終追遠

Legge translates this:

Let there be a careful attention to perform the funeral rites to parents, and let them be followed when long gone with the ceremonies of sacrifice.

Besides the brevity, there is what has been called the *swivel* faculty,

a capacity for being put to any use, for being applied under any circumstances. This is *the* great power of a proverb, and it comes no doubt from the fact that the proverb is the focal point of an infinite number of experiences of different people in a variety of conditions. The following, in being the most humorous, are among the best of world proverbs.

臭肉同味。

All putrid flesh has the same taste.

All bad people live in the same world of greediness, pretence, ambition, envy, self-love, in a word, egoism.

一個巴掌拍不響。

There is no sound when we clap with only one hand.

The interesting point here is that in Zen it is precisely this sound that we must (also) hear. The realism of the Chinese is to be tempered by the idealism of the Indians, or vice versa.

狗不嫌家貧。

A dog has no dislike of a poor family.

In this case, as in so many others, "Unless ye become as one of these little dogs, ye shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

一犬吠形。百犬吠聲。

One dog barks at something, and a hundred bark at his voice. Christ worships God; others worship him.

便宜不是貨。是貨不便宜。

Cheap things are not good; good things are not cheap.

It is interesting to contrast this with what the transcendentalist says:

All good things are cheap; all bad are very dear.¹

1. Thoreau, *Journals*, 1841.

The Chinese is speaking of man-made things; the American of God-made.

林中不賣薪。湖上不鬻魚。

Firewood is not sold in a forest;
fish is not sold on the lake.

We take advantage of the weakness, poverty, or stupidity of others to assure our own livelihood. Even in spiritual matters freedom is not found in a solitary life; music itself is an oasis of sound in a desert of silence.

雷同。

Identical, like claps of thunder.

This must be one of the shortest similes in the world, and one of the most appropriate. The humour lies in the unexpectedness, the remoteness of the comparison.

國易治。家難齊。

To rule a kingdom is easy; to control a family is difficult.

I have never ruled a kingdom, but apparently many people more stupid than I have done so successfully. With regard to a family, it simply depends on the family; if good, it runs itself, if bad, no one can control it.

你看我我看你。好看不好看。

You have looked at me; I have looked at you;
do we like each other's looks or not?

This is happening all over the world at every moment, and the answer is clear, though not always to the parties concerned.

一言不中。萬言無用。

If one word does not hit the mark, neither will ten thousand.

We can preach only to the converted. As some wise person said,

no man can be persuaded against his will.

一人傳虛。百人傳實。

What one man says is false; what a hundred men say is true.

This is disturbingly democratic. Is it indeed possibly true? Perhaps we had better take it in a more philosophical way, in the sense that Thoreau says, "After all, man is the great poet, not Homer or Shakespeare," the same "man" who is the author of these proverbs.

君子之交談如水。

小人之交甜如蜜。

The friendship of the superior man is thin like water;
That of the small man is as sweet as honey.

The humour of this lies in the unexpected similes.

少是觀音。老是猴。

Young, a Kuanyin; old, a monkey.

Then what is she *in toto*? What is woman that thou art mindful of her?

賭錢場上無父子。

In the gambling ring,—no father and son.

In the struggle for existence morality and filial piety play but a minor and intermittent role.

物各有主。

Everything in the world has its lord.

This seems to involve a paradox, since in the last resort the lordship must be mutual, or go beyond this world. Taken more humorously, it no doubt refers to that eternal feudal system, that hierarchy obeyed by non-human creatures also. The Emperor is afraid of his wife or his tailor, and so the circus goes on.

救人救到頭。殺人殺斷喉。

If you save, save thoroughly; if you kill, kill thoroughly.

There is more than a touch of Zen in this paradox.

買乾魚放生。不知死活。

One who buys a dried fish to save its life does not know what life and death are.

All missionaries and teachers look somewhat foolish in the face, because they are trying to resuscitate, not the dead, but the stillborn.

時來誰不來。時不來誰來。

If a lucky time comes, who does not come?

If it does not come, who comes?

Emerson raises this to a cosmic law; in *Fate* he says:

One thing is forever good;

That one thing is Success.

一葉既動百枝皆搖。

When a single leaf moves, all the branches shake.

This inversion of cause and effect makes us realise that there is no such thing as a cause, and an effect; only phenomena, seen under the illusion of time.

打虎不着。反被虎傷。

You may miss the tiger, but he won't miss.

The humour here is rather grim. This proverb also may be taken in a cosmic sense. The tiger is the world, or it is death. Christ says, "I have overcome the world."

古人不見今時月。

今月曾經照古人。

The ancients did not see tonight's moon,

But this moon shone on the ancients.

This is rather a strange proverb, which must come from a Chinese poem. The sense of time and place is laid to sleep, and we see

the world *sub specie aeternitatis*.

有兩好人。一個死了一個未生。

Two men of perfect virtue,—the one dead, the other yet unborn.

The living, the real, the present is always imperfect. The golden age, the age of golden men, is in the past or the future.

生不認魂。死不認屍。

Alive, we know not the soul; dead, we know not the body.

Putting the two together, and “making up the main account,” the answer is nothing.

幾長人穿幾長衣服。

People of a certain height must wear clothes of a certain length.

This can mean, “Cut your coat according to your cloth,” but it has a more universal application. There is no absolute freedom; we are free only in as far as we accept our lack of freedom.

人善人欺天不欺。

人惡人怕天不怕。

Men deceive good men; Heaven does not deceive them.

Men fear evil men; Heaven does not fear them.

This is a almost intolerably profound. The contrast has gone beyond even humour, beyond comedy and tragedy into the realm of the music of Bach.

天生一人。地生一穴。

Heaven provides the man, earth the grave for him.

This is the whole truth, that we find always in Homer, often in Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, and Goethe, almost never elsewhere.

人間私語。天闔若雷。

暗室虧心。神自如電。

Our whispers sound like thunder in the ears of Heaven; our

dark secret wickednesses flash like lightning into the eyes of the gods.

This is true, but unknown to but a few, yet all men feel it sometimes, for our uneasinesses or boastings all testify to the fact that Heaven is neither blind nor deaf.

弄假成真。

Pretending becomes truth.

This is what Nietzsche says, that untruth is as necessary for life and therefore in the deepest sense true, as so-called fact or reality. Also, in a more simple way, pretending to love or to be angry, acting a part may cause the actual emotions to arise. How about the reverse? Can truth become pretending? Yes, when repeated.

天知地知。你知我知。

Heaven knows, Earth knows, you know, I know.

What do they know? The answer is that they know. But there is nothing known, nothing to be known, only a knowing which is universal and without exceptions.

隨富隨貧且隨喜。

不開口笑是癡人。

Rich or poor, rejoice! Who laughs not with open mouth is a fool.

This alone is wisdom; it is in the will, not the circumstances.

君前無戲言。

Never joke before a prince.

Let us amend it to "before anyone," for the only difference between a prince and other people is that he has more power to put his displeasure into effect.

男僧寺對着女僧寺。

沒事也有事。

The monastery of monks faces the nunnery of nuns;
There is not the slightest significance in that,—or is there?

This is one of the many cases when both are true.

宮清司吏瘦。神靈廟祝肥。

If the magistrate is just, the clerks are thin;
If the god is powerful, the priests are fat.

This is a charmingly indirect way of damning both honesty and superstition. Here we have once more the whole truth.

殺他無皮。到他無肉。

If I kill him, he has no skin; if I cut him up, he has no flesh.

This is said of a man who cannot pay his debts, but it may be used of most people, who are useless to us, in that they live in the world of death, not the world of poetry.

吞了怕是骨頭。吐了怕是肉。

Afraid of a bone, he does not swallow; afraid there is flesh, he does not spit it out.

This is a graphic description of a man actually eating, but its symbolic meaning reaches to every activity of human life.

捏著鼻子誑眼睛。

Blowing the nose and blinding the eyes.

This means deceiving oneself. Comfort, of mind and body, makes dupes of us all.

抱琵琶進磨坊。對牛彈琴。

Taking a harp into a mill and playing to the ox.

Most writing of books is like this. The author little suspects how well the reader misunderstands him.

暑天無君子。

There is no Superior Man in hot weather.

This reminds us of what Sidney Smith wrote to a friend:

Very high and very low temperature extinguishes all human sympathy and relations . . . May God send that the glass may fall, and restore me to my regard for you, which in the temperate zone is invariable.

衣食足而後禮義興。

When there is enough to eat and to wear, manners and morals appear.

La Rochefoucauld never said anything more devastating. At a blow all the moralists and founders of religion are crushed to pulp.

人有三分怕鬼。

鬼有七分怕人。

Men are half afraid of ghosts; ghosts are more than half afraid of men.

This seems to be a more or less scientific fact, since ghosts dare not appear in the day-time, and at night only intermittently and surreptitiously.

只見活人愛罪。

邪見死鬼帶枷。

We see only the living being punished; has anybody seen a ghost with a cangue?

Even Hamlet's father's ghost wore armour, and a beard, not an instrument of torture.

坐轎子也是人。

抬轎子也是人。

He who sits in the palanquin and those who carry it are all men.

Humour, like poetry, shows us the equality of the unequal, and the differences in what seem the same.

屋山頭開門。

The door of his house is a skylight.

This is said of an inhospitable man, but few men have not wished for such a house at some time or other.

人心不足蛇吞象。

The heart of man is insatiable; the snake wishes to swallow the elephant.

Here also is the root of humour, finite man with his infinite desires.

心有天高。命如紙薄。

Man's heart as high as heaven;
His fate as thin as paper.

This is the tragedy and the comedy of man.

水能載舟亦能覆舟。

Water can both float and sink a ship.

This law, that the same sword can both kill and make alive, is what makes humour possible and indeed inevitable.

良醫不自醫。

A doctor, however clever he may be, cannot cure himself.

This is expressed more generally, including the philosophically and spiritually sick, in *The Rubaiyat*:

their Words to Scorn
Are scatter'd and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.

瞎子見錢眼也開。
和尚見錢經也賣。

When a blind man sees money his eyes open;
When a priest sees money, he sells his scriptures.

The terrible struggle for existence in China opened the eyes of the Chinese to this truth.

自大是個臭字。

“Self” and “great” together make “a stink.”

自 and 大 put together make 臭. Actually 大 is 犬, dog.

嬌鳥被籠。

It is the beautiful bird which is caged.

This is Emerson's doctrine of compensation ironically considered. Taken parabolically it means that every man is limited by his qualities, good and bad, and especially the good.

鳳凰落架不如雞。

A hen can roost better than a phoenix.

This means that the lowest forms of (human) life have a better chance of survival than the highest.

To designate those people who have no opinions but just go along with the majority, the Chinese say:

大拇指頭撓癢癢隨着。

When the other fingers scratch, the thumb just goes with them.

A rather odd proverb which might be useful to opera is the following:

飽彈餓唱。

Play stringed instruments on a full stomach; sing on an empty one.

Another interesting though sinister proverb:

鄧通有錢山。竟會餓死。

Teng T'ung had a mountain of money, but died of starvation.

The story is as follows. Teng T'ung, the favourite of a certain Han Emperor was told by a fortune-teller that he would die of starvation, and that only the cultivation of virtue would avert this. One day he mentioned the prediction to the Emperor, who, in order to put his mind at rest, bestowed on him a factory for making coins. However, in the course of time Teng T'ung suffered from a stricture of the oesophagus, and was unable to eat, thus fulfilling the prophecy.

一日清閒一日仙。

To be entirely at leisure for one day is to be an Immortal.

Emerson says: "Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of Emperors ridiculous."

你不可殺雞問客。

Don't ask the guest whether you shall kill the chicken.

This is beyond comment. The next is "for men only":

妻似牆上的坯 揭一層又一層。

A wife is like a wall of mud-bricks; take off one row, there is another beneath it.

Blind love for children, which seems commoner in China and Japan than in Europe and America, is expressed with ironic hyperbole:

要活人的腦漿子。

按倒就砸。

If the child asks for a man's brains, hold the man down and knock out his brains.

The next shows Nature's one principle, that might is right:

有意栽花花不發。

無心插柳柳成陰。

You carefully plant flowers; they do not grow. You carelessly stick in a twig of willow and it soon throws a shade.

人不知天知。

Men know not, but Heaven knows.

This has often been parodied, at least in Japan. As to whether the parodyableness of a literary work is evidence of some fatal flaw in it,—this is difficult to decide. It may be so. Shakespeare is seldom parodied, Wordsworth and Tennyson often.

騎驢覓驢。

To seek the ass you are riding on.

This has many applications. Every answer is circumscribed by its question. the smell by the nose. Can the eye see itself? When this happens we have the state of Zen.

包被雨傘我。

The bundle, the umbrella, and I.

This proverb I like very much, though I do not know its application and use. It shows us the aloneness of each living creature, without God and without hope in the world.

子不嫌母醜。狗不厭家貧。

A child does not dislike an ugly mother;

A dog does not despise a poor master.

The “joke” of this is that the first part is not true, at least when the child becomes four or five years old.

萬事留一線之路。

Leave a loophole for the erring.

Besides being a piece of practical advice, this proverb, like all of them, has a wider application. We see what is wrong with law and so-called justice. The judge sets himself up as the representative of a perfect principle; the criminal is considered to be 100% guilty of that particular offence. Both err; both need some way of escape,

and we do not know whether to laugh or weep at the magistrates, the offenders, and the machinery of the law, which are, as Dickens shows us at the beginning of *Bleak House*, surrounded by fog and obscurity, the mystery of life, its unpredictability and irresponsibility.

CHAPTER VII

Taoism

Humour, like every other activity, is founded on contrast, the greatest and most general of all contrasts being that of Yang and Ying, the male-female, light-darkness, warm-cold, dry-moist, movement-quiet principle, which in China was already explicit in Han times. To this duality was later added the transcendence, the harmony of both, the Tao. Like God, who is "namenlos", "the Way which can be called *a* Way is not *the* Way." Taken in its deepest and broadest sense, the Tao is poetry, is humour. This is something which even Laotse himself did not suspect, for he says in Chapter 41:

下士聞道。大笑之。不笑不足以爲道。

When low-class people hear of the Way they laugh uproariously. Should they not laugh, it would not be worthy to be called The Way.

Of course, by "laugh" Laotse meant "regard scornfully," "feel contempt for," but after all, what is really wrong is to take the Way so seriously and solemnly. Laotse's paradoxes must be laughed at, otherwise they will need to be explained, and explained away. The idea of extremes meeting is seen in the previous chapter, where Legge translates:

反者道之動

The movement of the Tao by contraries proceeds.

It should be noted that one of the aims of the original Taoists, whoever they were, was an absolute freedom, and this is the condition attained at the moment of (internal rather than external) laughter.

In addition, it is a supreme safety that is gained by having no self, relying on nothing, like Shelley's skylark, which is free and joyful because it is a spiritual being, not a bird.

It is generally accepted that the Taoist school, under Laotse, arose in reaction to the Confucian system. The Confucians wanted the so-called real, 實, but the Taoists chose the empty, 虛, that which embraces and gives meaning to the real. The Confucians and the Taoists appeared comical to each other, and both appear so to us. This conflict between the two is also a parallel to, indeed it is an emanation from the original Ying and Yang. However, of the two, the Ying, the female, and the Taoist quiescence are closer to the truth, to humour, than the Yang, the male, and the Confucian active goodness. So in the Chinese classics we find humour almost exclusively in Chuangtse and Liehtse. In Chinese classical poetry it is the semi-transcendental Taoistic humanist Po Chüi who has most humour. Again, it is in the writings of Zen, deriving as it does from Taoism rather than from Buddhism, that we find a cosmic yet earthly Chinese humour hardly to be paralleled in the comic literature of the rest of the world, ancient or modern.

It seems rather strange that Taoism had little direct effect upon Japanese thought and culture. One reason no doubt is that its place was taken by Zen, whose influence can hardly be over-estimated. Another is that the Japanese mind is not particularly fond of explicit paradoxes, especially if they are abstractly expressed. But it is time to come to Taoism itself.

It is generally thought that Taoism began as a Way to get to a region beyond life and death, and that it later degenerated into a vulgar system to assure longevity, not to say immortality. The probability is that the two began together; the desire to escape from the relative into the absolute, that is, from time into the timeless, and the desire to live forever in time, both arose together, and still persist all over the world. They are perhaps mingled in each person

however noble or ignoble he may be.

Both relative and absolute, time and the timeless, are subjects for mirth, the former as a foolish and ludicrous attempt to avoid the inevitable, to cheat death, and be cheated in the end by death itself. But the former also, the absolute, is not invulnerable to the comic spirit. Philosophically speaking, the absolute also is relative, relative to the relative, and in practical life one of the most common forms of humour is the observation and delineation of a man trying to lift himself by his own suspenders. This fact make all *Paradise Lost* and the solemn parts of *Hamlet* slightly uncomfortable. A fart will disconcert a concerto, and even the cantatas of Bach. Nothing is sacred but blasphemy.

Coming back to Taoism, it is interesting to consider the opinions of one of the earliest writers on Taoism as such, Ko Hung, 葛洪, or Pao P'utsu, 抱朴子, grand nephew of Ko Hsuan, 葛玄, of the Sankuo Period, who founded mystical Taoism about the middle of the 3rd century A. D. Ko Hung, fl. 326, of the Chin Dynasty, was the founder of alchemical, dietetic, and magical Taoism. His ideas, which come down from Han times, were that we are to have a desire-less will; become a genius through our own efforts; and find a good master to teach us the simple yet secret methods for attaining this. His autobiography, the *Pao P'utsu*, contains accounts of false geniuses who swindled people. These, like their counterparts in older (and modern) Europe or America, the quack doctor and vendors of panaceas, are an amusing tribe. One of them was Ku Chiang, 古強, who, when he was about 80, advertised that he was already 4,000 years old. He told stories concerning Confucius. "When the mother of Confucius was about seventeen years old," he declared, "I could tell by her physiognomy that she was going to give birth to a genius, and as I expected, in due time Confucius was born One night Confucius had a bad dream and asked me to interpret it to me, but the weather was so hot I refused to go, and later I heard

he had died seven days after." The wise laughed at him, but ordinary people believed what he said. Later he became senile, and when a man named Chi Han, 嵇含, gave him a jewelled cup, he forgot about it and told this same Chi Han who gave it to him, "Long long ago, Master An Ch'i, 安期, one of the genii, presented it to me."

A great many of the hsien, 仙, or immortalists, were not hermits, "hill-men", at all, but politicians and statesman and pseudo-scientists. An example is Liu An, 劉安, a grandson of the first Han Emperor, Liu Pang. He was a magician and alchemist, and the editor of the Taoist *Huainantsu*, 淮南子, about 130 B.C., in which we find practical illustrations of Laotse's principles. Owing to some treasonable activities he had to commit suicide, but his end as a Taoist was far more splendiferous. It was said that he discovered the elixir of life, drank it, and rose up to heaven in full view of everybody. The dogs and chickens who licked out the dishes also rose up into the sky, and were heard barking and crowing in the sky above. Another example of a dog becoming an immortal is given in the story of Wei Poyang, 魏伯陽, also of the Han Period. He tested his elixir of immortality upon a dog, which died on the spot. He then drank it himself, and fell dead immediately. One of his disciples, still believing in his Master, drank it, and was soon stretched lifeless on the ground. The other two disciples prudently went off to make arrangements for the funeral. Immediately after they had gone, Poyang resurrected himself, perfected the elixir and gave it to the dead disciple and the dead dog. Both recovered and went off, all three having become immortals. Poyang sent a letter to the other two disciples apologising for the lack of bodies for the proposed funeral.

Among these immortals we should include such people as Fengkan, Hanshan, Shite, and Putai. The first three were beggar-philosophers of the T'ang Period, who might have come out of Lear's

Book of Nonsense. Putai was a semi-legendary character of the Later Liang Period, 907-923. Fengkan, of the T'ang Dynasty, used a tiger as means of transportation. When asked about Buddhism he would answer, 隨時, "Follow the time!" which perhaps meant, "Act at that moment for that moment!" Hanshan, Shite ("Pick-up"), were the two Marx brothers of Buddhism, who laughed and danced through the solemnities of Buddhism and Confucianism. Shite was called so because he was picked up, a deserted baby, by Fengkan at the side of the road. One day, while he was sweeping the courtyard of Kuoch'ing temple at T'ientai, the head monk said to him, "We know you were picked up by Fengkan, but what is your real name and place of origin?" Shite dropped his broom, and stood there with clasped hands. The head monk again asked, whereupon Shite picked up the broom, swept the ground and turned to depart. Hanshan, who was by, beat his breast and cried "Alas! Alas!" Shite said, "What's the matter?" Hanshan answered, "Haven't you heard how if a man in the East dies, a man in the West grieves?" They both danced, and laughed, and wept, and went off, and were seen no more. This may not seem a very funny story, but the laughter of Shite and Hanshan lingers in our minds when other laughter is forgotten.

Putai (Hotei in Japanese), partly a real person, is said to have died in A.D. 916. He is represented in pictures and statues as enormously fat, and carrying a great bag into which he put, indiscriminately, whatever he was given. An obese and cheerful version of the Japanese monk Ryōkan, he is often seen with children, with farmers and fishermen, never with rich people. Like Falstaff, he laughs himself and is the cause of mirth in others. A senryu on Hotei:

瀬戸物の布袋は肩で小便し

The earthenware Hotei,—

He pisses

From his shoulder.

A small china figure of Hotei with a huge stomach is used as a water-container for brush-writing; the water is poured out of a hole in its shoulder, a rather odd place to make water from.

Putai symbolises something that we find difficult to believe, that happiness and goodness may co-exist, or even be identical; that value is not different from use; that a man may dance into Heaven; that "no cross, no crown," is false. After all, only a happy man can make others happy, not a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Carlyle said, with profound appeal, "Love not happiness; love God." Yes, but what if they be the same?

What is the relation between Taoism and humour? Taoism begins, in literature, with the transcendental contradictions and super-humour of Laotse and Chuangtse, illustrated on pages 23-28. It goes on to the mountebank Chang Taoling, 張道陵, died 156 A.D., founder of the Taoist religion; to Li Ch'angling, 李昌齡, his contemporary, who composed the *T'aishang Kanyingpien*, 太上感應篇, "The Treatise by the Great One on Response and Retribution"; and to Pao P'otse, "the philosopher who embraces simplicity"; then to Wei Poying, 魏伯陽, of the Sung, and his *Chou-i Tsantungch'i*, 周易參同契, "Interpenetration Unified and Harmonised". All these are moralistic and over-serious, that is to say, not so much laughing as laughable. However, as we see in the final outcome, which was quite a number of Chinese and Japanese solitary eccentrics, Taoism is at bottom an anarchism which laughs at all that is systematic and unpoetical, namely, science, militarism, government, violent revolution, and education. It seems to omit women (there are no Taoist nuns) but Taoism itself might be defined as the woman-spirit gently deriding the man-spirit. And in the end, the mountain must fall into the arms of the valley.

CHAPTER VIII

Zen

To say that the essence of Zen is humour sounds rather extreme, but is it a mere coincidence that the two are so often found together, in nations and in individuals? When I first read Dr. Suzuki's *Essays in Zen* I laughed at every koan he quoted, and indeed the less I "understood" the more I laughed. Whether this laughter was due to scorn or shame or bewilderment or some secret enlightenment is not the point. Zen has little to do with weeping. Zen is making a pleasure of necessity, wanting to do what you are doing, a perpetual realization that "all that we behold is full of blessings," that "cheerful faith" as Wordsworth calls it.

Again, much humour is concerned with the collision between the ideal and the real, with the emotional and intellectual contradictions of life, the personal, marital, social, and cosmic paradoxes. Profoundly considered, may not the strange joy of belly-laughter be due to a momentary joyful acceptance of that very contradiction? And is Zen anything but a continuance of this state, in which my will is the divine will? Is it not a steady illumination of which laughter is a flash, a spark? To continue the metaphor a little further, tinder is necessary to make a fire. It must be absolutely dry and lifeless, desireless, so that the spark may fall on it and burn it to an even more absolute nothingness. This is the state of mind just before enlightenment.

Let us assume then that Zen has a vital connection with humour, and before giving examples of their conjunction or identity in China, say once more what Zen is; this is better done by a subjunctive or imperative than an indicative sentence. When a thing and its

meaning are undivided, indivisible, there is Zen. (A "thing" is an object, an action, even a sentence.) When there is a *total* activity, mind and body unseparated, when an action is done, not *by* somebody, *to* somebody, *for* a certain purpose, there is Zen.

Humour is found everywhere in literature; what is the relation between Zen and words? Zen is said to be 不立文字, "without dependence on words or letters." This is no doubt so, but we must not suppose that words and Zen are in any sense enemies. Emerson says that "words and deeds are indifferent modes of the divine being," and Dr. Suzuki Daisetz explains the relation between words and Zen in his own wonderful way:

An assertion is Zen only when it is itself an act and does not refer to anything that is asserted in it.¹

So we find, as we would expect, Zen in *Alice in Wonderland* and Lear's *Nonsense Verses*. Like humour, like poetry, Zen is not intellect, morality, beauty, or emotion, though they may be present at the same time.

We "see" Zen, we "feel" it in religion, for example the writings of Eckhart; in music, Bach everywhere, Mozart often, never in Haydn, in the last quartets of Beethoven; in nature, especially mountains and stones; in daily life, mostly in women, whose lack of brain and absence of morality gives them the Zen of nature. In art, I "find" Zen in Byzantine art, its "fixed and unalterable truth in fixed unalterable images"; in Brueghel, with man and nature undivided, in Goya, fear seen without fear; in Klee, truth never fixed, but always growing in the mind of the poet.

Zen is thus to be found in every place, in every time, but the word and the intellectual realization of the one state of mind in all its infinite varieties of manifestation, was created-discovered in China. Supposed to have been brought from India by Bodhidharma in 520

1. *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, 1st Series, p. 284.

A.D., Zen is conspicuously and preëminently and uniquely “humorous” and even witty. It is possible to read the Bible without a smile, and the Koran without a chuckle. No one has died of laughing while reading the Buddhist Sutras. But Zen writings abound in anecdotes that stimulate the diaphragm. Enlightenment is frequently accompanied by laughing of a transcendental kind, which may further be described as a laughter of surprised approval. The approval is continuous, it will even increase, but the surprise, though it may not disappear, subsides, for as Thoreau says,

The impressions which the morning makes vanish with their dews, and not even the most persevering mortal can preserve the memory of its freshness to midday.¹

One of the more obvious examples of Zen humour, in the ordinary sense of the word humour, is what is called *nenro*, 拈弄, or *nenko*, 拈古, which means “picking up and playing” with some old saying of a master, and using it freely for one’s own purposes. A form of this is the *chakugo*, 著語, or *agyō*, 下語, which we find added to the *Hekiganroku*. Hakuin Zenji wrote a commentary on the *Hannya Shingyō* which he entitled *Dokugo Hannya Shingyō*, *doku* meaning “poisonous”. The idea of this word and indeed of all humour, is that we are apt to be misled by beauty, morality, so-called “truth”, pleasant emotions, and charming words. We need some shock to bring us back to a reality which includes all that we hope for, but also ugliness and terror and so-called badness, and painful things. The “purpose” of the universe towards itself and ourselves is to do both, to bless and to damn, but the laughter which comes from being cursed is somehow deeper than the contented chuckle.

Our *sincerest* laughter with some pain is fraught,
our own pain and that of others.

1. *A Week on the Concord.*

Zen is the only religion in which laughter is not merely permitted but necessary. Take an example from Case 70 of the *Hekiganroku*.¹ Weishan (Isan), Wufeng (Goho), Yünyen, (Ungan), three great disciples of Paichang (Hyakujō), 724-814, stand before him and are given the following problem:

併却咽喉唇吻。作麼生道。

“Shut your gullet, close your lips, and say something!”

This is of course not an exercise in ventriloquism. It is no different in its importance, its life-and-death-ness, from the triple question of Jesus to Peter, “Lovest thou me?” What Paichang asks his disciples to do is to live the truth before his eyes at this moment, uncircumscribed by speech or silence, to act absolutely, above the relativity of relative and absolute. What is odd and interesting also is the *chakugo* on the first sentence of the Case, “Isan, Goho, and Ungan were in attendance upon Hyakujō.” It is, “Ha! Ha! Ha!” The Chinese, 呵呵呵, is remarkable for its many mouths. What is the meaning of this laughing? Yüanwu is expressing his contempt for these four worthies paraded by Hsüehtou. They are more preproceros than a rhinoceros. He scorns the teacher-pupil relation between them, for truth cannot be shared. There is the same laughter in the mouth of Yangchin (Yōgi), d. 1049 A.D., whose “sermon on the mount” is this:

上堂。呵呵呵是甚麼。

僧堂裏喫茶去。下座。(楊岐錄)

He got up into his seat (a sort of pulpit), and exclaimed, “Ha! ha! ha! What’s all this? Go to the back of the hall and have some tea!” He then got down.

Zen and poetry and humour have this in common, that there is no such thing as Zen, as poetry, as humour. They cannot be isolated, they cannot be defined, they do not have an ulterior signifi-

1. 70, 71, 72, are really all one Case.

cance; yet they are there or not there; they are distinct and indubitable; they alone are meaning.

According to Dr. Suzuki¹ the characteristics of enlightenment are irrationality, intuitive insight, authoritativeness, affirmativeness, a sense of the beyond, an impersonal tone, a feeling of exaltation, and momentariness. Laughter is breaking through the intellectual barrier; at the moment of laughing something is understood; it needs no proof of itself; it is in no sense destructive or pessimistic or concerned with sin or punishment. Laughter is a state of being here and also everywhere, an infinite and timeless expansion of one's own nevertheless unalienable being. When we laugh we are free of all the oppression of our personality, or that of others, and even of God, who is indeed laughed away. One who laughs is master of his fate, and captain of his soul:

Weep, and the world weeps with you;
Laugh, and you laugh alone.

The abruptness of humour and enlightenment is too obvious to need anything but an abrupt mention.

It is an odd and deeply significant thing that Zen begins (or is supposed to begin) with a smile. The story as given in the 6th Case of the *Mumonkan* is this.

世尊昔在靈山會上拈花示
衆是時衆皆默然惟迦葉尊
者破顏微笑。

When the World-honoured One was on The Mount of the Holy Vulture, he held up a flower to the assembled monks. All were silent. Mahakasyapa the Venerable only smiled.

This story is found only in the *Daibontenmonbutsuketsugikyo*, 大梵天問佛決疑經, which is considered to be entirely apochryphal. But this is itself in accord with the spirit of Zen, which is concerned

1. *Essays in Zen*, Second Series page 16.

with truth, not with facts. The use of a flower indicates the Indian mind; also the smile, which in China would be rather a grin or guffaw.

The next name in the history of Zen is that of Daruma, who seems to have had nothing very witty or amusing about him; it is odd that in Japan he has been transformed into a humorous figure almost against his will, a kind of doll with no legs that however much pushed over always regains its balance. Nevertheless, we find in the anecdotes of Daruma's sojourn in China that element of paradox, almost, one might say, the pleasure of contradiction, which characterises all those who like Zen, whether they are adepts or not. The story of Daruma's interview with the Buddhist Emperor Wu (converted to Buddhism in 517 A.D.) is a model of all succeeding *mondō*, Zen debates.¹ It forms the 1st Case of the *Hekiganroku*:

梁武帝問達磨大師。如何。
是聖諦第一義。磨曰。廓然無聖。

The Emperor Wu of Liang asked Daruma, "What is the main principle of the Holy Teaching?" Daruma answered, "It is an Emptiness, with nothing holy about it."

The next great figure in Zen, Hui Neng (Enō), 637-713, was one of the most normal and uneccentric men of genius who ever lived, but even in him we find a perception of truth coupled with a strong sense of the ludicrousness of error. One example is the contest of the poems; another is when a monk quoted the following verse:

臥輪有伎倆。能斷百思想。
對境心不起。菩提日日長。

Wu Lun has a means
To cut off all thoughts;
The mind is not aroused by the external world;
The Tree of Enlightenment grows daily.

1. These are most conveniently collected and classified in 禪門公案大成 5, 515 in all

The Sixth Patriarch countered with the following:

慧能沒伎倆，不斷百思想。
對境心數起，菩提作麼長。

Hui Neng has no means
To cut off any thoughts;
The mind is continually aroused by the external world;
How on earth can enlightenment grow?

There is the story¹ of the enlightenment of Shuilao, 水潦, at the hands or rather the feet of his master Matsu, 馬祖.² He asked, "What is the meaning of Daruma's coming from the West?" Matsu immediately gave him a kick in the chest and knocked him down. Shuilao became enlightened, got up, and clapping his hands, laughed aloud. Taihui³ tells us that when Shuilao was asked what his enlightenment was, he answered, "Since the master kicked me, I have not been able to stop laughing."

The usual posture for Zen monks to die in is sitting, that is, doing zazen, but the Third Patriarch, Seng Ts'an, 僧璨, died (in 606) standing with clasped hands. Chihhsien of Huanch'i, 譙溪志閑, died 905 A.D., asked his attendants, "Who dies sitting?" They answered, "A monk" (僧伽). He said, "Who dies standing?" They said, "Enlightened monks" (僧會). He then walked around seven steps with his hands hanging down, and died. When Teng Yinfeng, 鄧隱峰, was about to die in front of the Diamond Cave at Wutai, 五台, he said to the people round him, "I have seen monks die sitting and lying, but have any died standing?" "Yes, some," they replied. "How about upside down?" "Never seen such a thing!" Teng died standing on his head. His clothes also rose up close to his body. It was decided to carry him to the burning-ground, but he still stood there without moving. People from far and near gazed with astonishment at the scene. His younger sister, a nun, happened

1. 道樹錄 二三. 2. died 788 A. D. 3. 1089-1163.

to be there, and grumbled at him, saying, "When you were alive you took no notice of laws and customs, and even now you're dead you are making a nuisance of yourself!" She then prodded her brother with her finger and he fell down with a bang. Then they went off to the crematorium.¹ To these we may add Rui Loan Zenji, 瑞鹿安, who entered his own coffin and died later, 入棺長往, and Wan Nienyi Zenji, 萬年一, who got in the coffin before he was dead and pulled down the lid.

All this shows the Chinese understanding of the fact that death is *the* great subject for laughter at it is for tears. Yesterday, a young woman spoke to me about her mother who has not long to live. She loves her dearly, has not married because of her, and said, half-jokingly, half-seriously, "Mother has such a poor sense of direction I'm afraid she will never reach Heaven. I think I ought to die at the same time and be put in a double coffin together with her."

Wit is always laconic, and the best examples of all are perhaps those of Yün Men (Unmon), famous for his one-syllable answers:

僧問雲門。殺父母向佛。
前懺悔。殺佛殺祖向甚麼。
處懺悔。門言露。

A monk said to Yün Men: "If a man kills his father or mother he may repent before the Buddha, but if he kills a Buddha or a patriarch, to whom can he repent?" Yün Men said, "Clear!"

Perhaps the monk was thinking of the words of Confucius:

不然。獲罪於天。無所禱也。

He that offends against Heaven has none to pray to.

In Christian terms it is the problem of Cowper and all supersensitive people, "What shall I do if I have committed the unforgivable

1. No. 3444 in 禪門公案大成.

sin?" Or in the more common form, "How shall I undo the unundoable evil that I have done to others?" At first sight the reply of Unmon only makes the matter more confused. "Clear!" What is it that is clear? First, it is clear that we have here an insoluble problem brought forward by a monk who can never solve it because he is going round in a circle and asking what he shall do when he comes to the end of it. Second, everything is clear; it is clear that nothing is clear. Third, if I am clear, the universe is clear. If I have no object, no ambition, no choosing, everything is good. What is the humour in all this? Unmon's answer, "All clear!" is a burst of cosmic laughter which sweeps away all object and subject, all killing and repentance, all good deeds and Heavenly rewards.

We come last of all to the two great text-books of Zen,¹ the *Hekiganroku*, (the *Piyenlu*) 1125 A.D., and the *Mumonkan* (*Wumenkuan*) shortly after 1228 A.D. The *Hekiganroku* with its hundred Cases, is a sort of specialist's book for Zen adepts, totally incomprehensible to the uninitiated. It is not devoid of humour, but the amount of intellect in it makes it like the *Art of Fugue*. The *Mumonkan* is more like the *Forty Eight Preludes and Fugues*, and actually consists of forty eight Cases. These cases exemplify all the different kinds of humour, and in *Haiiku*,² nine varieties of humour are illustrated from the *Mumonkan* and the *Hekiganroku*: the laughter of disillusionment, studied idiocy, spontaneous idiocy, hyperbole, dilemma, scatological humour, dry humour, breaking with convention, pathos. To these we may add from the *Mumonkan*, the humour of pure contradiction, No. 4; of circularity, No. 9; of impossibility, Nos. 10, 46; of pure nonsense, No. 14; of Lear's nonsense, Nos. 16 and 48; the laughter of omnipotence, No. 22; of inconsequence, No. 24; of speechlessness, No. 32; extremes meeting, No. 48; a sort of practical joke,

1. A short description of these will be found in Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, Second Series, pp. 217-229.

2. Vol I, pp. 219, 223.

No. 40; mutual contempt, No. 31. The last case, No. 48, consists of two parts, the first being an example of the opposite of "sudden glory"; the second is the "wild and whirling words" of transcendentalism:

乾隆和尚因僧問十方薄
伽梵一路涅槃何處
路頭在甚麼處峰拈起
拄杖劃一劃日在者裡
後僧議益雲門門拈起
扇子云扇踰跳上三十三
天築著帝釈鼻孔東海
鯉魚打一棒兩似盆傾。

The Zen Master Kan Fêng¹ was asked by a monk: "Buddha fills all the ten quarters of the world; one path leads to Nirvana (enlightenment); would you kindly tell me where this path is?" Kan Fêng took up his stick and drew a line with it, and said, "Here it is!"

Afterwards the monk brought up the matter with Yün Men (Unmon), who raised his fan and said, "This fan flies up to the thirty-third Heaven and hits the nose of the King there. Then the Carp of the Eastern Ocean tips over the rain-cloud with its tail, and it rains in torrents."

Kan Fêng goes to one extreme, Yün Men to the other, but both are true and both are humorous. The portals of Heaven are the garden gate. This pen I hold will cause a revolution. My love for my dog moves the sun and the other stars. God sneezes, and the universe is blown away. Compare this with the dilemma in *Alice in Wonderland* when we get the debate concerning the head of the Cheshire Cat. The executioner's argument is:

You couldn't cut off a head unless there was a body to cut it off from.

The King's argument was:

1. Disciple of Tung-shan, 洞山良价, 807-869.

Anything that had a head could be beheaded.

The Queen represents Mumon himself, or rather, the Universe, when she says:

If something wasn't done about it in less than no time, she'd have everybody executed.

Human beings are at every moment and in every place in this or some similar dilemma. The question is how always to act (and act we must) to please ourselves and others and God completely and perfectly.

CHAPTER IX

Short Stories

(to the *Ch'ing Period*)

At their best, humorous stories, while portraying the foolishness or wickedness of others, reveal to us our own, but, at the same time, show that there is something human, something divine in this very folly and viciousness of ours. Many Chinese stories have of course their European counterparts, but their particular and special flavour is a certain earthiness and unsentimentality. They are like nature itself, not so much cruel as not kind. They lack the poetry and tenderness of mind which the Japanese have infused into their own tales or into their retelling of these Chinese stories, but in compensation we have no feeling of being deceived by moral principles or artistic effects.

The following stories are arranged chronologically, beginning with *Hsiaolin*, 笑林, "Forest of Laughter," collected by Han Tanch'un, 邯鄲淳, also known as Tzushu, 子淑, a poet and official of the country of Wei in the 3rd century B.C.

A Man and his Pole

There was once a man in the kingdom of Lu who tried to enter a castle gate holding a long bamboo pole. First he held it upright, but it caught at the top and bottom, and he couldn't get in. Then he held it sideways, but couldn't pass through with it. While he was cudgelling his brains about it, a passer-by said, "I'm not exactly a genius, but if I were you I'd cut it into two in the middle. Then you could get in the gate."¹

1. See also other versions, page 120.



PLATE IV

KSUDAPANTHAKA

This is one of the Sixteen Arhats by Ch'anyueh (Zengetsu), 禪月, 832-912, the brilliant Chinese poet-monk Kuanhsin (Kankyu), 貫休. The pictures, of the Tang Period style, were found at Nara, and are kept in the Imperial Court. An arhat is a Hinayana saint. Ksudapanthaka, which means "little path," was one of twin brothers born on the road, the other, the elder, being Suddhpanthaka, "purity path." Ksudapanthaka, unlike his brother, was exceedingly stupid (see page 549) but became a disciple of Buddha and then an arhat. Zengetsu seems to have been the first to paint such human saints, but in the Sung Period pictures of Taoist and Buddhist individuals gradually increased. The Zen of the picture is seen in the fusion of fantasy, realism, and humaneness; in other words, hope, faith, and charity. The arhat has a fan stuck in his girdle; the expression of his face is benign, but not that of a brilliant thinker. Zen and poetry and humour are always somehow opposed to the handsome, the beautiful, the clever.

The humour of these portrait-fantasies was immediately acknowledged by monks, poets, and artists alike. Chinese critics, however, thought of them as realistic rather than as caricatures. In any case, the sweetness of countenance of this particular arhat would be impossible to the ordinary Buddhist statue or picture.

This is Hobbes' laughter of superiority, but already more mental than physical.

The Leaf of Invisibility

A poor man of Ch'u read in a book called *Huainantzu* that the praying-mantis, when it catches a cicada, hides itself behind a leaf, that it holds up. He went to a tree and lo and behold, there was a mantis holding up a leaf, about to catch a cicada. He tried to take the leaf from it, but it slipped from his hand and fell to the ground below the tree. Unfortunately he couldn't distinguish it from the other leaves which had already fallen on the ground, so he gathered together a bag-full of the leaves and took them home. Picking them up one by one he said to his wife, "Can you see me?" to which she kept on saying, "Of course I can see you!" but he persisted so long, so many days, she was wearied to death, and at last said, "I can't see you." The man was overjoyed, and taking that leaf went out into the town, and right in front of everybody stole something from a shop, but a policeman arrested him at the very moment. When examined, he explained everything, and the judge, laughing heartily, pronounced him innocent, and set him free.

All crime is of this "innocent" character.

A Divorce

T'aochiu of Pingyuan went as a bride to the house of Motai. The bride had beauty, and womanly tact, and the two were on good terms. But when the first son was born and they went back to the wife's native village, the mother, Mrs. Ting, who was already rather old, came and greeted them, and when they got back home the bridegroom told the bride he would divorce her. On being asked the reason for this sudden change, he said, "I saw your mother yesterday; she's already decrepit and ill-favoured. When you get old you'll look the same. That's the reason, and no other."

This is the reason for not marrying, but it is also the reason for not being born at all, and it is precisely this grim truth that makes us rejoice.

Eating Bamboo

A man of Han went on a journey to Wu, and someone there gave him some bamboo sprouts. "What might this be?" "It is bamboo," was the answer. When he got back home he took the *tse* (made of thin strips of bamboo and used in preparing food) and boiled and boiled it, but it wouldn't get soft, and he said to his wife, "That chap in Wu, he was just talking any old nonsense, and making a fool of me!"

All fools think all are fools but themselves. All wise men think all are wise but themselves. (This second sentence seems to reduce the number of wise men to zero.)

Seasoning

A certain man was making some soup and tasting it with a ladle. The taste wasn't quite right, so he put some salt in the soup and tasted what remained in the ladle. "Still it's not salt enough!" he wondered, and put more salt in, but however much he tasted the soup in the ladle he found it no saltier, and put a whole pound of salt in with no apparent effect whatever.

It is a simple and pleasing story, but there is, perhaps, something deeply symbolic in it.

Biting one's own Nose

Two men quarrelled, and one said the other had bitten him on the nose. When they went before the magistrate the other man said the first had bitten his own nose. The magistrate said, "How could he have done that? The nose in a high place and the mouth in a lower one!" "May it please your

worship, but he stood on a table to do it.”¹

This kind of boldness in lying is equal, morally, to the greatest modesty in telling the truth.

Condolences

Some country fellows had to go and offer their condolences at a funeral, but did not know the proper deportment and etiquette, but one of them said he did, and told them just to do everything he did, omitting nothing. When they got to the place where the funeral was being held, the leader prostrated himself, and all the rest followed suit, one after another. The leader kicked back at the second, saying “Big fool!” and they all did and said the same thing. The one right at the back, having no one else to kick, kicked the Chief Mourner and said to him, “Big fool!”²

This is an indirect and unconscious but valid criticism of funerals and indeed all ceremonies, which are the most nonsensical things in this world of nonsense.

A Grassy Stomach

A certain man practised vegetarianism all his life, but one day ate mutton. That night the Belly God appeared to him in a dream and said, “The sheep have trampled all over the vegetable field.”

How lucky I am! I can read this and enjoy it and still be a vegetarian.

A Looking-Glass

A certain woman was not rich enough to have had or seen a mirror. One day her husband bought one and brought it back with him. Picking it up and looking in it she was thunderstruck,

1. See also the story on page 115. 2. See the Korean version, page 189.

and cried to her mother, "My husband has brought another woman home." The mother peeped in the mirror and said, "Besides that, he's brought her mother too!"

A looking-glass, even a sheet of water reflecting the hills and "that uncertain heaven," remains a mysterious and wonderful thing.

Yenshihchi'ahsun, 顏氏家訓, "Instructive Tales for the Family of Yen", was written by Yen Yuan'ui, 顏元推, an official of the Southern Court of the Liang Dynasty, then of the later Sai and Chou of the Northern Court, afterwards appointed teacher of the Prince of Sui. He is said to have written the present book at this time for the sake of his descendants. The stories are on a variety of subjects.

A Mean Man

A man of Namyang was good at money-making, and stingy withal. At the Winter Solstice his son-in-law came to pay his respects, so he gave him a small bottle of wine, and five or six slices of venison. The son in law was angry at this skimpy meal and swallowed it down at a gulp. The father-in-law, surprised, gave him another small bottle, but grumbled at his daughter, saying, "Your husband is a great drinker, that's why you never get rich!"

The *Ch'iyenlu*, 啓顏錄, "The Book of Smiles", is said to be by Hou Pai, 侯白, a man of wide learning and nimble wit; he was appointed by the Emperor Wen, of Sui, to compile a history of China, for which he was paid highly, but died soon after. As there are stories of the T'ang Dynasty in the *Ch'iyenlu*, it is clear that these parts cannot be by him. It is also said to belong to the Sung Dynasty. In any case the *Ch'iyenlu* no longer exists, only about seventy stories from it remaining extant.

Who is the Fool?

Yen Ying of the country of Ch'i, a man of small stature,

took a message to the Emperor of Ch'u, and at that time the Emperor asked him, "Have they no fine big men in Ch'i?" Yen Ying answered, "As for the country of Ch'i, they send foolish messengers to foolish Princes." "Am I a fool then?" "I am a fool, so I have come to your Majesty."

The merit of this is the indirection, and the inclusion of the speaker of himself in the universe of fools.

High-class Stones

At the time of Emperor Hsiao Wen of the Later Wei Dynasty, a certain costly medicine called "Stone-Medicine," became popular among the aristocracy and higher officials. When drunk, a high fever ensued, which was called "stone-outbreak". Even some ordinary people began to speak of "drinking stone and fever breaking out," and they were disliked by many as pretending to be high-class. A certain man lay down at the entrance of the market and began writhing and crying out, "The heat! the heat!" and a crowd gathered round him. His friend asked what was wrong with him, and he answered, "I have the 'stone-outbreak.'" His friend said, "When did you drink the stone so as to have this stone-outbreak now?" "Yesterday I bought some rice at the market, and it had a lot of stones in it, so after I ate it the fever developed."

There are fashions in illnesses and medicines as in everything else, in humour as well, but these very fashions are themselves the subject of humour; therein lies the superiority of humour over all other things.

Eloquence

The court of Chen once sent an envoy to the State of Sui, and this court, to find out how much learning and wisdom the envoy had, ordered Hou Pai to disguise himself in old clothes, and pretend to be a poor man in attendance on him. The

envoy, taken in by his appearance, thought little of him, and talked to Hou Pai while reclining and farting at his ease. Hou Pai, though disgusted by this behaviour, had to put up with it. The envoy, still lying there, asked carelessly, "Are horses in your country cheap or dear?" Hou Pai immediately replied, "There are several kinds of horses, and the price varies. A fine, well-trained horse that is smart and fleet of foot costs more than thirty *kuan*. If its action is pretty good, and it can be used as a riding horse, it will bring more than twenty *kuan*. If however the horse is untrained but stout of body and can be used as a pack-horse, it costs four or five *kuan*. But, a horse of decrepit tail and cracked hooves, useful for nothing, which can only lie down and fart, costs nothing at all." The envoy was astonished, and asking his name, heard he was Hou Pai, and, most embarrassed, apologised.

The point of this story is the quickness of wit which enables a man to use any subject as parabolic material of anything.

Forgetting

Liu Chen of the Sui Dynasty, Governor of Loyang was famous for his absent-mindedness. A man once committed a crime which required the punishment of the bastinado. Liu Chen, angry at the misdeeds of the prisoner, prepared the rod, and told him to strip himself. The criminal did so, but just when the punishment was about to be put into effect, Liuchen was called away to see a visitor, with whom he talked for some time. It was a cold day, and the prisoner crept to a sunny place near the house, crouching there with his coat over him. A little later Liu Chen saw the visitor off, and on his way back noticed the criminal. "Who are you!" he said, "How dare you hunt for lice just outside my room!" The criminal ran away, but still Liu Chen was unaware of his mistake.

The Chinese, and the Japanese also, not only enjoy such stories of

forgetfulness, but actually admire such people.

The *Cha'oyehchuntsai*, 朝野僉載, was written by Changtsu, 張族, at the beginning of the T'ang Dynasty. He was the author of the famous novel, *Yuh sienchu*, 遊仙窟. The book contains stories which belong after his time, and must be by a later author.

Dreams

Chang Liche of T'ang was a very erratic man. Once he suddenly woke up, got on his horse, and rode into the castle, where he met his superior, Tengyun. He bowed to him and said, "I hear you are going to condemn me to death." Tengyun replied, "Don't talk nonsense!" "But such and such an official said so." Yun became very angry, and had the official arrested and was going to have him thrashed with the cat-of-nine-tails for the crime of setting officials at variance. But the official vehemently protested his innocence, whereupon Chang came and said, "Please let him go; it seems to have been something in my dream."

The *T'angkuosupu*, 唐國史補, "Stories of the T'ang Kingdom", was written by Lichao, 李肇, a man of the middle T'ang (9th century). The book records various events between 715 and 826 A.D.

To Tell the Truth

Hsi Ang was very intimate with Weichih. One day they were talking about the rulers of T'ang, and Chih said, "Who was the most incompetent of them?" Hsi Ang said, without thinking, "It was Wei Anshih (the father of Chih)." Then, noticing what he had said he rushed off. On the way, he met Chi Wen who asked him why he was in such a hurry. "I was just talking about the most incompetent of the rulers of T'ang, and absent-mindedly said Weian Shih when I really meant Chi So (the uncle of Wen)." Realising he had made another slip of

the tongue he again rushed away, whipping his horse until he reached the residence of Fang Kuan, who kindly asked him what had happened, and he told him, concluding, "I really meant to say Fang Kuan."

This story is quite Freudian, and a good example of the fact that nothing is accidental in this world; that nothing is more significant than so-called "accidents"; and that all which happens is the result of our (unconscious) will.

The author of *Yusutaichi*, 御史台記, "Stories of Officials" is unknown. The book consists of anecdotes of officials of the T'ang Dynasty.

Gamophobia

Kuei was very much afraid of his wife and even when the Emperor gave him two ladies-in-waiting as a reward for his services, he would not accept them. Tu Chenglun made fun of him on this account, but Kuei said, "I have three good reasons for being so afraid of my wife. First, when we married, she was as noble as a bodhisattva, and, as you know, we are all afraid of bodhisattvas. Then, when she gave birth to a child, she was like a tiger with its cub. Who is not afraid of a tiger? And now, when she is old, her face is all wrinkles and she looks like a demon, and all men fear demons. So is it not natural that I should be afraid of my wife?"

This is both witty and profound, and is the reason why men are afraid of women (and not vice versa).

Tears for the Unborn

Lu Wenli of the T'ang Dynasty was fond of study, and was good at writing, and was promoted to the position of an official of the Yangchou district. But he was born a little "off" in some ways. For example, a certain lower official brought a letter from another official, Chang Shih, in which it said, "This is to

send a notice concerning choosing the day, sister having died." When he read, "sister having died," Wenli began to sob. The lower official waited until his weeping had subsided a little and then said, "This is about Chang Shih's sister!" After a while Wenli said, "I see: it was about Chang Shih's sister." "Yes, sir, that's right." "You know, I have no sister, so it seemed somehow odd."

A great deal, perhaps the larger part, of all weeping has this purely imitative, conventional, and mechanical character.

The *Tiehweishantsung'an*, 鐵圍山叢談, was written by Ts'ait'iao, 蔡條, towards the end of the Northern Sung Dynasty. He was the son of a bad Ts'ai Ching, and governed after his father. He also was said to be no good, and was exiled. The book was written after his banishment, and tells anecdotes of people of his own times. Evidently a bad man may have a good sense of humour.

An Unbearable Beard

Tsai Chunmo had a remarkable beard. One day, at an Imperial Party the Emperor said to him, "Your beard is truly wonderful; when you sleep do you put it under the coverlet, or outside?" He answered, "I'm sorry, I don't remember." When he got home and went to bed he thought of what the Emperor had asked, and tried both ways, inside and outside, but both seemed uncomfortable, and he could not sleep all night long.

As with many Chinese stories we feel that there was some innate understanding of Zen in the ordinary Chinese mind, that what is done unselfconsciously is done easily, is done well.

The *Lêngtsaiyehhua*, 冷齋夜話, was written by a monk, Hui Hung, 惠洪, in the 12th century. He was a friend of the Prime Minister Chang Shangying, and was exiled together with him. The book tells of the various things he saw and heard, and also gives his opinions on the subject of poetry.

Illegibility

Chang Ch'enghsiang admired the calligraphy of Wang Shih-chi, but his own was exceedingly poor. His friends all laughed at it, but he believed he had mastered Wang Shih-chi. One day he was inspired to write a new poem, and dashed it off. It looked as if dragons and mosquitoes were flying all over the paper. He got his nephew to make a fair copy of it, but one part was quite undecipherable and he was forced to stop. He took it his uncle and asked him, "What is this character?" Ch'enghsiang looked at it for a long time, but he himself couldn't make it out, so he grumbled at his nephew, saying, "Why didn't you come sooner? You are so slow I have forgotten what it was!"

Scolding others for our own faults is the commonest thing in the world. What would we do if we had no children?

Shannuehchi, 善謔集, was written by T'ien Hotsu, 天和子, a man of the Sung Dynasty, but nothing is known about him. The book as a whole is not extant, but it seems to have been a collection of ancient comical stories.

O My Eyes! My Ears!

Wei Ming of the Southern T'ang was fond of versifying, often writing poems of several hundred characters, but none of them were much good. One day he visited Han Hsitsai, who told him to leave it on his desk, with the excuse that he was suffering from some eye disease. Ming said, "Then I will read it to you." "No, no!" said Han Hsitsai, "I have something wrong with my ears as well."

Unwelcome visitors, incompetent workmen, ambitious nincompoops are among the minor trials of life, but perhaps they are useful in taking our minds off the major ones.

The *Tsuwêngt'anlu*, 醉翁談錄, was written by Lohua, 羅燁, of the Sung Dynasty.

A Drunkard

The wife of Liu Ling was often annoyed by her husband's excessive drinking, and plotted with his concubine to kill him. She brewed a large cask of wine. Liu Ling asked for some of the wine every day, but she kept answering, "Wait till it's properly ripened, then you shall drink as much as you like!" When the wine was quite ripe she invited Liu Ling to drink, and together with his concubine pushed down into the cask. They put the lid on, got something heavy onto it, and waited for him to be drowned in the wine. After three days there was still no sound in the cask, so they thought he must be dead. The wife took off the lid and looked in the cask,—and there was no wine in it. There he sat, quite drunk, among the lees. After some time, Liu Ling managed to lift his head, and said to his wife, "Only a little while ago you said you would let me drink as much as I liked, but you just seem to want me to sit here doing nothing."

It is somewhat difficult to make out why drunkenness should be so funny; there must be some deep philosophical explanation, but to make it would itself be funny and require an explanation, and would thus land us in a *moto perpetuo* of explanation, which is actually the position of our present scientific and unhumorous civilization. To give a more poetic and dramatic explanation, no doubt God was drunk when he made the universe, and when we perceive, and share in this divine inebriety we too sing for joy as did the morning stars when they saw Act I, Scene I of the Divine Comedy.

The *Fuchanglu*, 拊掌錄, was written by Chan Jantzu, 輟然子, of the Sung Dynasty.

Be Thou as Chaste as Ice . . .

The wife of Hsu Ifang was proud of her fidelity. Her

husband once went on a journey, and came back after a year's absence. "Well, you must have been pretty bored being alone all the time; didn't you go to the neighbour's or to your relations to enjoy yourself?" "No, oh no! Since you left here I kept the gate always shut and never left the place once." Hsu Ifang was struck with admiration. "Really! Then how did you kill the time?" "I sometimes made poems, to relieve my heart." Hsu Ifang was delighted and asked her to show him some. The title of the first was, "Inviting the monk next door on a moonlight night, and talking to him."

Chastity and purity of mind are this at their best; at their worst they are unprintable.

The *Shihlinkuangchi*, 事林廣記, was written by an anonymous author of the Sung Dynasty about 1340. The following is another example of the Chinese delight in indirection, and teaching by metaphor and simile.

Outstaying his Welcome

A visitor to a certain house stayed for a long time and wouldn't leave, so one day the host took him to a tree near the house on which a large bird was perching. "Wait here," he said to the visitor, "I'll go and get my axe and cut down the tree, and then we'll catch the bird and cook it for supper!" "But won't the bird have flown away by the time the tree is cut down?" said the visitor. "Don't you know," said the host, "that some birds are so foolish that they don't fly away even when the tree is cut down?"

The following is on the same subject, but more from the point of view of the unwanted guest.

The Guest's Answer

A certain son-in-law stayed a long time at his father-in-law's house. The father-in-law wanted him to leave, but he wouldn't.

At last the father-in-law said to him, "It is very kind of you to come all the way to see us, but we have nothing left to entertain you with now, so I hope you will understand the circumstances." But the son-in-law replied, "Don't worry. On my way here I saw a herd of fat deer on the mountain. If we catch them, we shall not want for food for many days." The father-in-law said, "It's already a month since you came. The deer must have gone away by now." "No," said the son-in-law, "it's such a good place to feed, they won't have gone."

The following is a story that we may call particularly Chinese, that is to say, most English people would not find it funny, the cruelty or callousness seeming excessive. It must be remembered, however, that it was this tough spirit which produced the Chinese race, which made Zen possible; it is the courage without which humour is a poor weak thing indeed.

A Chip of the Young Block

One day, his father was sick, so the dutiful son cut off some flesh from his own thigh, to feed him with it and cure his illness. The father found it very delicious, and, not knowing it was his son's flesh, asked for more. The son, a knife in his hand, told his father that the meat he gave him the other day was the flesh of his thigh, and that he would cut off another slice. However, when he took a cut at it, he cried out, "Ouch! how painful!" His father frowned, and said, "If I had known how painful it is for you to cut off your flesh, I wouldn't have eaten it."

It should be noted that in China the flesh of a son or daughter has always been thought the remedy for certain incurable diseases, and until recent times it was not uncommon for a son to show with pride the scar on his leg where he had provided a meal for one of his parents.

The *Chuchishih*, 楮記室, "A Writing Room", was published in

1560 by Pan Yuan, 潘願. It shows the love of hyperbole which is severely repressed in other spheres of Chinese life.

Self-Indulgence

There was once a very selfish man who would say, "Let me use your quilt, and you use my blanket (he had none); if you have some money, we can use it together, and when I have no money, I'll use yours. If we climb up a mountain, you hold my legs, and when we come down I'll lean on your shoulder. When you get married, I'll sleep with your wife, and when I get married, I'll sleep with mine. If you keep to this arrangement I will die after you, and if I break it may you die before me!"

We seem to have met such people as this, and, to copy his way of speaking, when others met us they meet such a person.

The following two stories come from *Aitsubouyu*, 艾子后語, "Anecdotes of Aitsu," by Lu Shao, 陸杓.

An Aged Wife

Yujen was a friend of Aitsu and had a two-year-old daughter whom Aitsu asked for in marriage to his son. Yujen asked Aitsu how old his son was, and Aitsu said he was four. At this Yujen, looking very displeased, said, "Do you mean to say you want my daughter to marry an old man?" Aitsu couldn't understand what he was talking about. Yujen went on, "Your son is four, and my daughter is two, so your son is twice as old as she. So if my daughter marries your son, when she's twenty he'll be forty, and when she's twenty five she'll be married to a man of fifty. As I said, do you want my daughter to marry an old man?" Aitsu realised that Yujen was a fool, and gave up the idea of asking for his daughter.

Forgetting

There was once a very forgetful man in Chi. When he

started walking he forgot to stop, and when asleep he forgot to wake up. His wife was worried about it, and said to him, "Aitsu is a very wise man and cures all kinds difficult diseases; you'd better go and consult him." He agreed and set out on horseback with his bow and arrows. Before he had gone far he began to feel the calls of nature, so he dismounted, thrust the arrows in the ground and tethered his horse to a tree. Having finished his business, he turned back and noticed the arrows. "Good gracious! How dangerous! I wonder where these arrows came from! They must have nearly struck me!" He then turned to the right and found a horse, and was very pleased, and said, "I was upset about the arrows, but I got a horse instead." Taking the horse by the bridle, he was going to lead it off when he trod on something. "Now I have dirtied my shoes with some dog's dung. How vexatious!" Off he rode and soon got back home, but he walked to and fro in front of the gate, saying to himself, "I wonder who lives here? Perhaps it is Aitsu." His wife came out, and seeing he had forgotten everything began to rail at him. He looked at her reproachfully, and said, "Madam, I have never had anything to do with you; why must you speak so ill of me?"

As said before, for oriental people forgetfulness, like madness, had something divine in it, self-forgetfulness indeed being the highest possible condition of man, Nirvana itself.

The *Loshu*, 露書, "The Book of Dew," was written by Yao Lyu, 姚旅, of the Ming Dynasty.

No Smaller, Please!

Hsing Chinshi was a very small man. One day in Poyang he encountered a robber who took all his money and then intended to kill him to avoid being identified. As he flourished the sword over his head, Hsing Chinshi, speaking in a didactic tone of voice, said to the robber, "I'm already nick-named 'pigmy Hsing'. If you cut my head off I'll be even smaller

still!" The robber laughed, and sheathed his sword.

The *Ouhsiehlu*, 應諧錄, was written by Liu Yuanching, 劉元卿, of the Ming Dynasty, from which we take the following.

Stammering Girls

In the country of Yen there lived a man who had two daughters who both stuttered. One day a middleman was to come to arrange their marriage, so the father instructed the girls, "Keep your mouths shut and don't speak. If you say something you'll never get married." The middleman came, and while they were all in the room together, the younger sister said that the elder sister's dress was on fire. "Your d-d-d-dress is b-b-b-burning," she said. The elder sister looked meaningfully at her and said, "P-p-papa t-t-told you not t-t-to speak; why d-d-d-do you d-d-d-do so?" The middleman left in disgust.

The *Yanüeh*, 雅譚, "Elegant Humour", was written or collected by Lord Hupaichai, 浮白齋, of the Ming Dynasty.

The Visit of a Thief

One night a thief had broken into the house of Yukuon and just then Yukuon himself came back and caught him in the act. Astonished, the thief fled, leaving behind a sheepskin purse he had already stolen. Having got the purse, Yukuon was overjoyed, and every night, when he came back home and found it all quiet, would frown and say, "No thief again?"

Another story from the same collection concerns that absent-mindedness so much admired in the Orient, and not altogether despised in the West.

Absent-mindedness

Chen Shichao, a man of Puhien, was very learned but absent-minded. One day on his way home he intended to call

on one of his friends and told his driver to do so, but the driver didn't catch what he said and drove straight home. Thinking he had reached his friend's house, Shichao entered, and exclaimed in surprise, "How like my house this is!" When he looked at a picture hanging on the wall, he asked, "What is my picture doing here?" The servant entered the room, and Shichao scolded him. "What have you come here for?"

From *Hsiaolin*, 笑林, "Forest of Laughter", by the Lord of Hupai, 浮白, of the Ming Dynasty, come the next three stories. This *Hsiaolin* is not the first *Hsiaolin*, of a thousand years before.

A Fine Study

Chuyin was the man who was so poor he studied at night by the light of fireflies, and Sunkan the one who read his books by the light of snow. One day Sunkan visited Chuyin, but he was out. When he asked where he was, the servant replied, "He has gone out to catch fireflies." Later Chuyin returned Sunkan's visit, and saw Sunkan standing vacantly in the court-yard. He asked Sunkan why he was not studying. Sunkan replied, "It seems as if it's not going to snow, today."

This is a debunking not very common in Chinese stories, that is to say, making fun of scholars, but very frequently found in senryu.

Holding his Ear

One man sued another for biting his ear. The defendant said that he was innocent, and that the plaintiff had bitten his own ear. An official standing behind the judge caught hold of his own ear and began to turn round and round. The judge looked back and scolded him. "What are you doing, making such grimaces?" "I am only trying to get the thing clear."

The following is not particularly funny, but is another example of the love of hyperbole mentioned before; it reminds us a little of the

stories of Baron von Münchhausen.

A Fleet Steed

Lord Kuan's horse, Red Hare, could go a thousand miles in a day. Chouchan, Kuan's follower, with a halberd in his hand, could go a thousand miles in a day too. Kuan felt sorry for him and wanted to buy a fine horse for him. He went about looking for a good horse, and though he couldn't find a horse which could go a thousand miles he found one which could go nine hundred miles a day. He paid a high price for the horse and presented it to Chouchan. Chouchan followed Kuan on horse-back, but in one day he was left a hundred miles behind, and in two days two hundred miles behind. Chouchan, afraid that he might lose sight of his master, decided to dismount and go on foot. But unwilling to desert the horse, he bound the legs of the horse to the end of his halberd with a rope, and ran along with it over his shoulder.

The *Hsücht'uohsiehshih*, 雪濤諧史, "The Humorous History of Snow-Wave," by Kiang Yingko, 江盈科, of the Ming Dynasty has many witty and whimsical stories in it about odd or foolish people.

I am the King of Siam I am!

An obstinate man who was very fond of drinking was invited out to a party. He sat at the table with the other guests, and when the banquet was at its height he looked round, and said, "Those who come from a distance may go home if they like." The other guests all left, and there remained only the host drinking with him. Then the man said again, "Those who come from a distance may go home if they like." The host retorted, "There's nobody here but me." The man said, "You have to go to your bed-room, and I may doze off here."

Complicated Tears

A woman in a blue blouse and red skirt was weeping and cry-

ing, "Oh dear! Oh dear!" Some one asked her for whom she was mourning and she answered, "For him whose father is my father's son-in-law and my father is his father's son-in-law." She was grieving over the death of her son,—but what a talented woman!

Lord, what Fools!

In Wu Liang there lived a boy who was very skilful at deceiving people. One day he met an old man in the street who said to him, "I hear you are good at making fools of people; just try it on me." The boy answered, "I would, but I have no time for idle talk. A moment ago I heard that the water of the East Lake has been drawn off and people are catching terrapins there, and I am going there too." The old man hurried off to the lake, but when he found the lake full of water he realised that the boy had done what he had asked. Another time, the boy was downstairs and a nobleman said to him from upstairs, "You are said to be a smart boy, can you make me come down?" "No, my lord, I can't, but I can make you go upstairs if you come down." The nobleman came down and told him, "Now try to get me upstairs." The boy answered, "I have already made you come down; why should I take the trouble of making you go up again?"

The following two stories are from the *Hsiaotsan*, 笑贊. "The Explanations of Laughter", by Chao Nanhsing, 趙南星, of the Ming Dynasty.

Even If

A man who was very interested in language heard other people say, "It couldn't be so, even if the sun rose in the west," and liking this expression kept repeating it in order to memorise it, but one day in hurrying across a river quite forgot it. He ordered the boatman to turn back and look for it. The boatman asked him what he had lost, and he said, "A sentence." The

boatman expostulated, "How can a sentence be lost? You couldn't do such a thing even if the sun rose in the west." "Why didn't you tell me sooner that you had found it?" said the man.

The next story also has something subtle in it.

Any Excuse

There was a man who was very fond of wine. One day he kept drinking and drinking, and his servant, in the hope of taking him home, said it was clouding over and looked like rain. His master said, "We can't return if it's going to rain." A little later it did rain. The rain lasted a long time, and when it cleared up the servant told his master the rain had stopped. The master said, "Now what are you worrying about?"

The *Hsiaoshanlu*, 笑禪錄, was published by P'an Yulung, 潘游龍, of the Ming Dynasty, in 1646.

The Stuff that Dreams are Made of

A certain stupid man picked up a roll of white cloth in his dream, and when day broke he rushed to the dyer's without even washing his face, and gasped out, "I have a roll of cloth. Will you dye it for me?" "Certainly, please bring it and show it to me." Then the man noticed he hadn't got it and blurted out, "It must have been in my dream last night!"

Here also there is something attractive in the whole-heartedness of the man's belief in what he had dreamed. And in all things are not the best but shadows?

Can't Cut

A man called a tailor to his house and told him to cut some cloth. But the tailor only stared at it in silence, and did not even try to cut it. The man asked him what was the matter,

and the tailor made answer, "If I make my suit out of this cloth there won't be enough for you, and if I make your's there won't be sufficient left for me, so I don't know what to do."

This blind egoism is so revealing that we are quite stunned by it.

The *Hsiaofu*, 笑府, "The House of Laughter," by Feng Menglung, 馮夢龍, is the most famous of all the Chinese humorous collections, especially in Japan.

Frailty, thy name is Man

One day a group of hen-pecked husbands gathered together to discuss how they could remove the fear they felt of their wives, and regain their husbandly dignity. However, someone, to scare them off, came and told them that their wives had got wind of their discussion and were about to march in on them. The frightened husbands scattered in all directions, but one man still remained there. The messenger, wishing to know who it was that had no fear of his wife, looked at him closely, and found that he had been scared to death.

The next story is a parable of the life of Everyman.

Heads I Win, Tails you Lose

A certain man thought himself good at chess. One day he played three games with his opponent, and lost every game. Being asked by someone how many times he had played, he answered "Three." "And what happened?" "I didn't win the first game, and my opponent didn't lose the second. I wanted to draw the third game, but he didn't agree. That's all."

The next is of a more self-conscious humour.

Burglaric Scorn

A thief broke into the house of a poor man. He groped about in every corner of the house but could find nothing what-

ever to steal. He spat in contempt, and was just going off, when the poor man, still lying in bed, called out, "Please shut the door after you!" The thief said, with a sneer, "Let me assure you there is no need to!"

This story teaches us what moralists forget, that wealth only is the cause of robbery.

One Fool Makes Two

A carpenter made a gate, and by mistake put the bar outside. The owner of the house abused him, "You blind fool, you!" The carpenter retorted, "It's you who are blind!" The owner taken aback, asked how that could be. "If you were not blind, you wouldn't have employed a carpenter like me!"

Has a clever man more right to life than a stupid one?

The Gate

A certain man with a long bamboo pole was trying to enter the gate of a castle-town. He held it broadside and could not make his way in; he held it straight up and couldn't get it in. He was at his wit's end. Another man nearby said to him, "There's a very wise man called Li Sanlao about ten miles away from here. Why don't you go and ask his advice?" Sanlao happened to come riding along and everybody was pleased to see him. However, he was seen to be sitting on the hindquarters of the donkey, and the man asked him why he did not sit in the middle of the donkey's back, as is customary. The wise old chap replied, "The ears which I use as a bridle are too long to sit in the middle."

This version has a pleasantly rustic flavour.

Ice

A foolish son-in-law once visited the native place of his wife,

and his father-in-law treated him to a feast. There were some pieces of ice in one of the dishes, and these tasted so delicious to him he wrapped one up in a piece of paper when nobody was looking and slipped it into his pocket. When he got back home he told his wife that he had brought with him some specially nice thing for her to taste too. When he searched his pocket he found it had disappeared. Surprised, he cried out, "Good heavens, it pissed and ran away!"

It is refreshing to find people who can talk of the natural functions without affectation or coarseness.

Joint Sowing

There were two brothers who used to sow and labour in the same field together. When the rice was ripe, they talked over the question of how to divide the results of their labour. The elder brother suggested, "I'll take the upper part, and you the lower." This seemed unfair to the younger brother, but the elder soothed him, saying, "It's all right; next year you may take the upper, and I will have the lower." The next year the younger brother urged the elder to begin sowing. The elder agreed, and said, "But this year let's sow potato seed."

Almost all our altruism and unselfishness is a variation, a disguise of this kind of thing.

Dumplings

A peddler was walking along the street crying, "Dumplings!" but his voice was so weak a passer-by asked what was the matter with him. He said he was hungry, very hungry. The other asked him why in that case he didn't eat some of his dumplings. "They're old, and sour."

After all, everybody sells only things they don't themselves want.

The Finger that changed Stone to Gold

A poor man met an old friend of his who had attained the supernatural art. After mutual greetings, the friend pointed to a stone lying on the roadside, when it immediately turned into gold. When he presented it to the poor man, however, he said he didn't want it; it was too small. So his friend pointed to a stone lion, and was going to give him that, but still the other did not want to receive it. The magician asked him what on earth he wanted. The other replied, "I want to have your finger."

This greediness of human beings is their divine nature, their wish to be God himself.

Borrowing Tea

A man wanted to treat a visitor to a cup of tea, so he sent someone next door to borrow some. Before he came back the hot water had boiled, so he added some cold water. This happened several times until the huge kettle was full of water. Still the tea had not come. The wife said to the husband, "We know this friend of ours pretty well; how about treating him to a bath?"

This is a serious suggestion, I think. Women are always serious, and must be taken so, in appearance at least.

Saucepan-Selling

Pedlars who sell saucepans always throw them on the ground to show they are not cracked, by the sound. One of them threw the saucepan down, and it broke. He said to the people around, "You see, I would not sell such a saucepan to you!"

The undefeatable spirit is indeed admirable.

Recognising Shoes

A wife had an intrigue with another man. One night the husband came back unexpectedly and the man jumped out of the window. The husband found and brought in the other man's shoes, and berated and abused his wife. He went to sleep with his head on the shoes as a pillow, saying to his wife, "Tomorrow, when day dawns, I shall see whose shoes these are, and shame you before all." When he was sound asleep, his wife changed the shoes for his own. In the morning, the husband got up and began abusing his wife again, but she made him look at the shoes. He found they were his own, and was very upset and apologised to his wife, saying, "I scolded you, but I was wrong. And it must have been I that jumped out of the window."

This kind of story is common all over the world, and shows the what Coleridge calls "the willing suspension of disbelief".

A Long Face

A certain man had the saddle of his horse stolen. He saw someone with a long face, sunken in the middle, and recognising it as his saddle seized it. The man said, "This is my face, don't make a fool of me!" But the other persisted and was taking him to court when a passer-by stopped and asked what was happening. Hearing the reason he looked at the long-faced man carefully, and then said, "I advise you to give him the money. In court, the case will go against you."

This kind of mad, Gothamite world is so intriguing as to be frightening, and frightening because things like this often happen in the real world.

Wine-licking

Some people are stingy. A certain father and son were on a

journey and bought some wine, a penny-worth every day. Afraid it would soon run out, they dipped their chopsticks in it and licked them. But when the son licked his twice continuously his father scolded him, "What a drunkard you are!"

All so-called economy, or even wisdom is no different from this. Exaggeration is always exaggeration of something.

Well-side

A woman went to the court and sued a man. She said, "I went to the well to draw water, and this man came from behind and assaulted me." The judge asked, "Then why didn't you run away?" "I was afraid that if I stood up and went away it wouldn't be finished."

This story also has a deeper moral than most fables and New Testament parables. We wish for pleasure without pain. Immoral stories are more truly moral than moral ones.

Shooting a Tiger

A man was seized and carried off by a tiger. His son ran after it and was going to shoot it when from the mouth of the tiger the father shouted, "Aim at the feet! Don't injure the fur!"

Human beings are unexpectedly, at certain times, transcendental and poetical.

New Silk Clothes

A man went out in new silk clothes, but no one seemed to be looking at him, so he raised his shoulders and swaggered along. After a while, he asked his boy-attendant, "Is anyone looking at me?" "No, sir, there's nobody in sight." He relaxed his shoulders, saying, "Then I'll take a rest."

To be proud of oneself so innocently is to make pride a virtue rather than a sin. Satan never took a rest, nor did Milton, nor do I. That is what is wrong with us.

A Birth-mark on a Certain Place

A physiognomist said, "If a woman has a mole on a certain place, she will give birth to a noble child." Hearing this a man was very glad and said, "If that is so, my sister-in-law will have a fine son." "How do you know your sister-in-law has that mark?" "My father told my wife, and she told me."

This is Shelley's *The Cenci*, and Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, seen with the cosmic comic Eye.

Not Feasting a Visitor

A visitor came from a distant place and stayed at a certain man's house. The yard was full of cocks and hens, but he said he had nothing to feast his guest with. The visitor took his sword and was going to kill his own horse for dinner. The man said, "But how can you go back, without a horse?" The visitor answered, "I was going to borrow one of your cocks and ride back on it."

Why is indirectness so comical, so excellent? It must be because nothing of importance can be expressed. Only by not saying a thing can we really say it.

Straw Mats

A family was so poor they could not afford any bedding but slept in straw matting. To keep this a secret the father told the child always to refer to it as "bedding". One day a visitor came, and the child saw a straw in his father's beard and cried, "Father, take the bedding off your face!"

Children, as Wordsworth and Christ and Mencius said, are transcendental animals.

Obstinacy

A father and son were both stubborn and unbending. One day the father had a visitor and sat drinking with him while his son went to the town to buy some meat. The son had bought the meat and was on his way back when he met a man as he was going out of one of the town gates. They would neither give way to the other and stood there a long time. At last the father came to see what he was happening, and said to the son, "You take the meat back and eat it. I will stand here for you."

This kind of thing has something deeply admirable in it.

Love of Wine

A man who liked drinking dreamed he got some excellent wine. He was heating it when he woke up. He said regretfully, "I should have drunk it cold."

A Freudian explanation would rather spoil this story, for it would only represent a repressed wish to be a teetotaler.

Enquiring about Father

A man was going on a journey to some distant place, so he called his son and said, "If someone comes, and asks about me, say I have gone somewhere on business, and remember to give him a cup of tea." The son was not particularly bright, so the father wrote this down on a piece of paper, and the son put it in his sleeve. After his father left, the son took the paper out several times and read it, but nobody came the first day or the second day or the third day, so he thought the paper was no use and threw it in the fire. On the fourth day, a visitor did come, and asked about his father. The son felt in his sleeve but could

not find the paper, so he blurted out, "'s gone!" The visitor was surprised and said, "When was that?" "Put in the stove last night!"

This story has for us, as it no doubt had and has still more for the Chinese, a release effect on the Oedipus complex.

A Short-sighted Man

There was a banquet in a certain house and two men were sitting there in the principal seat. One had no left eye, the other no right eye. A short-sighted man came into the chamber and looked around at the guests. He whispered to the man next to him, "Who is that broad-faced man in the chief seat?"

I like hyperbole.

Chairs

Chairs in the country are made of the natural crotch of a tree. One was broken, so the master told a servant to go and get one in the wood. The servant went out with his axe, but came back in the evening empty-handed. He told the master, "There were many crotches, but they were all growing upward; not one downward."

This is the country bumpkin type of story, the humour consisting only of the feeling of superiority aroused in the reader.

Inserting the Medicine

A certain woman had something wrong with her internally, and went to the doctor with her husband. Seeing that he was a fool, the doctor said, "I must put the medicine in personally." The husband stood looking down at them for some time, and then said, "If the medicine were not on it, I would be very jealous."

This gross kind of humour is the death of romance and all its half truths. It lacks the commercial value of romance, and is therefore frowned upon as "vulgar", or, to use a word whose definition and explanation I have yet to see, "obscene".

The Winter Hat

A man went out in a winter hat one sultry summer day. He was so hot he stopped under a big tree, took off his hat and fanned himself with it. "It was lucky," he said, "I came out with this hat, otherwise I would have been dead of the heat."

All self-congratulation is of this nature, if we look deeply into it, being but making a virtue of necessity, that necessity often being the result of our own folly.

Rice

A young man of the neighbourhood was visiting a woman in the absence of her husband. There was a knocking at the gate, showing that the husband had come back suddenly. In a flurry the woman decided that her lover should get in a sack and that she should say there was rice in it. He got inside, and she let her husband in, already suspicious of the delay. He saw the bag and asked his wife what was in it, but she was too terrified to answer. He asked again in a louder voice, a sharper tone, and the man inside the bag said in a quaking voice, "Rice!"

This is a well-known story, and admits of a continuation, by making the husband foolish enough to think it natural that the bag of rice should say what was in it, and so on.

Never Inviting Guests

A certain miserly old chap had something that he wanted prayed for, so he called in a mountain priest and asked him to pray to some god. The priest prayed to some very far-off deity.

The man asked why he chose such a distant god. "Those around here know you are stingy, and even if they are invited they won't come."

This kind of thing seems to be a quite possible occurrence, especially in China or ancient Greece, where common sense and practicality were often stronger than the religious sentiment.

A Blind Man

Many people were talking together, a blind man among them, and they all laughed at something. The blind man also laughed. They asked him why he laughed. He said, "What was the difference between my laughing and yours?"

There seems to be something profound and almost super-humorous in this story.

The Fartress

A maid-servant happened to fart in front of her master, and he became angry, and was going to strike her, but, seeing her white hips, his anger suddenly abated, and he took his pleasure with her. The next day, when he was in his study, there was a knock at the door. It was the maidservant. "What is it? What do you want?" "Please sir, I farted again a little while ago."

The point here is the momentary connecting of totally unrelated things, which are nevertheless not so "totally" unrelated as we suppose in our unlaughing hours.

Slow to Anger Others

A certain man was very slow in everything. One winter day he was sitting by the fire with some other people when he noticed that one of the men's skirts were burning. He said to him,

"There is something I want to tell you, but I'm afraid; you get angry so quickly. But if I don't tell you, you will be angry; what shall I do, tell you or not?" The other said, "What on earth are you talking about?" So he answered, "Your clothes are burning." The other patted his clothes hurriedly and exclaimed, with anger, "Why didn't you tell me before?" The man said, "I told you you would be angry, and so you are."

As we grow older we learn one thing, that people learn nothing.

Escorting a Priest

An official was taking to the court a priest who had committed some crime or other. This priest was a very clever man, and on the way he made the official drunk, shaved his head with his sword, bound him with the rope round himself, and ran off. Early the next morning the official woke up and looked for the priest, but he was nowhere to be seen. When he stroked his own head he found it was shaven, and the rope was round his neck. "Here is the priest," he said, "but where am I?"

This kind of humorous story seems common all over the world. Profoundly considered it adumbrates the ego-less-ness of things, their absence of self-nature, particularly in the case of human beings, who have wishful-thought themselves into believing in personal immortality.

The Disciples of Confucius

On hearing "Tsuchang No. 19", people thought that the disciples of Confucius had had an examination. "His bearing is good, so he got a good mark," they said to each other. Then there was "Tsulu No. 13." "Even such a rough awkward fellow as he got a good mark. That must have been on account of his inner character." "Yenyuan No. 12." "He was the most learned of them all. It's a pity he got such a poor mark." "Kungyen Ch'ang No. 5." People were astonished, and said,

"He was usually quite undistinguished; why on earth is his position so good?" Someone said, "That's because he was helped on the side." "Who?" "His wife's father."¹

The joke of all this is that these numbers refer to the chapters of the Confucian *Analects*, which were mistaken for the marks of the disciples after whom the chapters were named. Chinese people were not so iconoclastic, at least of Confucian learning, as were the Japanese of their classical literature and religion.

The Character Chai, 齋

A certain monk said it was 齋, a nun said 齋, and they quarrelled about it. Someone present at their altercation said, "The upper part is the same, but the lower part is a bit different."

"The upper part" means both the upper portion of the character *chai*, and their shaven heads; "the lower part" refers both to the character and their anatomies.

Catching a Tiddler with a Gudgeon

A certain farmer made his own public lavatory so as to get manure for his fields. Seeing a man come along with his skirt picked up ready to make water, the farmer went into the lavatory on the other side of the road to prevent him from going in there. Sure enough the man went into the farmer's lavatory. Unfortunately, while the farmer was squatting there, he let out a fart, and without thinking what he was doing, excreted. Realising his mistake, he said ruefully, "I killed a small insect, and let the big one go!"

Some people may find this more disgusting than funny, but I think otherwise. This is real farmer's humour, Chinese humour,

1. His wife's father was Confucius himself, whose daughter was married to Kuang-
yen Ch'ang.

finding something amusing in the things of everyday, when so often the best-laid plans of mice and men go wrong.

Globe-Fish

A married pair bough a swell-fish when it was the season. Talking it over, as it might be very poisonous, they kept pressing each other to eat it. At length the wife took up her chopsticks and said, with tears in her eyes, "Please look after the two children, and when they are of age, don't neglect to tell them on no account to eat globe fish."

So many people have been killed in one way another, by poison or gunpowder, because it was "a pity to waste it". But to look upon a fish or a bullet as more than human life, is not this the height of poetry and transcendentalism?

The Doctor-Undertaker

A certain doctor had killed somebody's child and promised to take it home in his sleeve and bury it. So, to see that he should carry out his promise, the people of the house had the servant follow him. When he got to the middle of a bridge he took out the dead body of a child from his sleeve and threw it into the river. The servant was infuriated and said "Why did you throw our child into the water?" "No, no!" cried the doctor, lifting up the other sleeve. "The child of your house is here all right."

This is a rather gruesome story, though far less terrible than real life, but it brings out the strong Chinese stomach, which is not deterred by sentiment or romance from laughing at anything and everything.

That'll be All Right Too

A certain man had stomach trouble and went to see a doctor,

who said, "If you drink this medicine, your belly will rumble and you will have a bowel movement." He drank it, and a little while afterwards there was the sound of a fart. The doctor said to the patient, "How do you feel now?" Another person answered, "It was I." The doctor said, "Well, that will do too."

The point of this is the indifference of the doctor to the individual patient. His medicine will kill or cure somebody; it doesn't really matter which or whom.

Please Kick Me!

A wood-cutter, while carrying firewood, knocked against a doctor and begged his pardon. But the doctor was angry and clenched his fist to strike him. The woodcutter fell on his knees, and said, "I implore you to use your foot on me." A passer-by commented, "Yes, indeed, if the doctor used his hands, it would be all over with him."

The hand of the doctor, like the hand of God, was supposed by the Chinese and Japanese to be the instrument of life and death.

The Art of Swimming

A certain doctor had killed so many patients, their relatives rose up in arms and captured him, but he escaped during the night, dived into the river and made his get-away. Reaching home he found his son reading *Mochüeh*, 脈訣, a book of medicine. He said hastily to him, "Don't be in such a hurry to study that book; what you need to do first is to learn to swim."

Nowadays doctors make their escape in automobiles.

Fixing the Date

A certain man, being extremely stingy, had never invited a

visitor to his house. One day a neighbour borrowed his house and held a banquet in it. Another man, seeing all this, said to the stingy chap's servant, "Has your master invited some people?" The servant answered, "My master won't invite anybody until Judgement Day!" The master overheard this and scolded him, saying, "How dare you fix the day!"

The essence of humour lies in *mayoi*, illusion, the false idea of the ego, anthropocentricity, egocentricity. "I am I" is so true, and yet so untrue, so comical.

I won't Come Out

A certain man, beaten by his wife, got under the bed. "Come out of there at once!" screamed his wife. "I am a man too! If I say I won't come out, I simply won't!"

Most courage, almost all virtue, all human beings are like this.

The Wrong Person Died

The mother of the wife of a certain man died, and he asked the master of a temple school to write a funeral address for him. The master looked up some old writings and copied out by mistake that for a wife, and gave it to him. The man thought there was something wrong about it, and when he asked him, the other said, "This writing is printed in a book and there can be no mistake. Perhaps the person who died made a mistake, but that is not my responsibility."

This brings out the great respect the Chinese people have always had for the written word, and the arrogance of the literati.

A Joke

A man was married to a virago, and she died. In front of her coffin was hung a picture of her, which confronting, the



PLATE V

TWO WRESTLERS

This mud-wall picture of wrestlers, in a grave of the Chian district, just over the Korean border, belongs to the Kokuryu Period, 300-500 A.D. They seem to have imitated the wall pictures of the previous Chinese dynasties, that is to say, with the four gods on the four walls, Blue Dragon, White Tiger, Peacock, and Snake-Tortoise, and on the ceiling the sun and moon with three-legged birds, other places being all decorated with arabesques and angels. The coffin walls have a portrait of the deceased, and pictures of hunting, dancing, wrestling and so on. On the posts there are seen flames, monsters, mountains, trees, etc. These pictures resemble those of Tunhuang, and probably influenced them.

The picture of the illustration is elaborately coloured. It seems to show two wrestlers rushing to grapple with each other, with such élan as to have a somewhat comical effect.

widower clenched his fist and shook it at her. A gust of wind at that moment blowing, the picture moved a little, and the man, hurriedly unclenching his fist, quavered, "I was only joking!"

This power of one person over another, like that of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar even after his death, is something that can hardly be explained scientifically.

The Vine-Trellis

One day, an official had his face scratched by his wife, who was a termagant, and when he went to the office the next day his superior asked him what had happened. "I was outside cooling in the evening when the trellis up which the grape vines were growing suddenly fell down and scratched my face." The superior official did not believe him, and said, "I'm pretty sure it is your wife that scratched your face; tell a messenger to go and fetch her." By chance his own wife happened to be eavesdropping on him at the time; she became furious and rushed out. The superior official said hurriedly to him, "Wait a bit! the vine-trellis of my house also is going to fall!"

The humour of this lies in the unexpected symbol of the vine-trellis, and its unexpected universality, the way in which vines and wives always cling and scratch.

A Willow Branch

The teachers of Yoyang used to teach in Suchou prefecture, going there early in spring and returning home late in the year, so they knew little of the scenery of their native place. One spring a teacher, having received a branch of a leafy willow tree from someone, wished to take it back and plant it. The other said, "This is a very common thing, and there must be plenty in your native place." The teacher replied, "In our part of the country, they don't have leaves."

This is a satire on teachers immersed in their books and knowing nothing of the outer world, that is to say, uneducated.

Like Giving Birth

A talented scholar, with his examination just before him, was in a very irritable state of mind from morning to night. His wife said to him, "If writing is so difficult, it must be just like having a baby." "Your giving birth to a child is infinitely less painful!" "How should that be?" "You have something inside your belly which you can bring out; in mine there is nothing."

Lawrence however compares creative writing to the excretory function.

Dreaming of the Duke of Chou¹

A certain teacher of a temple school took a nap, and waking, said, "I saw the Duke of Chou in my dream." The next day his pupil also took a nap in the afternoon. The teacher struck him with his ruler and woke him, crying, "Impudent creature!" but the pupil said, "I also went to see the Duke of Chou." "And what, may I ask, did the Duke of Chou say to you?" "He said he didn't meet you at all yesterday."

This is a very pretty revenge. The relation of master and disciple is always odious.

A Shoemaker

A certain shoemaker used only one piece of leather all his life. Whoever's shoes he mended he always followed them out of the shop, picked it up when it fell off in the street, and then used it again. One day he followed a customer whose shoes he had just mended, but it didn't fall off. "All my capital is gone! I am ruined!" he said weeping, on his way back, but when he

1. The Duke of Chou was the author of the *I Ching*, Diagrams of Mutations, in 1092-1090 B.C.

got home he found the piece of leather on the floor of the shop; it had already fallen off there.

This is excellent hyperbole.

Relations

While an official was hearing a judgement somebody farted. "What's that sound? Arrest it and bring it here!" The lower official said, "Your honour, it's something that can't be arrested." "What do you mean by saying a thing like that? Go and get it!" The lower official put some excretion in a paper and came with it. "The actual criminal got away, but here is his relation."

This is the vulgar, earthy, mediaeval Chinese version of *Alice in Wonderland* and the beheading of the bodiless Cheshire cat.

Helped by the Target

A warrior was almost defeated in the battle, when reinforcements suddenly appeared in the shape of a soldier spirit, and he gained a great victory. Bowing deeply, he asked what the god's name might be. "My name is Target." "When did I earn the favour of the Target god?" "All your life you never once struck me with an arrow, and thus my gratitude is equally boundless."

The First Sound

A certain man let out a fart in front of a visitor to whom he was talking. He felt so ashamed he wanted to camouflage it, so, as if continuing the sound, he rubbed the chair with his finger, but the visitor said, "Somehow or other, the first sound was the most like."

How Wonderful Instinct Is!

Three men were sleeping side by side, and one of them felt

itchy and scratched vigorously the thigh of the next man, but the itching did not stop, and he scratched still more strongly until it bled. The second man, feeling his leg wet, thought the third man had wet the bed and shook him awake. The third man went to the lavatory, but next door was a brewery, and hearing the wine drop out without cessation, he thought it was himself, and stood there until dawn.

Truly, as the Bible says, we have our treasures in leaky vessels.

Drowning

A man had fallen in the water and was drowning. His son called for someone to come and save him, but the father, raising his head from the water cried, "If they will save me for three shillings, all right, but not for more!"

The point of this story lies in the fact that it is Chinese, which makes it more credible. Chinese do not put such an extreme and excessive value on any one individual life as Europeans do.

Rice Bran

A poor man had a meal of bran and then went out for a walk. He met a rich friend on the way who invited him to a river-side tea-house. "This morning I had a good meal of dog-meat, and so I feel quite full, but I don't mind accepting a cup of wine," he said, and they went in. Unfortunately, when he had drunk the wine he vomited and brought up the bran. The other man was surprised. "You say you ate dog meat; how is it that bran came out?" After staring at it for some time, he said, "I ate the dog-meat; but the dog must have eaten the bran."

This is rather a disagreeable story, but it must be admitted as humour in spite of, and partly because of, our squeamishness.

The Contention of the Shoes and Socks

A certain man's shoes and socks were both full of holes. The shoes said it was the fault of the socks, and the socks blamed the shoes. Both appealed to the god, but even the god could not decide the case, so the heel was called. But the heel said, "I was always outside, how can I know anything about it all?"

The more fantastic the animism the more delightful.

Concealing their Deaf and Dumbness

Two men, one deaf the other dumb, hid the fact from each other. The deaf man met the dumb man one day, and asked him to sing. The dumb man knew he was deaf, so he opened and shut his lips and beat time with his hand. The deaf man "listened" intently for some time, and when the other's lips stopped moving said, "I haven't heard you sing for a long time, but your singing has much improved."

The humour of this is really in its parabolic meaning. Ninety percent of concert musicians and audiences are no different from this.

Falling Down

A man happened to fall down on the ground. He got up and again tumbled down. "If I'd known I was going to fall down again I would not have got up!"

This could be applied to the Fall of Man.

Easily Getting Angry

A certain man was very irritable. He once saw a man wearing a winter hat in June. He couldn't bear the out-of-season-ness of it and wanted to strike him. People soothed him down and got him to go home, but he fell ill because of it. By the

end of the year he became better and in the New Year his younger brother took him out to divert his mind. Seeing a man wearing a fur cap, he went up to him and said, "It's the first time my brother has been out since his illness. Would you mind going somewhere else, please?"

This super-sensitiveness to incongruity has something interesting and good in it. Such people are a nuisance, but without them the world would not progress at all.

Its Nature is not to Drink

On the last night of the year a bottle of wine and bowl of bean curd were offered to the stone statue of Buddha at the roadside. After making the offerings and praying before it, the master noticed a dog hanging around near it, and told his boy to bring the offerings back into the house. The child took the wine and put it back in the house, and then came for the bean curd, but the dog had already eaten it. The master scolded the child, "What a fool you are! You should have taken the bean curd in first, dogs don't drink wine!"

The humour of this is in the last line, the extreme obviousness of the truth of the remark, The world is full of people telling us that Tuesday comes after Monday.

A Timid Man

There was once a cowardly chap who did not dare get on a boat. One day, however, he had to cross a river, so he asked his fellow-travellers to bind him tightly to the boat. "Tie the rope as tightly as you can!" he told them. When they got to the other shore, they were going to undo the ropes, but he asked, "Must I cross the river again when we come back?" "Of course," they said. "Then I want to be carried, as I am, with the boat; I don't mind the expense. I'm afraid you can't

bind me so tightly the second time."

This is a good example of the "humour" of egocentricity, self-love carried to an extreme.

Ill from Using too much Energy

A certain man drank too much and did it too much, and became ill. The doctor said, "The illness is due to your excesses. You must be continent from now on." His wife glared at the doctor, who hurriedly added, "I mean, about drinking." The man said, "I think the other does me more harm. That's what I must be careful about." His wife said, "How can you expect to get better if you don't listen to what the doctor says?"

Here also we have the clash of egoisms. By mutual kindness we are able to camouflage our egoism; to transcend it is given to few, and even for them somewhat superficially and spasmodically.

The Dead Silkworms

There was a doctor with a very small practice. One day a patient came to get some medicine. When he opened the box, it was full of caterpillars. "What on earth are these?" he asked. "Dead dry silkworms," the doctor said. "But they are alive!" "Yes, they have been eating my medicine."

Changing Horses

A man went out riding on a donkey, and happened to meet a man on a fine horse. He dismounted suddenly, bowed, and said, "Wouldn't you like to change your mount for mine?" The other said, "Why, are you a fool?" "No," said the man, "but I thought you might be."

The story seems to me very Chinese, and very good. It is Chinese in that the man is always ready to take advantage of any possible

stupidity on the part of others. And good, because the whole art of human life consists of taking advantage of other people's ignorance, weakness, illness, and greediness. Indeed we may universalise it and say that we take advantage of the ignorance of animals, the weakness of water, and the greediness of fire.

The *Kuchint'ank'ai*, 古今譚概, "Stories of the Past and Present," was composed by the author of *Hsiaofu*, Feng Menglung, 馮夢龍, of the Ming Dynasty, published afterwards in 1667. The following comes from it.

Heavy Sleepers

Cheng of Hwating asked to see an influential person of the locality. But before the other entered the room he fell asleep, and snored in his seat. The other came in, but, finding the visitor sleeping, had not the heart to wake him, and slept too in the seat in front of him. A little later Cheng woke, and, seeing the other asleep, went to sleep again. Then the other woke up, and seeing Cheng still asleep, he went to sleep again too. When Cheng woke up once more, the other being still slumbering, he crept softly out of the house. When the other awoke, he saw that the visitor had gone, and went into an inner room to sleep.

The story is simple but has something very good about it, something of both humanity and humaneness in it.

The *Chinghsienyahsiao*, 精选雅笑, "A Selection of Refined Humour", was written by Tsui Yüchtsu, 醉月子, of the Ming Dynasty.

The Lost Spade

A farmer came back from working in the field and his wife asked him where he had left his spade. He replied in a loud voice, "In the field." "Speak in a lower voice," urged his wife, "somebody might hear, and steal it. Go and fetch it!"

He went back to the field but couldn't find the spade, and hurried home and whispered in his wife's ear, "It wasn't there!"

An Official

An official worked hard and sweated, and went to a bath-house and took a bath. After he had finished his bath he found his clothes had been stolen. He made a fuss, but the bath-owner said it was a slander on him. The official indignantly put on his hat and shoes, tied his belt round him, and emerging before everybody, cried, "Did I come here like this?"

Boasting of Wealth

A man was boasting of his possessions. "We have everything in our house." So saying, he bent two of his fingers,¹ and continued, "The only things not in our house are the sun and moon." Just then a servant came up to him and said, "We have no firewood in the kitchen." The man crooked another finger, and said, "No sun, no moon, no firewood."

Just as enlightenment is deeper than death or life, so ignorant complacency is the funniest thing in the universe.

The following from the *Shihshanghsiaot'an*, 時尚笑談, by an anonymous author, is an illustration of Cromwell's "Trust in God and keep your powder dry!" though the order should be reversed.

A Charm for Mosquitoes

People in ancient times believed it possible to keep away mosquitoes by means of a talisman. A man paid some money for a charm, and brought it home. He stuck it on the wall, but the mosquitoes seemed to become even more numerous than before, so he went to the charm-seller and complained about it. The charm-seller said, "There must be something wrong with

1. An oriental habit when counting.

your house, so I will go to your home and investigate the matter.” They went to the house together, and the charm-seller said, “No wonder you can’t keep away the mosquitoes! You have no mosquito net. And the charm must be hung *inside* the mosquito net.”

CHAPTER X

Short Stories

(from 1644)

The *Hsiaotao*, 笑倒, "Falling down with Laughter," was written by Chen Kaomo, 陳臬謨, of the Ching Dynasty, in 1718.

Profit

A certain man who was going out on New Year's Day to offer the season's greetings, thought to himself, "As it's the beginning of the year, I'd like to get something for nothing as a good omen," and wrote the character 吉, "luck", on a piece of paper and left it on his desk. However, though he went round several houses, no one gave him even a cup of tea, and coming back to his house he sat for some time looking at the characters 口干. "I wrote the two characters (mouth is dry), that's why nobody gave me anything to drink. If I had known it, I would have written it upside down and that would have been 十一口, and eleven houses would have treated me to wine."

He wrote 吉, which means "luck". When he came back he sat on the other side of the table, and read it upside down, 口干, as two characters, which mean "dry mouth", and then thought he should have read it the other way up as three characters, 十一口, which mean "eleven mouths". This kind of humour corresponds to punctuation mistakes and palindromes in European tongues.

Borrowing an Ox

A certain man wrote a letter to a wealthy man, asking him to

lend him his ox. When the letter arrived the wealthy man was talking to a guest. Not wishing the guest to know he was illiterate, he pretended to read the letter, and said to the messenger, "All right, I'll go."

Where would truth be without untruth?

Divination

A certain man believed strongly in divination, and asked the fortune-teller about everything, whether he should do it or not. One day a mud-wall suddenly fell down on him, and lying under it he was bawling for help. His family said, "Please be patient while we go and ask the fortune-teller whether we should move the mud-wall today or not."

China was, and perhaps still is a peculiar mixture of extreme credulity and common sense.

A Hasty Person

A very irritable and hot-tempered master was going to punish his servant for making some mistake or other, but couldn't find the cane for a moment. He became every moment more furious, so the servant said, "Just give me a slap on account."

This innocence of the servant is of the very highest kind of humour, morally speaking.

The Gunny-bag

A man went out with some money to buy rice. He lost the bag, and when he got home he said to his wife, "The market was so crowded, someone lost his bag." His wife said, "How about you?" "I couldn't help losing mine," he replied. His wife was upset and asked, "How about the money?" "Oh, that's all right. I tied it safely in the neck of the bag."

People like this are more difficult to deal with than criminals. They have no sense of sin or shame whatever. The only thing we can do with them is to put them in funny stories.

A Louse

A man caught a louse on his own clothes when he was with his friend. For the sake of appearances he purposely threw it on the floor, saying, "Good Heavens! I thought it was a louse!" His friend picked it up carefully and examining it said, "I *thought* it was a louse."

This is one more example of the fact that just as the style is the man, so the intonation of a sentence is the meaning.

The Dream of Drama

A man dreamed he went to an entertainment, and when the play was just going to begin, his wife woke him up. He got angry and kept on grumbling at her, but she said, "Stop scolding, and go to sleep again; it isn't the middle of the first scene yet!"

"The reasoning of women hath oftener left me mourning."

Gold and Silver

A certain poor man was carrying a bundle of paper-money (usually offered to the Buddha, and of little value). He looked at it and said to it, with a sigh, "Ah, if you were hard, how useful you would be!" The paper money laughed, and retorted, "How can I be hard? Instead, you had better become hard and rake together me and mine."

The second "hard" means "hard-working." This kind of fable, in which things talk to each other and to human beings, we find all over the world, and especially in La Fontaine.

Goldfish Wine

A guest was given some very well-watered wine. After swallowing a cup he praised the cook highly. The host said, "You haven't eaten anything yet; how can you tell he's a good cook?" "It's not necessary to taste the rest of the food to know that, he knows how to flavour the hot water so delicately."

The guest's remark is no less delicately flavoured with irony.

Robber-Prevention

A certain foolish man, hearing a robber forcing his way into the house, hastily wrote and stuck up a notice in the hall, "For Women Only", but the robber had already broken in, so he put up another notice in the passage-way, "No Thoroughfare", but still the robber came on and on, so he got into the privy after pasting up outside, "Being Used."

After all, the pen is not mightier than the sword.

Inside Eating

A certain man had a visitor whom he kept in the waiting room while he himself went into the inner part of the house and had a meal. "What a fine room this is!" cried the visitor in a loud voice. "It's a pity the beams and posts are so worm-eaten." The host rushed out, crying, "Where is the eating?" The visitor answered, "Inside; I don't know about the outside."

Fifty Percent

A certain man who was going to Suchou for the first time was told, "The people of Suchou exaggerate very much, so you must believe only half what they say." When he got to Suchou he asked a man his name. "Ayten," he replied. The man

thought to himself, "Then his name must be "Forfive." He asked him how many rooms there were in his house, and when the man said, "Five," he mused, "That means he had two rooms and a wide verandah. Last, he asked him how many people there were in his family. On the other's replying, "Only my wife," he concluded that the man was sharing his wife with another man.

This story might possibly be used to show the inherent untruth of mathematics and logic, which somehow never quite applies to animate existence.

A Great Tub

A very boastful fellow once bragged, "In my province, at a certain temple there is a tub so big that a thousand people can all bathe in it together." Another man who heard what he said retorted, "That's nothing much! In my province we have something far more wonderful that would really astonish you!" When asked what it was, he replied, "In a certain temple there's a grove of bamboos. In less than three years the bamboos grow to a height of several hundred thousand feet. But it doesn't get in the way of it; it grows down again from the sky. Doesn't that surprise you?" The people listening didn't seem to believe the story he had told, so he added, "If there were no such tall bamboos, what would they use to bind the tub round with?"

Long strips of bamboo are plaited and used as the bands of the tub. The principle of the story, the moral is, that one good lie deserves another. Your foolish belief justifies mine.

The following stories come from the *Hsiaotéhao*, 笑得好, by Shih Chiêngchin, 石成金, of the Ch'ing Dynasty, published in 1881.

The Elixir or Life

A certain doctor was ill, in fact at death's door. As he lay there in bed he cried, "If there is any doctor who can cure me,

I'll give him a medicine which will assure that he shall live to be many hundreds of years old." When asked why he didn't take the medicine himself, since it was so effective, he answered, "A superior doctor does not cure himself."

Sawing off a Cup

A certain man attended a party, held by a man who poured out only half a cup of wine each time. At last he said to the host, "Would you mind lending me a saw, if you have one?" The host asked him what he wanted with a saw. "There's no wine in the upper part of the cup, so it's better to cut off the top half and not leave it in its emptiness."

Next to Famous

There was once an old woman named Wang who was not only rich but vainglorious, and asked a Taoist scholar to write a valedictory poem to be put on her coffin. She paid him a lot to compose a fine one, so as to show it to the people of the village. The Taoist thought and thought, but could find nothing to praise about her, so he wrote:

"The old woman Wang, who lives next door to The Director of the Imperial Bureau, Royal Tutor, and Censor of National Documents."

A Carbuncle

A certain man had a bad boil on his leg. It was so painful he kept on groaning and groaning, but suddenly he made a hole in the wall, stuck his leg through, and when asked by someone why he did so, he frowned and said, "This boil on my leg is terribly painful, but if I put it into the next-door house, it will hurt them, not me."

This is a very primitive humour, or rather a primitive psychology, but we still understand the feeling of it.

Someone's Fallen in Love with You!

A certain doctor had a wife, a boy, and a girl, but one day he treated someone's son to death and had to give his own son as an adopted child in compensation. Then again his medicines proved fatal to a girl, whom he was again forced to replace by his own daughter. Only his wife was left, and they sat there in lonely silence when there came a sudden knock at the door. It was a messenger for a new patient, "Who is it?" he asked, "My wife," was the answer. Weeping, the doctor said to his wife, "What can I do? Now someone has taken a fancy to you!"

This story has something tragic in it, something that lies close to the heart of humour.

Once More

Disregarding decency, a countryman excreted in front of a Confucian Temple. The Principal was very indignant, and taking him to the Provincial court, asked that he be punished. The magistrate asked, "Why did you insult the Sages?" "When I come to the city I always pass by the Temple and suddenly I wanted to evacuate my bowels and I did so; I had no intention of insulting the Sages." "Well, do you want to be prosecuted, or will you pay a fine?" "I would rather pay a fine." "As a punishment for your outrage you must pay one tael of gold which must be weighed in this place." The countryman brought 2 taels of gold and said, "Please divide this into halves." The magistrate said, "Bring it here." As it was gold, his expression softened, and he put it in his sleeve, saying, "This should not be divided. You are forgiven. Tomorrow morning go and excrete once more in front of the Temple."

This is a very good satire on officials in particular and human nature in general, which loves money more than anything else in the world.

Abstinence

A priest was invited out to a feast, but as he was a monk the host was troubled about what to offer to him, and said, "What will you eat and drink?" The priest answered, smiling, "I take wine, but not vegetarian food."

This is very witty. By refusing the vegetarian food he is asking for meat and fish, forbidden, like wine, to monks.

Poem about a Leopard

A certain man boasted to everybody round him, "Yesterday I read a poem about a leopard, it was extraordinarily good, only four lines, but in them it described a leopard to perfection." Asked to tell them the poem he replied, "The first line went tum-ti tum-ti tum-ti tum-ti. The second line was tum-ti tum-ti tum-ti tum-ti hard." Somebody said, "You seem to have forgotten the first two lines; tell us the other two." "I don't quite call to mind the third line, but the fourth I remember perfectly. It said it was mighty fierce."

This has the humour of Dickens.

Father

A father once said to his son, "When you say something, always speak so that other people don't exactly catch your meaning. Don't make it too definite. Be evasive." The son was wondering what "evasive" meant when someone came to borrow something. "For example, when anybody wants to be lent something, to say we have it is not suitable, nor is it proper to say we have not got it at all. This is the meaning." The son thought he had understood the instruction, and when on the next day a visitor came to ask whether his father was at home he answered, "Well, he's not exactly in, and not exactly out."

Most moral training overreaches itself in this way, every case being different from every other case.

The Sheep-Stealer

A certain woman stole a sheep from a neighbour and hid it under her bed, and warned her son not to tell anyone about it. At length the neighbour came in complaining, when the son burst out, "My mother didn't steal your sheep, and don't you think so!" The mother made a threatening face at her son, whereupon he added, "Look at mother's face! Her eyes look just like those of the sheep under the bed!"

This reminds us of the *Second Shepherd's Play* in the Townley miracle play.

How to Sleep

A nurse was doing her best to get a child to sleep but it kept on crying, so giving up, she called to the master to bring a book. "What on earth do you want a book for?" "Whenever you read books you soon get sleepy."

Especially in China, a book meant a serious study of a not very interesting subject. For this reason "a humorous book" was to the Chinese a contradiction in terms.

A Lovely Fist

A certain man went to Peking, and when he came back he praised everything in Peking. One day he was walking in the moonlight with his father, and met someone who said, "A fine moon tonight!" He answered, "What's good about this moon? You should see the moon in Peking! It's far, far better." His father was angry and said, "The moon is the same everywhere. There's nothing specially good about the moon in Peking!" and clenching his fist he gave him a box of the ears. In a lachry-

mose voice the son replied, "Your fist is nothing wonderful. You should feel the fists in Pekin!"

This is "the very error of the moon."

A Poor Sort of Moon

A certain man had the habit of always saying, "My humble . . ." speaking disparagingly of his own things. One day he invited someone to his house and while they were drinking wine, the moon came out." "A lovely moon," said the guest. "Oh, not at all," the host said, "It's only a very poor moon."

There is something comical in humility.

An Anti-Demoniac Charm

A Taoist was bewitched by an evil spirit; his face and body became the colour of mud, and he shouted for help. The neighbours ran in, sprinkled him with water, and resuscitated him. The Taoist was most grateful, and said to them, "You have saved my life. Here is a charm for exorcising demons; please accept it as an expression of my gratitude."

This sort of thing is so common in this world as to be hardly comical at all.

From The *Hsiaohsiaolu*, 笑笑錄, "A Book of Laughing Laughter", by Tuiwa T'uishih, 獨邊窩退士, of the Ch'ing Dynasty in 1879, comes the next story, which seems to me to require a serious philosophical explanation.

A Recollection of his Dream

A man called Chin was from childhood fond of reading, but somewhat foolish. One day he got up early, and called the maid. "You met me in your dream last night, didn't you?" "No, sir," replied the maid. The man stormed at the maid, "I met you in my dream last night; there's no mistake; why

do you tell a lie?" And he went to tell his mother about it and demand that she should be punished.

From *Hsi't'anlu*, 嘻談錄, "Stories Told with Laughter", by Hsiao Shihtao, 小石道, of the Ch'ing Dynasty, 1884, comes the next story, of unwanted kindness.

Writing Mania

There was a man who was exceedingly fond of calligraphy, and of presenting it to others, but very bad at it. One day he saw a man holding a white fan and wanted to write on it for the man. The man bowed for a long time, and the writing maniac said, "I'm only going to write a few characters, so you need not be so grateful." The man said, "I'm not asking you to write, I'm asking you not to."

This is I suppose what the man would have liked to have said.

The *Hsiaolinkuangchi*, 笑林廣記, was written by Yuhshichuen, 游戯主人, of the Ch'ing Dynasty.

The Entrance Greeting

When a certain teacher set up his school, a pupil offered fifty shillings as entrance fee, writing on his card, "I respectfully offer these fifty shillings, together with a hundred bows." The teacher returned the card, having written on it, "Make it a hundred shillings and fifty bows!"

The contrast, unavoidable and irreconcilable, between the material and the spiritual could hardly be brought out better.

Uncle

A certain tutor once said to his pupil's father, "My son is a quiet and clever boy, and has learned all the Chinese characters, and I think he will make a fine companion for your own son."

"I am glad to hear that," was the reply. When the tutor got back to his home he said to his son, "Tomorrow I'm going to take you to the mansion of my pupil. I praised you to the skies to my employer, but you are foolish by nature and don't know a single character!" So he wrote and taught him the three character for quilt, 被, rice, 飯, and father, 父, ready for questioning. Off they went, but when they got there, and the man wrote down some Chinese characters, not a single one could the boy read. The tutor said, "It is because he is not accustomed to your handwriting. If I write them he will be able to read them easily enough." He wrote down 被, but he had forgotten it already. "What is it you sleep on?" he asked. "A straw mat." Then he wrote 飯, but the son only gaped at it. "What is it you eat at home?" "Barley." Last he wrote 父, but the son looked blanker than ever. "Who is it sleeps with your mother?" "Uncle."

The point of this story is its unexpected, O. Henry conclusion.

Portrait-Painting

A certain man who painted portraits never had a commission, so someone recommended him to make a portrait of himself and his wife and hang it up as an advertisement, and he did so. One day his father-in-law came, and said, looking at the portrait, "Who is that woman?" "It's your daughter." "Then why is she with that strange man?"

The history of art has always provided us with such examples, and they have increased recently.

A Newly-made Head

A certain barber who had only just begun work cut somebody's head all over as he shaved it. So he stopped and said, "This head is only half-ripe, and can't be shaved properly.

Bring it again, and when it's hard and properly settled down I'll have another go at it."

This shows the psychology of barbers exactly, their egoism and ignorance, their sublime indifference to the pain of others and indeed looking upon the heads of others as so many cabbages and turnips.

Three Names

The Court promulgated a new law, that any man having two names should become a common soldier, and anyone having three should be decapitated. The egg-plant heard of this and escaped into the water. "What have you come for?" asked the water. "I'm escaping from the new law. I myself have two names, *chiatsu*, 茄子, and *laosu*, 落蘇." The water said, "Then I must suffer capital punishment too, for my names are water, hot-water, and wine. Rascals throw a few grains of rice into me and sell me under a different name."

This is a satire on eating-houses, with their watery gruel and watery wine.

Sour Wine

The bill of fare of a certain wine-shop said: "Wine: one cup, a penny. Vinegar: one cup, twopence." Two men entered the shop and ordered some wine, but it was so sour one of them licked his lips, and knitting his brows said, "I've never tasted such sour wine! Didn't you bring vinegar by mistake?" The other pinched his leg and whispered, "Don't be a fool! Look at the bill of fare! The vinegar costs more than the wine!"

The Skin of the Face

"What is the hardest thing in the world?" "Stone, or iron, I suppose." "No, stone can be broken, iron can be cut; they can't be called really hard. In my opinion, your beard is infi-

nately harder than either.” “Why do you say that?” “Because it has broken through your face.”

The meaning of this seems to be that the hardest thing in the world is a hard man's face. This is perhaps true.

Asking the Way

A certain short-sighted man once lost his way. There was a crow sitting on a stone at the side of the road, and mistaking it for a man he asked the way three or four times, but there was no answer. The crow flew away, and the man said, “I asked you several times and you say nothing at all. Well, I won't tell you that your hat's blown off either, so there!”

This seems to me quite a moral story, a cautionary tale. If we could really see, not ourselves as others see us, but other people as God sees them, we should find them to be only crows on stones.

A Cloud near the Sun

A near-sighted man was at a banquet, and opposite him sat a man with a bushy beard, eating a ripe persimmon. He stood up suddenly and said, “My house is rather far from here. I'm afraid I must be saying good-bye.” The host said, “But the sun is still shining!” “Yes,” said the guest, “but it's going to rain soon. Look at that dark cloud near the sun!”

Speaking over-profoundly we may say that there is a perception here of the transcendental identity of a black-bearded man eating a soft red persimmon, and a rain-cloud hanging over the sun.

Yawning

A deaf man visited his friend and the dog barked at him like mad. Being unable to hear anything he said to his friend after they had exchanged greetings, “Your dog didn't sleep well last

night.” “Why do you say that?” “He looked at me and kept on yawning.”

There is a senryu which is perhaps based on this story. It says that a deaf man, looking at a cock crowing, asked why it was yawning.

Sensitivity to Cold

“What thing is the most insensitive to cold?” “Snot is. When it gets cold it comes running out.” “And the most sensitive thing?” “A fart. As soon as it comes out, it gets into the nostrils.”

This kind of humour is somewhat primitive, or at least mediaeval. It is rather low in the sense of being concerned with the body, but is not vulgar, which is a lowness of the mind. Animals are never vulgar.

Chopping Wood

A father and son were chopping firewood together when the father's axe slipped and he hurt his son's hand. The son bawled out, “Big fool! Are you blind?” The grandson who was standing there and could not bear his grandfather to be abused, shouted to him, “You good-for-nothing! How dare you speak to your own father like that!”

This is not only comical, or rather, just because comical, it is profound. All expostulation and admonishment and reproof is precisely of this nature. All we are to do—and it is the most difficult thing in the world—when someone does something bad or foolish, is to forgive them.

Living a Thousand Years

A dependent once said to his patron, “Last night I dreamed that you lived for a thousand years!” The patron replied, “It

is said that to dream of life presages death. What an ill omen!" The dependent hastily added, "No, no, that was a slip of the tongue. I meant to say that I dreamed you were dead for a thousand years!"

As Thoreau says, "too serious for our page", it is with explanations that all the trouble begins in human relationships.

An Older and a Sadder Man

A merchant once invited a singing-girl, and, asking her age, was told eighteen. Several years later, after suffering many losses, he went to the same girl, who did not remember him, and when he asked her age, she answered "Seventeen." Again after several years he saw the same girl, and this time she said she was sixteen. The merchant burst into tears, and on her asking him the reason, he replied, "Your age is like my capital, getting gradually less and less. When I think of that, how can I not be sad?"

Speaking profoundly once more, the tears of the merchant are half true, half false, and it is these false, humorous tears which are the "real," the valuable ones.

The Trumpet

On his way back home a musician found that a robber had entered someone's house after having made a hole through the wall. Putting his trumpet to the hole he blew a loud blast on it to wake up the people of the house. They got up and found the robber, and asked him, "Didn't you see someone blowing a trumpet?"

The point of this story is that the people were so alarmed by the trumpet that did not fear the burglar or even recognise him as such.

A Side-Dish

Two sons asked their father what the side-dish would be for

dinner. He answered, "We are told that the ancients quenched their thirst by gazing at a blossoming plum tree. Just have a look at the salted salmon hanging on the wall while eating a morsel; that will be the side-dish." The two sons did as they were told, but the younger one said suddenly, "Elder brother looked too long!" The father said, "That would make it too salt."

The father is either a great fool or a great wit; both are delightful.

Breaking the Ice

A certain man was being dunned, and at last said in a rage, "Must I say it! Will you force me to do so?" On hearing this, the other went off without saying a word, somehow ashamed of himself. This happened several times until at last the dun himself got angry and burst out, "Say whatever you like! I'm not afraid of you!" "You make me say it?" "Yes, say whatever you are going to say!" "I'm not going to pay the money!"

The psychology of the dun and the dunnee is very delicate. Power not merely degrades; it has its limits, and cannot go beyond them.

Carrying the Borrower

A certain man borrowed some money and would not pay it back however much he was pressed, so the other got angry and told his servants to wait for him and carry him off to the lender's home. On their way the servants had a rest, and the borrower said, "You'd better hurry. While you're resting, other lenders might come and carry me off. I am quite indifferent as to which of them it is."

A complete irresponsibility and non-morality is very attractive. It is the great charm of women, but besides having this other-sexual meaning it takes us back to our pre-human, even pre-animal days,

when as plants and stones we were free and perfect. The following is another example of the love of the hyperbolic that we have already noticed in the Chinese people.

An Idle Wife

There was once an idle woman. Her daily meals were prepared by her husband, and all she ever did was to put her hands into her sleeves when her clothes were brought to her, and open her mouth when she was fed. One day her husband had to go away for five days, and, afraid his wife might die of starvation, baked a large flour-cake and hung it round her neck to eat during his absence. The husband went off without anxiety, but when he came back he found she had been dead for three days. Examining carefully the flour-cake, he saw that only the part near her mouth had been eaten off.

Pulling out Black Hairs

There was an old man whose beard had a lot of white hairs in it, so he asked his concubine to pull them out. Seeing that there were too many of them, she thought it a task beyond her powers, and extracted the black ones instead. When the work was finished and the man looked in the mirror, he got a shock, and reproached her, but she said, "Isn't it unreasonable to pull out those which are more, and leave those which are less?"

The next is rather quaint.

Quilp Aground

A dwarf once went out boating, and got stranded, and while trying to refloat the boat he fell into the water, which came over his head. After getting out of the water he said angrily, "I, of all people, to be stranded in such a deep place!"

The *Ihsiao*, 一笑, was written by Yuyueh, 俞樾, of the Ch'ing

Dynasty. The following is a variant of the well-known story of the man who bought a mirror for the first time.

A certain fisherman's wife had never seen a mirror, and used water instead when she combed her hair. One day her husband bought a mirror for her. The wife looked at herself in the mirror, and was astonished and said to her mother-in-law, "My husband has brought a new wife home!" Her mother-in-law looked in the mirror and complained, "I can understand he should bring a new wife home, but why did he bring her mother here too?"



PLATE VI

PICTURE ORNAMENTATION OF A KOREAN BASKET

This laquered basket is about one foot three inches by six inches, and the illustration, which shows the two long sides over which the lid fits, is slightly smaller than the actual size. It was made in the first century A.D., the Rakrang Period, 樂浪, and was discovered in Pyongyang. The figures are those for example of persons appearing in what afterwards became the *Twenty-Four Filial Pietists*, written by Kuo Chuyeh, 郭居業, in the Yuan Dynasty, 1280-1367, and brought to Japan later. It appeared as a kanazōshi, an educational story book in easy language, in 1632. The names are written beside each.

The hands and faces are minutely drawn; the lines of the garments, however, are broad and sweeping. The eyes of the figures look askance at one another, and they appear to be telling their own dramatic stories. The conscious intention of the artist was perhaps a didactic one, teaching filial piety and so on in a time of egoism, decadence, and luxury, but the extreme animation and "speaking" quality of the figures is such that the energetic liveliness approaches humour.

PART TWO

KOREA

CHAPTER XI

Korean Humour

We must consider first the Korean character, not so much for itself, but as a means of recreating the Korean comic cosmos, into which we also, if it be possible, would enter. As said before, a national character, like that of an individual, seems to be a certain combination of opposite qualities, the English of snobbery and humanity, the Japanese of practicality and idealism, the French of rationality and sentimentality, and so on. In the case of the Koreans, the two opposite qualities are placidity and vehemence. Neither of these sounds as interesting as it is, but it should be noted that the first implies a kind of non-interference very attractive in the regimented world of our own age, and the second gives the affections of the Korean people their lasting and profound quality. For humour, the latter involves the power to act, to go the extremes of kindness or cruelty, the former to be a spectator and have the power to see the latter as a form of unbalance. Add to this, a toughness, not exceeded by the Chinese, which does not flinch at any kind of grossness or sadism, and an obstinacy which will squeeze a thing dry and get the last ounce of humour out of it.

More than anything else the Korean language shows the national spirit. Korean sounds harsh to the ears of foreigners, though it can be and is often spoken beautifully and melodiously. It may be said that making hard soft is far better (and far more possible) than the soft (language) made harsh. The aspirated consonants express the

violence and passion of the Koreans; the many r's and l's (*rul* is the sign of the accusative case) their weaker side. Humour comes out perhaps in the clash between the two. Put in a more general way, the humour of the Koreans lies in the collision between the violence of their desires and the cold, immovable facts of life. The Koreans are hardly capable of the loftiest, philosophical, super-natural humour; where they score is in their feeling of the common life of men and women and tigers and dogs and bed-bugs. In this connection I would like to quote once more something that appears in *Zen in English Literature*, a short passage by Yi Kyu Bo, 李奎報, 1168-1241, statesman, musician, and poet, which brings out the Korean character in these two types, the soft-hearted and the hard-headed.

A friend of mine came and said, "Yesterday evening I saw some rascal beat to death a dog which was wandering about there. It was such a pitiful sight, and I was so upset by it, I resolved never to touch dog's flesh again." I said to him, "Last night I saw a man sitting by the fire cracking lice and burning them. I was so upset I made up my mind never to kill another louse." My friend said indignantly, "A louse is a very small thing; what I saw was a big animal done to death, and because I felt so grieved, I told you about it. Why do you answer me so facetiously?" I replied, "All things with life and breath, from common men to oxen, horses, pigs, sheep, down to insects, mole-crickets, and ants,—all, without exception, love life and hate death. Do you imagine for a moment that big animals only dislike to die and the little ones don't mind it? Thus the death of a louse is no different from that of a dog. This is quite clear; why should you suppose I was talking flippantly? Bite your own ten fingers and see. The thumb hurts; but how about the rest of the fingers? In one body there is no distinction between large and small members. All that has blood and flesh feels the same pain. So it is with all things that have received life and breath; how can you think that one hates

death and another finds it pleasant? Now you go home and quietly meditate on this, and when you see that the horns of a snail are the same as those of a bull, the wren of equal value with the mighty Rukh, then come, and we'll talk of religion again."

Korean humorous tales derive from two sources; first, China, through the intelligentsia or at least the aristocratic class, the yangpan. These stories are usually modified, sometimes spoiled, sometimes improved. Then there is the native product, usually scatological, not to say pornological, if we may coin a word, as the stories are not necessarily written, but told all over the country to mixed audiences, in which young boys and girls and women share in the general enjoyment of them.

As a whole Koreans are (or were) as cruel to dogs as English people are to pigs or foxes. It was (before the War) quite a common thing for all the village children to gather under the trees to watch a man slowly beating his dog to death suspended by the nose. In spite of this we may find Koreans who are extremely fond of dogs and bears and other animals. Further, like the ancient Egyptians, mythology and religion are closely connected with birds and beasts. Particularly bears Koreans have always felt to be semi-human, or that they themselves were semi-bear. There is a myth that 4500 years ago one of the sons of the Creator, feeling lonely, proposed to turn a bear and a tiger into human beings if they would eat certain plants and remain in the dark for three weeks. The tiger, an irritable animal, could not stand the long darkness, but the bear did so, and metamorphosed into a woman. He had sexual relations with her and they had a son Tangun, who built an altar on Mount Mari in Kanghwha Island and ruled over the Koreans for 1200 years.

The Koreans can abandon themselves to singing, dancing, drinking and so forth to such a degree that, though they cannot be called pantheists, they attain a mystical or at least animistic condition in

which they become spirits in a world of spirits. This helps towards the only true democracy, the democracy of humour.

The Confucianism of Korea is nothing like what we find in the writings concerning Confucius or by Mencius. In Korea every husband is (was) a petty tyrant; children a sort of life-insurance for their parents; funerals and graves the most important things in life. Korean humour never gained enough strength to attempt the reform of such conditions by laughing them out of existence. They are now dying a natural death, but the comic spirit is more important than rational modes of social life. Politeness of speech, honorifics and excessive ceremonialism also seem to have produced only their opposites, insensitiveness and rudeness, instead of the power to laugh at indirection. Buddhism never affected the Koreans (or the Chinese) as it did the Japanese, and the Mahayana doctrine of contraries was never in the background of their minds to universalise their particular experiences of the contradictions of life.

The art of humour requires as delicate an aesthetic sense as any other art, perhaps more so, since its materials, human beings, are notoriously misshapen in iniquity. The pottery of Korea, by far the best in the world, shows that at one time at least Koreans had this aesthetic judgement, combined with a humorous freedom which reminds us of such different artists as Goya and Klee. The humour of Korean pottery thus corresponds to that of the Japanese in haiku, and to the Southern School in Chinese visual arts. The "lightness" which Bashō kept in his verses, and which has never since been lost (though Shiki almost destroyed it) is what we feel in the pottery of the Koreans, a slight awryness, a faint irregularity, as though, like Davies' butterflies, the pots were

Escaped from Nature's hand
Ere perfect quite.

The Koreans, like the Japanese, cannot or rather will not think.

There is no Korean as there is no Japanese philosophy, and there seems to be some relation between this fact and the presence of philosophy and the absence of humour among the Germans.

Almost as much as the language, the proverbs of a nation show the national character. They are everywhere certainly older than written literature, and must be the remains of a vast oral literature of the world which has been almost entirely lost. Korean proverbs have in large part come from China, or rather, belong to the period before Korea and China were politically if not linguistically separated. But the Koreans modified the Chinese proverbs in making them even more concrete, physical, homely, coarse,—in a word, poetical. The following is but a random selection, with many of the best omitted because of outspokenness.

他人之餌。聊樂歲始。

With other's food,

The pleasure of the year begins.

During the New Year's Days Korean people visit their friends and relations and are treated with all kinds of food. There is no greater pleasure than to get something for nothing. Perhaps this is the bliss of being born.

不啼之兒。其誰乳之。

Who will give him milk,

If he does not cry?

The Japanese proverb corresponding is less homely, and more hyperbolic: 黄金刀も請うて見よ, "Ask for it, even though it be a golden sword!"

逐彼山豕。竝失家彘。

Running after the wild boar,

And losing the pig at home.

This expresses a common experience, but it applies to religion, and

to Christ and Buddha, who forgot or never knew that love begins at home.

膚爛之枚. 吾先兒後.
To save from burning,
Oneself first, then the child.

This is dreadfully realistic. At the moment of intense and sudden pain we jump away from it. Can a mother's tender care . . . ? But we need not be so ashamed of ourselves, for even God always looks after number one first.

鸚效鶴步. 載裂厥脰.
A little bird walks like a crane,
And gets his legs torn.

This is Christ talking like God.

山下卜宅. 春杵難獲.
At the house under the hill,
It is difficult to get a fulling-block.

Where there is so much timber, wooden things seem scarce. The Japanese proverb is more paradoxical: 有る物に事を缺く, "To be short of what they have."

我所珍度. 竟歸人屎.
My treasure,
Others come and piss on.

This is the cause of war, cold, hot, or tepid.

十人之守. 難敵一寇.
Though ten men guard,
It is difficult to defeat the intruder.

The Japanese proverb is more explanatory: 守り手の隙はあれど盗人の隙はなし, "There may be an unguarded moment for those who

guard, but never for a thief."

莫以狗子。監此麴鼓。

Do not have a dog
Guard the bean-paste!

This is what God did in the Garden of Eden.

夫婦之瞽。如刀割水。

A quarrel between man and wife
Is like cutting water with a sword.

The simile is interesting. The Japanese have expanded it: 夫婦喧嘩と谷川の水はすぐにすむ, "The quarrel of man and wife and the water of a rill will soon become clear."

一日之狗。不知畏虎。

A dog of one day old
Does not fear a tiger.

If you are going to be eaten anyway, perhaps the puppy is the "best Philosopher". The Japanese proverb corresponding is: 盲蛇におぢず, "A blind man does not fear a snake."

舌下有斨。入用自戕。

There's an axe under your own tongue,
That may hurt yourself.

The interest of this is in the strong metaphor.

既乘其馬。又思牽者。

On the horse,
And already thinking of someone to lead it.

The Japanese say: おぶへば抱かれる, "Carried on the back, he wishes to be held in the arms."

鐵冶家世。食刀乏些。

There are few knives
In the smith's.

The Japanese proverb corresponding: 紺屋の白袴, "The dyer wears white clothes."

投石石來。擲餅餅回。

Stone thrown, stone comes back;
Rice-cake thrown, rice-cake comes back.

This is interesting because so true, and yet not literally so.

暗中瞬目。誰知約束。

A wink in the darkness,—
Who knows what it promised?

This is a rather poetical proverb, so that the meaning somewhat escapes us.

西瓜外舐。不識內美。

You lick the outside of the melon;
You cannot tell the taste of the inside.

This is a parable of marriage for both men and women, and also of the universe which most people never know the real taste of.

我厭其饗。予狗則慳。

For himself, too much,
But too mean to give it to the dog.

This is a parable of the have and have-not nations.

農夫餓死。枕厥種子。

A farmer dies from hunger;
At his pillow, the seeds.

This is the rustic wisdom that would have saved Christ, saved him from his last and lamentable cry.

全癡誇妻。半癡誇兒。

Quite a fool is proud of his wife,
Half a fool of his child.

This seems terribly true, and comical, but I don't know why.

既終夜哭。問誰不祿。

After sobbing and grieving,
He asks who is dead.

This corresponds to the Chinese story on page 106.

三歲之習。生千八十。

What is learned at three
Continues to eighty.

I feel inclined to put the word "Only" at the beginning of this proverb, and to shorten it to, "Only what is learned at three is learned."

我腹既飽。不察奴飢。

When my stomach is already full,
I can't conceive of another's hunger.

This is true of Shakespeare and of Christ as well as of Tom, Dick, and Harry.

唯笥無藏。是以錦裳。

Nothing in the chest-of-drawers,—
That's the finest clothes.

This may be said of some over-dressed woman.

牛耳誦經。何能諦聽。

The sutras read to a cow,—
What can she possibly understand?

This is almost all speaking and writing.

談虎虎至。談人人至。

Speak of a tiger, and a tiger comes;
Talk of a man, and a man comes.

This is concretely expressive of the fact that each creature creates the world that it then lives in.

有鷲共鷹。我視作鷹。

The kite flies high,
And looks to us like an eagle.

This is to be applied to all presidents and emperors and founders of religion.

予所畜犬。適噬我髒。

My own dog
Is gnawing my own bones.

This is "the most unkindest cut of all."

竈苟不燃。突豈生煙。

If there is no fire under the cauldron,
How can the smoke be coming out of the chimney?

This is an improvement on, "Where there's smoke there's fire."

聞則是病。不聞是藥。

To hear of it, is illness;
Not to hear of it, makes life worth living.

This is a better, because a more concrete form of, "Ignorance is bliss".

襤褸々々。猶然錦褸。

Rags and tatters it may be,
But it is still brocade.

This might be used of Gandhi or some other old or ugly great man.

既死之子. 胡算其齒.

How foolish to count
The "teeth" of a dead child!

The Japanese say "years", but "teeth" is better.

Here are some more proverbs in onmun, native script, also called hangul, originated by Chong Inji in 1443.

의사가 제 병 못 고친다

A doctor cannot cure his own illness.

This applies to spiritual as much as, or even more than material things. The mouths of Christ and Plato and Buddha also are "stopped with dust."

화약을 지고 불로 들어간다

Carrying gunpowder, he jumps into the fire.

We carry within us the seeds of our own destruction. All death, whether material or spiritual, is suicide.

사람은 죽으면 이름을 남기고 범은 죽으면 가죽을 남긴다

A man leaves his name after his death,
A tiger his skin.

The comparison is suitable to Korea, which was a tiger-infested country. Perhaps "infest" is the right word to use of the so-called great man.

귀 막고 방울 도둑질한다

Covering his ears, he steals a bell.

"How all occasions do inform against me!"

딸이 셋이면 문을 열어 놓고 잔다

If they have three daughters, they sleep opening the gate.

All over the world parents seem to want to get rid of their daughters,

but especially in China, Korea, and Japan.

북은 칠수록 소리 난다

The more we beat a drum, the better the sound.

I don't know whether this is true, but if so, it means that the leather becomes more resilient and thus more resonant. Man is the drum of the universe which nature beats so assiduously. He becomes daily more human, more tragic.

까마귀 날자 배 떨어진다

The crow flies away, and at once a pear falls.

The cause is invariably followed by the effect,—or are they not rather simultaneous?

개구리 올챙이 적 생각을 못 한다

He thinks only of his being a frog, and forgets his having once been a tadpole.

This is curiously like one of Stevenson's *Fables*:

"Be ashamed of yourself," said the frog. "When I was a tadpole, I had no tail."

"Just what I thought!" said the tadpole. "You never were a tadpole."

개 발에 편자

Horse-shoes for dogs' feet.

This is all education of all children.

고슴도치도 제 새끼는 함참한다고 한다

A hedge-hog thinks his young are soft and sleek.

This applies not only to one's offspring, but to all the children of the mind also.

꽃밭에 불 지르 듯

Like setting fire to a flower-bed.

This is a splendid simile for something ludicrously impossible or foolish.

구제할 것은 없어도 도둑 맞을 것은 있다

Nothing to give to one's relations, but enough for a thief to take.

The thief is also time, which steals all.

낮 말은 새가 듣고 밤 말은 쥐가 듣는다

Birds hear what is said by day, and rats what is said by night.

This is perhaps the beginning, and the better part, of all religion.

달면 삼키고 쓰면 뱉는다

We swallow the sweet, and spit out the bitter.

This is our great mistake, but this is also our human nature.

닭 쫓던 개 지붕이나 치어다 보지

The dog that chased the hen can only look up at the roof of the house.

I would like to take the dog as a parable of those who have chased God into the infinite and eternal and transcendental. The same meaning may be read into the next proverb:

오를 수 없는 나무는 쳐다보지도 말라

A tree you cannot climb, you need not bother to look up at.

두 손박이 맞아야 소리가 난다

One hand finds it hard to clap.

This is an interesting variant of the Chinese proverb which was later used by Hakuin Zenji as his chief koan, "The sound of clapping

with one hand."

부뚜막의 소금도 집어 넣어야 짜다

Salt, even on the kitchen shelf, has to be added to give the flavour.

It is a simple fact like this which makes us doubt all transcendentalism and mysticism.

비단 옷 입고 밤길 걸기

Dressing in silk for a walk in the dark.

This is what our three score years and ten of life is.

새도 앓는 곳마다 깃이 든단다

Whenever a bird roasts, the feathers fall.

Somehow this makes me think of politicians and statesmen who have been found out.

소경 개천 나무래 무엇 하나?

The blind man blames the river.

We are the blind; the universe is the river. The next proverb is similar in meaning, if we take it so.

원수는 외나무 다리에서 만난다

Meeting one's enemy on a single log bridge.

This is what we do every moment of our lives.

쓴 배도 맛 들일 타

Even a sour pear is agreeable when the taste is required.

So even with death.

죄 구멍으로 소 몰라고 한다

Trying to drive an ox through a rat-hole.

PLATE VII

LANDSCAPE WITH A POET

This was painted by Kang Hi An, 姜希顔, who lived more than 500 years ago, at the beginning of the Li Dynasty, 1392-1910, a poet, a writer, and a painter of genius. In spirit he is somewhat like Sesshū, whom he antedated, but less artistic, less romantic, more poetic, in a word, better. This picture rises above mere art into a region where man is truly undivided from nature. The poet lies on the rock as a feather bed might. It is a small picture, eight inches by six, but the scale is enormous. We feel that the highest possible culture has been reached by this not very handsome man who looks like a reincarnation of Putai. The wild nature of the left upper half of the picture contrasts with his transcendental but jovial calm, yet he does not "oppose to nature a deeper nature," so that the picture almost rises above even humour, into a region of pure bliss.



This also we are trying to do twenty four hours a day.

재는 넘을수록 높고 데는 건들수록 깊다

The higher we go, the wilder the mountain; the farther we cross, the deeper the water.

This is the story of my life.

CHAPTER XII

Korean Short Stories

Many Korean stories, both of the mythological and humorous kinds, are retellings, often with modifications, of Chinese stories. An example is the following:

A Clever Boy

Yi¹ Sun Shi, 李瞬臣, was a very clever boy. One day his father said to him, "Here am I sitting in this room on the ondol.² Can you make me stand up and go out of it?" After some thought, the boy replied to him, "Father, that is impossible for me to do, but if you will come outside a moment, I know how to get you back again in it." The father came out, and the boy then said, "You see, I have got you out." The father was struck with admiration for his son.

This is a form of the Chinese story found on page 117. It is noteworthy that it has been brought down somewhat in social level, as were the French romances done into English in the 12th and following centuries. The next story is also Chinese, and may be seen in its Chinese form on page 162.

Pulling Out His Hair

Once an old man kept a mistress, and got her to pull out his white hairs. His wife noticed that he had no white hairs, and concluded that he was keeping a mistress somewhere. She accused him of this, and he denied it, and to prove it was not so, told her to pull out his black hairs. This his wife did, with the result that in the end he became completely bald.

1. Yi is also spelled Li, I, and Rhee. 2. heated floor.

There are a great many varieties of the mirror story.¹ This is one of the Korean forms of it.

A Looking-Glass

A certain soldier went to Seoul and bought a looking-glass. He kept it in his closet and looked at himself in it morning and evening. Becoming suspicious of him, his wife peeped into it during his absence. Seeing a young woman in it she became angry and ran to her mother-in-law and cried, "My husband had brought a mistress from Seoul!" The mother-in-law went and had a look in the mirror. "Don't be silly!" she said. "That's the old woman from over the hill." The father-in-law also took a look, and said, "Oh my father! Why have you returned to the land of the living?" But the wife couldn't believe what they said, and looked in it again, and screamed into it, "How could you have the impudence to deceive my husband with such a hideous face!" The woman in the looking-glass was silent but only pouted her lips. The wife was so furious that she hit the woman in the glass with her clenched fist, and the mirror broke into a thousand fragments.

The following is another version, perhaps a Chinese version, of this popular story of the wife and the mirror. It begins with an old man who bought a mirror, and his old wife who became jealous when she looked in it.

... The (still older) mother-in-law looked in the mirror and saw an old crone in it. "Dont be silly!" she said to her daughter-in-law. "Such can't possibly be his paramour; he must have some special reason for keeping her. Ask him quietly why." The mother-in-law told her husband about it, and when he looked in it he said, "Oh, it's only the dirty old man next door who comes here sometimes. Take no notice of him!" Then the grandson peeped in. The child in the mirror had a

1. See pages 101, 163, and 220.

cake, so he began to cry, saying, "That child has taken my cake away! It's mine!" He held up his fist, and the other did the same. He got angry, and so did the other child, and he began to get into a tantrum. At this a young man came up and looked into the mirror and saw a strange young man. "What do you mean by coming and teasing this poor little boy?" he shouted. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" and he struck him with his fist, and the mirror fell into the fireplace, and broke into pieces.

The following story also is Chinese in origin.

Poisonous Dried Persimmons

A certain monk hid some dry persimmons in his cupboard, and ate them secretly. To his young acolytes he said, "These are poisonous; if you eat them you will die." One day, during his absence, one of the acolytes ate them all up, and then broke the monk's favourite ink-slab. When the monk came back he found the acolyte in bed, and asked, "What's the matter with you?" "While you were out," said the acolyte, "I broke your most precious ink-slab, so I ate those things in your cupboard, intending to atone for my fault with my death. I am now waiting to die."

The following story is more typically Korean, though somewhat crude. It shows the willing suspension of disbelief, the urge to laugh, if only given the opportunity.

Three Foolish Brides

Three wives who had been divorced by their husbands came together, and they asked one another why they had been divorced. One said, "It was a mere nothing. One evening my mother-in-law told me to take out the tobacco ash-tray and throw the ashes away. I went into the garden and knocked out

the dottle of the tobacco pipe on what I thought was a round stone, but it turned out to be the bald bare head of my father-in-law." The second woman said, "I was divorced also for nothing at all. One day my father-in-law told me to bring in some fire for a smoke. It was a sieve I brought it in." The third woman said, "I was divorced for even less. I couldn't get rid of the fleas in my dress, so I boiled it the rice-pot before I washed it. They said I shouldn't have."

We see in this story, simple as it is, that "Life is what you want in your soul." It is not, after all, that the universe is paradoxical in its nature; it is not merely that we perceive with joy the absolute unmechanicality of the world, its complete freedom from cause and effect. It is that a human being, in his soul, wishes, wants, *wills* that a woman should mistake her father-in-law's bald head for a stone; that fire should be carried in a sieve; that fleas should be killed by boiling in a rice-pot; that the world should be destroyed by atomic bombs; that Jesus should be mistaken for the Son of God; that Sakyamuni should be thought the Eternal Buddha; that we should accept, willingly, all things that happen in any case as a result of our will.

A great many Korean stories, and some of the best, are not printable unfortunately. This is due to the immorality of European readers, for to the obscene all things are obscene. Here is a story that is just as gross as many others, but will pass the censor, whose psychology is beyond me, and which is indeed the most fruitful subject for humour.

What to Draw Where

A certain jealous man was going on a journey for several days, so he drew a pig at the side of his wife's secret parts. When he came home he found it had changed into a dog, and became furious. "I drew a pig, didn't I? You must have had a

paramour!" The wife replied with a nonchalant air, "Well, pigs change into dogs sometimes, don't they?" "Yes, that's true, but" The husband was pacified.

According to Korean belief, certain animals change into others. A different and better form of the story is one in which the husband draws a cow lying down; it concludes:

Coming back, and looking at the place, he found the cow standing. He began, in a passion, "I drew a lying cow. This one is standing" The wife replied, "The cow found a bush near by, and stood up to eat the leaves."

The following also illustrates the uninhibitedness of Korean humour.

Three Foolish Sisters

There once lived in a certain place three foolish sisters. The eldest, on the wedding night flatly refused to take off her clothes, so her husband, thinking she disliked him, went home the next morning, and never came again.¹ Hearing of this, the second sister, when she married, stripped herself of all her clothes, made a bundle of them, and walked into the room with it on her head the first night. The bridegroom got a shock, and went off immediately. The youngest sister, on her wedding night, stood outside the door and asked, "Shall I come in with my clothes on, or off?" This bridegroom also thought she must be out of her mind, and would not stay.

As in China, child marriages were common in Korea, and there are many stories about them, both tragic and comic. The bride was usually older than the bridegroom.

A Boy Husband

A certain woman who had a boy husband was dissatisfied

1. It is a Korean custom for the husband to stay at the wife's home during the wedding period.

with him because he would not do what she wanted him to do, not every night, at least. One day when she was transferring the rice from the cauldron to the rice-tub, her husband came and said to her, "Give me a little burned rice."¹ When she heard this childish request, she got angry, and catching him by the neck, threw him up onto the roof. When his mother came back, he thought to himself, "Though I am only a child, after all I am the husband, and if my mother finds me like this I shall be shamed." So in order to hide the real state of things, he pretended to be looking to see if the pumpkins growing on the roof were ripe or not, and called out to his wife in a loud voice, "Well, which do you want, a big one or a small one?"

There are many stories in both China and Korea concerning the tiger, not always derogatory to the animal. It was the Manchurian tiger, a rather rough and bony version of the sleek and cat-like Indian tiger.

Tiger, Persimmon, Cow, Robber

One night a tiger came down to a village to eat a child, and peeped into the window of a certain house. The child was crying, and the mother said, "A tiger is coming for you!" but the child did not stop. When the tiger saw this he thought to himself, "The child is not afraid of me at all!" The mother then said, "If you stop crying, I'll give you a dry persimmon." The child immediately stopped crying, and the tiger thought, "What a fearful thing a dried persimmon must be!" and gave up the idea of eating the child, and went to the cow-shed to steal a cow. Just at that moment a robber came, intending also to steal a cow. Mistaking the tiger for a cow he got astride him and rode off. The tiger thought, "This must be the persimmon!" and ran off at full speed. The people of the house had heard the noise and raised a hue and cry, but the robber

1. Children in Korea and Japan are fond of the rice that sticks to the side of the cauldron. It has a taste something like toast.

whipped up his "cow" and escaped. When day dawned the robber realised his error and jumped off the tiger in a panic. The tiger also felt relieved and flew off like an arrow.

This story ends with no cruelty to anybody or anything, something uncommon even in real life.

The stupidity of women is more interesting (to men) than the folly of men, and though there are Korean stories of hen-pecked husbands, there are many more of nitwit women. The following is an example of what is even more amusing, the woman who wishes to be thought clever, and is not.

A Foolish Lady

There was a foolish woman who one day had to go to the funeral of her son, her daughter's husband's father. Weeping before the mortuary tablet, she cried "Aigo! Aigo!" so passionately that she began to think it was her own husband that was dead, and said, "Oh! my husband! my husband! please take me with you!" Hearing this, the whole company burst out laughing, but she did not notice anything and kept up her weeping and wailing. At last her daughter nudged her with her elbow, and she suddenly remembered where she was and what she was doing, so in order to camouflage her mistake she said in an unctuous voice to the bereaved family, "How are you getting along recently?" They said, "Nothing is more of a change than this!" and she saw she had made another mistake, and then asked, "What did he die of?" "A gimlet fell off a shelf, and . . .," but before the story was half told she exclaimed, "Oh, how dangerous for his eyes! Did he hurt them?" The mother-in-law was surprised at such a foolish question, and said severely, "Is anything more serious than death?" The foolish woman blushed with shame, and waited for a chance to retrieve her losses with one bright remark. When all the women went out into the garden, she was the last, and saw her own

shoes there by themselves, and said admiringly, "How clever! How did you all manage to leave them there? How did you know they were mine?" All the women laughed uproariously, but she saw a magpie in a tree and made one more effort and said to the mother-in-law, "Madam, is that your magpie?"

There are many stories all over the world about telling the biggest lie. The following seems to me very well done.

A Bride by a Lie

There was once a prime minister who was very fond of lies. He announced that he would give his daughter to the man who could tell two lies to satisfy him. All the liars in Korea gathered and told all the biggest lies they could think of, but the prime minister only said, "That's so," and nobody could get his daughter. One day a certain young man came and said to him, "Summer is coming, so if you dig deep holes here and there in Chongno Street, and put the cold wind of the winter before into those holes, and then sell it in summer, what a profit you could make!" The minister was pleased and said, "That's a wonderful lie; let's hear the other one." The young man took a paper out of his sleeve and showed it to him. He said, "This is a bond which your father, the late minister, gave to me before he died. He borrowed a million won from me. Please pay the money." The prime minister realised that if he said it was a lie he would have to give him his daughter, and if he said it was true he would have to give him a million won. He of course chose the former.

The Koreans have what most people would call an inordinate, but what I consider a natural interest in defecation. It is important to note that this, in being natural, is a poetical interest, as is shown for example in the Korean word for shooting stars, *pyol-dong*, star-dung. Is not this dust and rubbish that is showered upon us a kind of

cosmic diarrhea? It should be noted that not only is there spirit-worship, but great trees are animistically revered, and the sea and rivers and mountains and even wells have their spiritual beings, sometimes beneficent, sometimes malignant. The toilet has its spirit also, a malevolent one connected however with the shed itself, which is always outside and apart from the house. The following story derives its humour, interest, and pleasure from the Rabelasian idea that in defecation also the more the better. The story itself is a version of the world-wide original idea, or what Lamb calls, "Great Nature's stereotypes", the wishful thinking that the good man gets good luck, and the bad man, by imitating him badly, gets bad luck.

The Two Brothers

There were once two brothers, the elder kind-hearted and generous, the younger cruel and mean. One day a young swallow fell from its nest under the eaves, and broke its leg. The elder brother picked it up, put the leg in splints, and looked after it. When the leg was quite well the swallow flew off to the King of the Swallows, who lives south of the Yangtse River, and told him all about it. The King was much pleased with the man's kindness, and sent him as a reward two gourd seeds. The elder brother received them from the swallow when it returned in the spring, and planted them in his garden. Later in the year, the roof of the house was covered with the ripe yellow gourds, and the man and his wife brought them down into the house and began to saw them in halves.¹ What was their astonishment when gold poured out of each gourd! The elder brother became a wealthy man overnight.

When the younger brother heard of this he became inflamed with envy, went back to his own house, and taking one of the swallows from its nest, broke its leg. Then he put it in splints and waited for it to heal. When the bird had recovered it flew

1. They are hollowed out and used as utensils.

off like the other one to the King of the Swallows and told him what had happened. The swallow brought back two gourd seeds as before, and the younger brother planted them. This time even more yellow gourds ripened on the roof, and the man and his wife could not wait, but went on the roof to cut them open. The first one was full of excrement, and the second one likewise, but they kept on opening them until the house collapsed with the weight of ordure.

Another type of story of which there are many variations is that of people who didn't know how to behave, imitating someone, the leader, with too literal an exactness. The Chinese version, or original, is given on page 101. It is always a visit to condole with the relatives of some deceased person, death, at least in the background, being almost an essential for comedy.

Condolences

A not very bright young man went with his uncle to pay a visit of condolence, his friend's father having died. Not knowing the proper behaviour on such an occasion, he asked his uncle what to do, but the uncle, thinking it a nuisance to explain everything in detail, told him just to do whatever he himself did. When they arrived at the gate of his friend's house, the uncle, being an unusually tall man, bumped his head on the gate as they went in. Seeing this, the nephew, who was short of stature, went back a few paces, took a run, and jumped up and banged his own head on the gate. They went inside the house, and bowed to the mortuary tablet, but in doing so, by accident the uncle farted. The nephew tries to imitate him but could not, try as he would. At length he evacuated his bowels, whereupon his uncle took him home more in anger than in sorrow.

A great many Korean stories are concerned with what we may call the (facetious) explanation of common things, reminding us of the

German story of why the sea is salt (because a ship with a salt-making machine on it sank to the bottom of the sea, and still continues to manufacture salt). The pretended explanations are often sexual, and nearly always gross. The following is an explanation of why a man has two testicles, neither more nor less.

A Dream of Heavenly Peaches

There was once a young man who earnestly desired to go to Heaven, and one day he dreamed that he went there. In Heaven there were many peach trees with peaches ripening on the boughs, and he asked God if he might have one. God told one of his angels to give the young man one. Then the young man, who was a dutiful son, thought of his father, and said to the angel, "I would like one for my father. Could I have another one?" The angel gave him another, and then he thought of his mother and begged the angel to give him just one more. As he was about to receive the third one there was a loud noise, and he woke up, and found no peaches, but he was holding a peach-like thing with each hand.

I was once teaching English conversation in a class in Korea. The subject was to describe some animal: "A giraffe is a long-legged animal with a long neck; it feeds on the leaves of trees," and that sort of thing. The Japanese students solemnly described dogs and crocodiles etcetera, and most of the Korean students followed suit, but the brightest of the Korean students, when it came to his turn, burst out with, "A *pinde* (bed-bug) is an over-friendly animal . . . and so on, and sent me into solitary convulsions. The following story was produced by this type of mind.

A Flea, a Mosquito, and a Louse

Long, long ago, a flea, a mosquito, and a louse met together and made poems. The flea's was:

Jumping and jumping about the room,
Being afraid only of a finger.

The mosquito's verse:

Circling round the ears of human beings, humming,
Fearful only of a man who suddenly slaps his face.

The louse's attempt:

Creeping around the hip,
Only dreading a squint-eyed man.

Each was proud of his own composition, and they could not decide whose was best, so they went to their teacher, a bed-bug, and asked him to choose. After careful consideration, he selected the flea's poem, and the mosquito and the louse were exceedingly angry. They began to quarrel and fight, and there was *mélée* of many legs and feet. The flea was struck on the mouth, which became pointed; the mosquito's legs were pulled so much they became very long; the louse was bruised on the hip by being kicked. The bed-louse, whose judgement had started the quarrel, was pinned beneath the others and became flat. That is how they all became as they are.

Korean people have always had a warm interest in what are rudely called vermin, in this way resembling Swift in England and Issa in Japan, but unlike them they have always sought to explain the great physical differences between them. A similar kind of story, but dealing with creatures of a supposedly higher class, is the following.

The Locust, the Ant, and the Kingfisher

Once upon a time, a locust, an ant, and a kingfisher were going to have a party. The ant went to look for some rice, the locust and the halcyon being in charge of the preparations for fish. The ant met a woman carrying her lunch on her head, so

he climbed up inside her clothes and nipped her in some secret place. She was so surprised, the bundle fell down off her head, and the ant got his rice. The locust and the kingfisher had gone off to a pond. The locust perched on a reed in the water, waiting to be swallowed by a fish. A fish saw the locust, and just as it jumped up and swallowed it the kingfisher pounced on it and took it off to the place of the party. The locust jumped out of the fish's mouth, and then began to quarrel with the kingfisher. "I caught it!" he cried. "No, not you, it was I!" screeched the kingfisher. Looking at them quarreling, the ant laughed and laughed until his waist grew quite weak and thin. The kingfisher's nose was pulled out long by the locust, and the locust was hit on the head so that his forehead is flat to this day.

Stories of clever children are as common in Korea as in China. The following may be from some Chinese original, though the hero is a Korean in history, but anyway it has the Korean spirit. It reminds us of the apochryphal stories of Napoleon when a child.

When Kang Kam Chan, 姜邯贊, was young he collected together many other children, and played at war. As they were building a castle of stones, a certain official came riding along, and shouted at the children to move their stones out of the way. "I have never heard," said the little Kang, "that a castle was supposed to get out of the way of people." The official could not help admiring the boy, and said to him, "What do you know about astronomy?" The boy retorted, "Why ask me about such far-off things when you don't know what is under your nose, or rather, over it?" The official got angry and said, "What on earth do you mean?" The boy asked, "How many eyelashes have you?" The official was silent and abashed, and rode on.

There are many tiger stories, one of the most famous being a variant of the well-known and world-wide tale of the skilful marks-

man. It is called "The Tiger of the Kumkang Mountains." The hunter learns first to shoot off the handle of a waterpot on his mother's head, without spilling a drop of water; to shoot the eye out of a needle at the distance of one league; to shoot down the highest leaf of a tall tree, firing over his shoulder; to shoot an ant off a cliff a league away without scratching the cliff. The story goes on to tell how he had to shoot and kill a priest, an old woman, a young girl, and a young man, all metamorphoses of the original tiger. This reminds us of Stevenson's fable, *The House of Eld*, where the young man must slay his uncle, his father, and his mother, all forms of the sorcerer. The Korean story also may have the same symbolic meaning of resistance to society, custom, and hypocrisy, and have the same moral; one that applies to Korea as much as to any country:

Old is the tree and the fruit good,
Very old and thick the wood.
Woodman, is you courage stout?
Beware! the root is wrapped about
Your mother's heart, your father's bones;
And like the mandrake comes with groans.

An Ironical Animal

Towards the end of the Koryo Period, 918-1392 A. D., there appeared a strange animal. It was in form like a cat, and ate everything that an ordinary cat eats, but also iron pots, saucepans, hoes, sickles, nails, anything made of iron,—which was indeed its favourite food. Not only so, but it ate red-hot iron, so that nobody could kill it, and people were at their wits' end to know what to do about it. But oddly enough, about the time of the first Emperor of the Li Dynasty it disappeared suddenly and was seen no more. Not knowing what to call it, they named it, "Impossible-to-explain".

A more interesting version of this story, of the same period, is the

following:

There once lived a widow, "somewhat stope in age," who lived by needle-work. One day as she was sewing as usual, a small creature crept out. She felt somehow alarmed at the sight of it and tried to stab it with her needle, but the creature ate the needle. "What a strange animal!" she said, and thinking it very interesting gave it a needle to eat every day. It got bigger and bigger and was soon able to eat any iron utensils. After a time it began to get violent and force its way into others' houses and eat up all their iron-ware. The government officials were ordered to suppress it, but their swords were of no avail; it simply ate them. When they threw it in the fire to burn it, it looked perfectly unconcerned. After a while its body became red-hot. It rolled out of the fire and ran about the city, and soon after the city of Kaesong fell into ruins.

This story like most, perhaps all stories, ends rather feebly, but the idea is good, and the moral may be that of Emerson:

Things are in the saddle,
And rule mankind.

The Grief of Frogs

There was once a frog who was exceedingly wilful and never paid the slightest attention to what his mother told him. In fact he always did exactly the opposite, as if on principle. When he was told to go to a hill, he would go to the river, and when told to go to the river, off he went to the hill.

As his mother got older she began to worry about what would happen after her death. One day she called her son to her and said, "I feel I am not going to live much longer, and I want to tell you what to do when I die. Please bury me on the other bank of the river." Soon afterwards, the mother died. Though he had been wilful and disobedient, the frog was not bad at

PLATE VIII

FLOWERS, BIRDS, CATS, PUPS

This picture was painted by Li Am, 李穡, some time in the Li Dynasty. The subject is not uncommon in the Ming Dynasty of China, and is a very simple and natural one, but it is all the more difficult to avoid falling into mere prettiness and sentimentality. What preserves it from this is the feline humour of the cat. It is our old friend death, up a tree and glaring round at the ornithological unattainable in one picture, and threatening canine impudence in the other. Besides this, there is in both pictures a harmonious and joyous dancing of all the forms of life.



heart, and when his mother was no more he suffered remorse and changed in his character. He wished now to please his mother, and buried her carefully and reverentially on the bank of the river. However, the mother had not wished to be buried there, and had thought that if she said that, he would bury her on the hill. The son did not know this, and so whenever it rained he became very worried. "Mother's grave will be washed away!" So from that time frogs always weep and cry when it rains.

Korean people are fond of and good at this kind of story, which gives a fantastic reason for some natural phenomenon. It is interesting to see how, like a good theme in music, certain situations are capable of an infinite number of variations. The next story is a version of the good-old-man, bad-old-man tale given on page 190.

A Rice-Hole

There was a temple on the mountain called Taewon San, 大圓山, near Pyongwon. 平原, which oddly enough had a small hole in the corner of the kitchen out of which there came every day enough rice to feed the priest there. Not only so, but when he had guests, the right amount for them too came out the hole, so the priest was never troubled about it. A strange thing, indeed!

Later on the priest changed, but the rice continued to come out for the new priest. However, he was greedy, and thought that if he enlarged the hole, more rice would come out. When he did so, only water flowed out, and he was forced to work hard for his food.

A Contest of Magic Arts

In ancient times there lived in the Kumkang Mountains a priest named So San Taesa,¹ 西山大師, famous for his knowledge

1. Japanese, Dai-shi.

of both Buddhism and Confucianism; he was patronised by the Court and revered by the common people. Just at the same time there was living in Mount Myohyng, 妙香山, another equally famous monk called Sa Myong Tang, 四明堂. During the war of Imjin, 壬辰, they planned the strategy, after the war suggested the provisions of the peace treaty, all this being done quite unofficially. The following concerns Sa Myong Tang before he had attained to enlightenment.

Sa Myong Tang was proud of his magical powers, the greatest in all Korea, but one day, hearing of the fame of So San in Mount Kumkang he thought he would make So San his disciple, and went to the Kumkang Mountains for that purpose. But before Sa Myong Tang reached there So San already knew he was coming, and called his acolyte and told him to go and meet him. The acolyte said, "I have never seen him, so how shall I recognise him?" "Well, he's a man who can make water run uphill, so you'll know him all right." When the acolyte met Sa Myong Tang, he was surprised, but did not show it and said, "Thank you for coming to meet me."

When he reached the temple, Sa Myong Tang made a sparrow alight on his hand and asked, "Is it alive or dead?" So San stood with one foot out of the door and said, "Am I coming in or going out?" Sa Myong Tang was confused, and they exchanged compliments. Going inside, So San brought a bowl of water and took a lot of fish out of it; it was like a conjuring trick. He then said, "We monks are not allowed to take life, but we may do so if we kill a thing and then bring it to life again." So saying, he began to eat them. "I'll have some too," said Sa Myong Tang, and they ate them all up. After a while, So San vomited all the fish he had eaten into the bowl of water, where they all swam about in a lively manner. Sa Myong Tang tried to do the same, but unfortunately not one of the regurgitated fish would or could swim.

Next, they began piling up eggs. Sa Myong Tang chose a level piece of ground and piled up the eggs most cleverly, one

upon another. So San did the same, but he piled up his eggs beginning at the top.

By now it was midday, and So San said, "Let's have some noodles," but when they were brought in they proved to be a bowlful of needles. However So San ate them up, smacking his lips over them. Sa Myong Tang hadn't the nerve even to pick up his chopsticks. It is said that from this time Sa Myong Tang became So San's disciple.

This story, or rather three stories, is interesting as showing how Zen, like Taoism, could be confused in the popular mind with magic. True humour is not found in magical feats. There is a very interesting and subtle difference here. The next story has fantasy and humour blended.

Floating Hills

Once upon a time, torrential rain fell in North Korea without ceasing, and Nine Dragons came down from the sky, riding on the rain. At a place called Yongwon, 寧遠, they cut off a mountain and sent it floating away. Off it went, and at last reached a place called Tokchon, 德川, and stopped there. In the meantime the rain had ceased, and the people of Yongwon said, "That's our mountain!" and every year they received tribute from the people of Tokchon, who were good-natured, and because the mountain had actually floated there. One year, long afterwards, there came to Tokchon a new governor, only thirteen years of age, but as clever as clever could be. The time came to pay the tribute, but the young governor said to the officials sent to get it, "No, no, it won't do. Tell the governor of Yongwon that this year it is we who will receive tribute, and bring it back with you." The officials went back empty-handed, and when he was told about the matter the governor of Yongwon said, "What do they mean? They paid the tribute every year so far; why should not they pay it this year too?" Things

were at a deadlock, but the young governor declared, "This mountain is yours. It has come to our part of the country as a guest, and must pay board and lodging. If you can't pay these, then take the mountain back with you! And anyway, we seem to have paid tribute for a long time, but that was a mistake, so we must count the number of years and find out the total amount, and reckon the interest on it, and you must pay us the money back." The governor of Yongwon was defeated.

Going back to the Nine Dragons, they had cleverly succeeded in making the mountain float down from Yongwon; now they wanted to do the same thing in the east, but they failed, so they tried at Onchonli, 溫泉里, and cut the hill and floated it away. They enjoyed this hugely, and hurried off to cut off a hill at Sashik, 社食, called Pangcho Ryong, 黃處嶺. On the way they met a woman water-carrier. As they passed by her, she glanced at them. She didn't know they were dragons, but murmured contemptuously, "Hm! like a lot of dogs!" At that moment the Nine Dragons turned into stones, looking like nine cows lying down. The woman also turned into stone, and stood there like one carved out of the rock.

This story is a medley of mythology, hydrology, orology, humour, and wit.



以刺休居士所定圖定之

生於貞享六年八月



PLATE IX

"THREE FLAT, TWO FULL"

This picture was painted by Ogawa Haritsu, 小川破笠, 1663-1747, when he was 64 years old. A haijin of the Bashō School, he learned painting from Itchō, though his works are said to belong to the Tosa School.

The young woman is an o-kame, or o-tafuku. She has two plump cheeks, a flat forehead, a flat nose, and a flat chin, that is, "three flats and two fulls." Her kimono is decorated with bamboo leaves, and with the characters for snow, 雪, hail, 霰, and so on. The face itself is fat but delicate. The hair-do is strangely modern, with an apparent permanent wave and a pony tail. A picture of a fan with a picture on it is itself a kind of joke, but the point is that unbeauty is better than beauty, especially in the human face.

The expression "Three flat, two full" was invented by Sun Fang, 孫昉, an imperial physician of the Sung Dynasty, who called himself "Four Rests," 四休. When asked why, he explained that one was eating the proper amount of food; the second, to wear proper clothes and keep warm; the third was "san-pei ni-man"; the fourth, not to be greedy, and just grow older. "San-pei ni-man" means to be satisfied with insufficiency. Then this was used of the face. In 1784 Shokusanjin published *Danna Sanjin Geishashū*, 檀那山人藝舍集, a collection of kyōshi, one being:

美女不如惡女情，莫嫌二滿與三平。
阿彌阿德阿多福，盡是息災延命名。

A beautiful woman is not so tender as an ugly one;
Don't dislike a "two full, three flat"!
An o-kame, an o-toku, an o-tafuku,—
They all ward off calamities and lengthen your life.

PART THREE

JAPAN

CHAPTER XIII

Japanese Humour

First, of humour in general. Hazlitt says at the beginning of his often brilliant and always stimulating lectures on *The Comic Writers of Great Britain*:

We weep at what thwarts or exceeds our desires in serious matters: we laugh at what only disappoints our expectations in trifles.

This is not so. What we laugh at and what we weep at are the same things. The difference is simply in the will, the (unconscious) will to laugh, or to cry. For this reason suffering and death are the best subjects for humour, and he who can laugh at these is beyond their power. Here we must say once for all that humour is the humour, that is, the temper, the flavour, the nature of the universe. God has a dreadful grin on his face. Of course he has an infinite variety of expressions, but this is the most characteristic. Thoreau, whose every word is suffused with a sublime humour, says the same thing in more temperate language; he is speaking of that most comic of all subjects, death, the death of his brother John in 1842:

Soon the ice will melt, and the blackbirds sing along the river which he frequented, as pleasantly as ever. The same everlasting serenity will appear in this face of God, and we will not be sorrowful if he is not.

From this cosmic joy down through the transcendence of Dickens,

the violence of Juvenal, the misanthropy of Swift, the mockery of Byron, the lightness of La Fontaine, the kindliness of Goldsmith, the nonsense of Carroll and Lear, to the "loud laugh that speaks the vacant mind," and the practical jokes of the half-animal school-boy,—in all these there is a perception of the inmost nature of things, the unresolvable contradictions, the tragi-comedy of the universe. And this perception is not so much a discovery as a creation. It is mankind that has made itself human by its sweet and bitter laughter. When we are asked which is deeper, tragedy or comedy, we hesitate, inclining to say tragedy, and the Comic Spirit is silent; it will never urge its claims, but with a more becoming modesty make way for suffering and death. There is loud weeping and lamentation, and the Comic Spirit hides its face in compassion, while Job curses God and wishes to die. But Walter Hylton¹ says:

He that cometh home and findeth nought there but dirt and smoke and a scolding wife will quickly run out of it But do you not run out of it. Stay at home and endure the pains and discomfort. For behind this nothingness, behind this dark and formless shape of evil, is Jesus hid in his joy.

In Mr. Pecksniff the hypocrite and Mrs. Gamp the ghoul we see more truth and comfort than in Socrates and Florence Nightingale. But paradoxes end by wearying. Let us quote rather from a humorist whose light touch has been celebrated by another master, Lytton Strachey. In his 1668 Preface, La Fontaine writes:

Je n'appelle pas gaieté ce qu'excite le rire; mais un certain charme, un air agréable qu'on peut donner à toutes sortes de sujets, même les plus sérieux.

Humour is not a particular attitude of the mind, but the mind itself. the whole mind's free acceptance of all things in their self-and-

¹ died 1396.

other contradiction. In *Notes on English Verse Satire* Humbert Wolf says that "the task of the satirist is . . . to kill the causes of spiritual death," and this is finely said and a precious truth—perhaps the most life-giving truth a man can grasp—but in the mere words there is contained an equally fatal error. The danger is that we may throw out the baby together with the bath-water. It is possible to kill the causes of death without bringing anything to life. Real humour, as in senryu, reforms by not intending to; it destroys by the sweetness of its smile; it damns with faint praise.

The universe has no sense of humour, apparently. How about the hippopotamus, or the rhinoceros which, according to Ogden Nash, is so preproceros? These and other creatures are not comical to themselves, nor are we to them; crocodiles are said by Mandeville to be "Serpents that slay men, and they eat them weeping". But they are funny to us (at a distance), and still more important, we are funny to ourselves. The great defect of humanity is precisely a deficiency of humour. Oscar Wilde says:

Humanity takes itself too seriously. It's the world's original sin. If the cave-men had known how to laugh, history would have been different.

Josh Billings says the same thing in other words:

Confess your sins to God, and they will be forgiven; confess them to men, and you will be laughed at.

It would be too much to blame all the woes of Japan upon an insufficiency of humour; however, it might not be wrong to say that the absence of religious wars in the Far East was due to the sense of humour seen in the many senryu on Buddhism.

One great difference between Japanese and European humour is that there is no spitefulness or rudeness or personal animus in Japanese humour. There is hardly any criticism of the deity or of

nature, until Meiji times. There is no one who will curse God and die. Swift says, "The chief end I propose to myself in all my labours is to vex the world rather than divert it", and this is true of most European satirists, but Japanese satire always puts diversion first.

Another form of humour lacking in Japanese literature is that of nonsense. There is nothing like "The Walrus and the Carpenter," or, "T'was brillig, and the slithy toves". The English relax themselves with nonsense. "Write upon prawns, rheumatism, Armstrong guns, Birds of Paradise, or raspberry jam—so you write," says Lear, but on the whole the Japanese of the later Edo Period blend the nonsense with the reality; the real Edokko did not think "Business is business", or "Time is money." Swift says again:

I have employed all the wit and humour which I am master in the following history; wherein I have endeavoured to laugh mankind out of their favourite follies and vices.

It is difficult to believe Fielding and Juvenal and Swift and anybody else when they tell us that their object is to reform the world. We may believe it of Shelley or Christ or Socrates (though their real motives are another matter) but the object of humour of any kind, and especially of Japanese humour, like that of poetry or music or painting, is simply itself. In other words, it has no object, no cause or effect; it is transcendental in nature.

There are two contradictory aspects of humour: its preoccupation with the darker side of human nature, our meanness and cowardliness and self-deception; and on the other hand its human warmth, warmer than Buddhist compassion, not so possessive as Christian love, not dangerously violent like romantic love. By laughing at both good and evil in the world, humour once more transcends both. To speak in a very grand way, the ultimate origin of humour lies in the nature of the universe. Emerson says in *Unity*, of the world at its inception:

A spell is laid on sod and stone,
Night and day were tampered with.

These lines express the feeling we all have in our most enlightened mood, that there is something odd about things that appears to the intellect as unreason and paradox. The Clown says in *Twelfth Night*:

Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun: it shines everywhere.

Take the following example of this truth:

吉原に向いて上野で首をつり
Yoshiwara ni muite ueno de kubi wo tsuru

He hanged himself
At Ueno,
Facing the Yoshiwara.

Death is always terrible: to commit suicide more so, but to do so for some wretched prostitute is a kind of parody. The man has spent all his money, all his patrimony on the fawning creature who now will have nothing more to do with him. He foolishly imagines that she will be touched by his death for her. This Hogarthian picture—perhaps Goya is closer—contains all the elements of a good *senryu*: a personal, sensational experience: biting criticism; realism, no fancy or fantasy; humour; universal significance; human warmth without sentimentality or even pity. The parody disinfests the scene of any falsity. We see a human being stripped bare of all but his painful life and solitary death. There is also, by the way, another element, seen in the place, Ueno, opposite the Yoshiwara, of exhibitionism; even the greatest men are not entirely free from it. As for the quality of universal significance, we may safely say that the relations of the sexes, as Dorothy Parker has so poignantly shown, are the least satisfactory thing in the world; that bachelordom is lonely and unbearable, but to be married is just one nuisance after

another. And going back to the senryu, what a bitterness it adds to Marvell's lines:

Had we but world enough and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.

The study of humour is thus an important element in a liberal education, indispensable for getting through the world with the minimum of friction at home and abroad.

Humour is free, free of morality, free of the intellect, free of beauty, free of the relative and free of the absolute. In the last analysis, humour is equivalent to poetry, which is also free of all these things, and like it, humour can fall on the one hand into the coarseness of the body, and on the other into the artificiality of the mind. It is the mind in its destructive as well as its constructive function. In his *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour* Shaftesbury states:

'Twas the saying of an ancient sage, Gorgias Leontinus, that humour was the only test of gravity, and gravity of humour. For a subject that would not bear raillery was suspicious; and a jest which would not bear a serious examination was certainly false wit.

All that is strong and true in a man, in a nation, in an art, can be and must be tested by destructive ridicule; all that is weak and sentimental and self-deceiving in them is what has not borne and cannot bear the critical grin.

In Japan humour is less destructive and more pervasive than in England; it is less on the surface. Facetiousness is unknown, and sarcasm is forbidden, or at least dangerous. With regard to the difference between English and Japanese humour, we may say first, that the history of English literature is that of an alternation between poetry and prose. In verse, "poetical" verse is sometimes in fashion, for example in the second half of the 19th century; at

others prosaic verse is popular, as in the years around 1700. In prose we have the poetical prose of Browne and the prosaic prose of Swift and Newman.

The history of Japanese literature is rather that of an alternation of seriousness and lightness. In *waka*, it is mixed in the *Manyōhū*, separated in the *Kokinshū*, dividing again in the creation of *kyōka*, light or humorous *waka*, in the 18th century. *Senryū* branches off from *haiku*, but itself again subdivides into serious *senryū*, that is, *kosenryū* (old *senryū*) and *kyōku*, wit and jokes and nothing else. Using the word "humour" in a broader and deeper sense than usual, it could be said, that Japanese literature is a (serious or light) humorous "criticism of life"; that Japanese culture is an expression of a love of nature that always involves in it a certain *omoshiro*, an interest that smiles; that the ideal Japanese has a certain "softness" of mind, a lack of that logical and moral rigidity which is the antithesis of humour. There are some exceptions to this, *Bushidō* and the idea of honour being the most conspicuous example. But this fanaticism, this ego-less egoism is precisely the danger which the comic spirit is constantly avoiding, and it is therefore not at all surprising that the nation which has added to world dictionaries such words as *harakiri* should have conceived a way of life which can laugh at all things without exception. This Japanese view of life is not so much original perhaps, as an instinctive choice of one part of Chinese culture. The Chinese have a love of simplicity and asceticism, but a still stronger love of wealth and gorgeousness. Of the two kinds of culture, that associated with poverty, and that arising from riches, the Japanese have always, so far, preferred the former, and rather despised the latter.

In Section 18 of the *Tsurezuregusa* we are told about a Chinese hermit, Hsuyu, of the T'ang Dynasty, who owned nothing, and drank water from the stream, scooping it up in his hand. Somebody, seeing this and feeling sorry for him, gave him a gourd. He hung

this on the branch of a tree, but when the wind blew, it clattered about, so he threw it away and again drank water out of his hand. For the Japanese, this kind of story corresponded, until the Meiji Era, to the success stories of the West. Again, the hermits and solitary sages of China appealed to the Japanese even more perhaps than they did to the Chinese themselves. Kanzan, (Hanshan) for example, in his solitary and simple life, his lack of worldly ambition, his apparent irresponsibility, represented an ideal to be yearned after, if not to be imitated. Kanzan looked upon himself, upon the world, upon enlightenment, as something un-understandable, paradoxical, and laugh-at-able. One of his poems is the following, in which the way to his dwelling place is the Way to Paradise:

可笑寒山道 而無車馬蹤
 蹤谿難記曲 疊嶂不知重
 泣露千般草 吟風一樣松
 此時迷徑處 形問影何從。

The way to Kanzan's is a queer one;
 No ruts or hoof-prints are seen.
 Valleys wind into valleys,
 Peaks rise above peaks;
 Grasses are bright with dew,
 And pine-trees sigh in the breeze.
 Even now you do not know?
 The reality is asking the shadow the way.

The point of this quotation from Kanzan is that humour, as distinct from wit, can be produced by and exist among and be appreciated by a people that has a love of poverty. Wit is for the rich, to hide their shameful riches. Blessed are the poor, for they shall laugh at their poverty. Since humour pervades Japanese life so universally, the varieties of humour are correspondingly numerous. However, when we drag out the humour from this or that custom, art, and so on, something disagreeable happens. In one of the *Idlers* Dr.

Johnson tells us that "nothing in more hopeless than a scheme of merriment". Books of humour must always be to a large extent a failure, because they have collected together what should remain separate; they have extracted the humorous spirit that lacks the body of reality,—in a word, humour is like pure poetry or abstract art, we soon weary of it and turn back to life, where humour comes and goes naturally. Thus to point out all the humorous elements of Japanese life and culture is an onerous and ungrateful task; but it must be done, once.

The order, India, China, Korea, Japan, besides being indicative of geographical and historical relations, has a deeper significance. Just as the mysticism of the *Upanishads*, when brought back to earth by the practical Chinese, developed after 3,000 years into the material-spirituality of haiku as created by Bashō, so that spirituality, which appears as paradox and irrationality to the serious mind, at last gave rise to the remarkable flourishing of senryu in 18th century Japan. The Indian ascetic ascends from the dichotomy of this troubled earth into the holy peace of non-being. But the Chinese realised or discovered, in their experience of life, that we rise out of illusion only into a vacuum, and they understood that most difficult yet most practical truth that illusion is enlightenment and enlightenment is no different from that same illusion. This experience is the Zen experience, and in their own way, the Japanese after realising, that is, making real, this truth with regard to nature in the 17th century, began in the 18th century to apply it to human life, to the disease, violence, hypocrisy, sentimentality, deceit, and stupidity which the waka poets and after them the haiku poets had still omitted or glossed over. Sankara, the great neo-Brahminist of the 9th century A.D., says:

For me there is no death, no fear, no distinction of caste. I have no father, mother, birth, relatives, or friends. For me there is neither teacher nor pupil.

This may be said equally by the satirist and the writer of comedy. But on the other hand we must remember that without death and fear and snobbery and mothers-in-law and the pretence of reform, there would be no I to know there is none. So the comic poet, no less than the tragic one, must be beyond the objects of his smiles or tears, and yet united indivisibly with them. A pitiless pity—this is the truest and deepest state of mind for us, and it is found most eminently and consistently among the unknown or forgotten writers of senryu. They themselves wrote, no doubt, to pass the time, to get the prizes which were offered for the best verses. They were the army of mercenaries of whom Housman wrote the *Epitaph*:

What God abandoned these defended,
And saved the sum of things for pay.

What is the difference between Japanese and Chinese humour? This can be brought out by comparing Indian and Chinese and Japanese cultures. The Indian was spiritual and idealistic; the Chinese made the Buddhism and Hinduism which they derived from India more practical, more earthy. The Japanese went a step further. Their culture was not only that of saints and sages, of philosophers and hermits, it penetrated into the lower ranks of society. Chinese culture was to a large extent that of rich people, at least of scholars, but in Japan, especially from the seventeenth century, there was a poetry of poverty, quite different from that of the Renaissance culture of Europe, based as much of it was upon power and wealth.

Senryu, no less than haiku arises from poverty, that material poverty which invariably accompanies spiritual poverty. "Blessed are the poor in spirit How hardly shall a rich man enter the Kingdom of Heaven." All poetry and humour has this selflessness, desirelessness, "Thy will be done," in it, and God's will is that we should laugh and sing together as did the angels when the world

was first created.

Japanese humour, is more subtle, more poetical than Chinese. It avoids vulgarity and obscenity on the one hand, and the excessively high tone of Chinese literature on the other. Chinese poetry has as little humour as that of Milton or Collins. Japanese literature begins with humour, and never loses it. Humour, *senryu*, are held in low esteem in the land of their birth, it is true, but this is partly Chinese influence, or rather, the example of Chinese literature. Further, besides this snobbery, there is the fact that humour is "a criticism of life", an expression of the inherent weaknesses of human nature, of the divine nature, and though we are not entirely unwilling to take a glance for once in a while at the painful truth of things, we do not wish to dwell upon it, to live with it. Another point is this: to walk the Way of Humour requires more courage than to walk the Way of Poetry. To live the life of haiku it is necessary to be poor and obscure; it is a difficult and narrow way, and few and fewer there be that find it. But for humour, for the Way of *Senryu*, we have to do something far more difficult: we have to live in time, not eternity; with folly, not with wisdom; to see God as a cosmic flea-cracker rather than as a divine architect; as a destroyer of beauty rather than as its creator.

Yet the world is not entirely a discord, a mere "number of things" which Stevenson tells us should makes us as "happy as kings" do not look. Japanese literature is pre-eminent in puns and playing on words, and most expert in parody, the weakest form of European literature. Puns, philosophically considered, may be regarded as the apparently accidental congruence of certain sounds which reveals the "one hidden stuff" of which all things are made. For example, Lewis Carroll says:

He thought he saw an Elephant
That practised on a fife;
He looked again, and found it was

A letter from his wife.
 "At length I realise," he said,
 "The bitterness of life."

When we read this, we realise, more or less unconsciously, that a fife and a wife and life have some unexpected connection, revealed by the rhyme. (It is hardly necessary to point out the relation.) Rhyme in ordinary poetry also has this unrecognised function. In other words, rhyme is a sort of pun. This metaphysical, transcendental nature of words has been degraded in all countries and at all times into a magic power, the power of the word, the Word of God, the Um, A. (The expression "degraded" is used because instead of the pure power expressed by names, revealed onomatopoeically, we have applied power, power *over* others.) In Japanese poetry and drama puns were taken as something essential rather than ornamental; as an evidence, or rather as an example of the fact that the world is not mere discord but has some harmony too.

Something should be said, even though in English, about the Japanese language. Every language is an expression of the life-feeling of the race that created and uses it; the language keeps that "feeling" steady and continuous. More exactly, at the moment that the language is being spoken, that is the life-feeling. Without speech, silent or spoken, a person, a nation does not really exist at all. When we hear a Japanese talking Japanese we hear the Japanese spirit. When he says, "*Sō deshō ka ne*," the Japanese world-view is instantaneously perceivable.

There is little stress; a democracy of sounds in which even the mere particles are as important as nouns or verbs. This is the natural religion of the Japanese people, a kind of Hinduism in which every person in the world, every star in the sky, every blade of grass in the field has its own particular right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, though only human beings are foolish enough to exercise their "right" to the detriment of these. The

grammatical subject may be absent, not omitted for the sake of brevity, but unexpressed because strictly speaking non-existent. "Aishite iru" really means, "there is loving", not "I love you". The separate existence of myself and you are felt so little, compared with the activity of loving, that "I" and "you" do not move the vocal chords at all.

When we listen carefully to a Japanese talking, if we are extremely sensitive linguistically and anthropologically, we shall hear that the words used are not so compact, not so well-defined and limited, and the speaker's ego is not so independent, isolated, and clear-cut as in the case of an Englishman speaking. The Japanese mind and speech have a certain jelly-fish quality, an interpermeable character which finds it difficult to call a spade a spade or even an agricultural implement, because after all it may be used for an infinite number of purposes.

The Japanese language is thus seen to be especially fit for humour, in its equality of all things (humour, like love makes all things equal) in the absence of the laugher and laughed at (no megalomania or inferiority complex) in the absence of Christianity (no limitation of the objects of risibility). Sentences without subject or object, sentences without verbs, sentences which may mean anything you please,—these are themselves the very form and pressure of humour. Thus the reader of this book in English must make a tremendous effort to relax, must transcend all his transcendentalities and come back to earth, must be "all men to all things," must give up all his and other people's moral, aesthetic, scientific, and eschatological judgements,—and be like the Cheshire Cat, a bodiless grin.

To come finally to religion, the Japanese can never become Christians in the European sense of the word until they give up the Japanese language and adopt some (Christian) European language. Compare, "We thank Thee Lord for this our food," with "*Itadaki-masu.*" In the Japanese, who receives? receives what? receives from

whom? Modern speech is mostly the camouflage of our ignorance. The Japanese language reveals it. If then every English man, woman, and child learns Japanese, as of course they should, one effect and the most important will be the realisation that truth and untruth, you and I, is and is not, are not so distinct and mutually exclusive as usually thought or pretended. Conversely, Japanese people, when they learn English, learn at the same time that, after all, though

Black's not so black;—nor white so *very* white,
yet black is black and white is white.

CHAPTER XIV

The Influence of Chinese Humorous Literature upon Japanese Humorous Literature

The difficulty of this subject is not the lack of materials, but the fact that much of the material is immaterial, in the sense that it belongs to spoken, as distinct from written literature. Humorous stories became a recognised form of Japanese literature from about the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Keichō Era, 1596-1614, and flourished most in the Anei Era, 1771-1781. The reasons for these two facts are many, the chief being the changing of fashions of literature in Japan, the gradual percolation of Chinese learning down to the lower classes, and the publication of translations of Chinese humorous stories.

From the earliest times, scholars and especially priests had brought back with them not only sutras and the Chinese classics and novels, but the as yet unprinted stories that the ordinary Chinese openly, and officials secretly, enjoyed to tell and be told. Then the original stories in Chinese were imported into Japan, not very long after they were published in China, we may suppose. Japanese scholars could of course read these in the original, and no doubt many of them did so, on the sly at least. Between 1617 and the Genroku Era, 1688-1703, twenty collections of Chinese stories in Chinese were published. In the ten years of Anei, ninety appeared. They began to decrease from Bunei, 1818-1829, only three being published in Keiō, 1865-1869, the era just before Meiji. Many of these Chinese books were supplied with a sort of Japanese transliteration beside the Chinese characters, but it seems that the knowledge of Chinese literature on the part of the Japanese in Edo was at least as great as that of

Latin and Greek by the English in London of the same period. Especially in the second half of the 18th century, Japan was at peace and prosperous, *kyōka* and *senryū* were being written, *kokkeibon*, witty and erotic books, were being published. Besides the publication of Chinese stories, or perhaps the cause of it, was the fact that there occurred both a change of taste in Chinese scholarship, and a corresponding permeation of Chinese learning throughout even the common people. Up to the end of the 17th century, Chinese studies had been moralistic, patriotic, and economic, literature being far less stressed, but by the Hōreki and Meiwa Eras, 1751-1771, Chinese learning was connected with painting and poetry and drama. In addition to all this, in the Hōreki Era, 1751-1764, Japanese literary men began to write humorous stories in Chinese. They had been writing prose and verse in Chinese for a thousand years already, but the use of *kanji*, Chinese characters only, for comical tales was an innovation. Oka Hakku, 岡白駒, a scholar of Chinese literature, published in 1751 a book called *Kaikōshingo*, 開口新語, which is a Chinese translation of Japanese humorous stories, and his modifications of Chinese humorous stories, especially from *Hsiaofu*. Almost half the stories of such famous collections of Japanese humorous stories as *Kikijōzu*, 聞上手, and later imitations, are skilful adaptations of Chinese stories. The question arises, to what extent did the Japanese authors of such collections read the original Chinese, that is, *Hsiaofu*, and other books, stories in Chinese written by Japanese? In opposition to the opinion given above, many scholars think that the Japanese editors read only translated selections, or, without knowing it, chose stories of Chinese origin from earlier Japanese humorous stories, *hanashibon*, 噺本. To support this theory we have the following story from *Ki no Kusuri*, 氣の藥, published in 1779. It shows the blind leading the blind, as they still do, and always will.

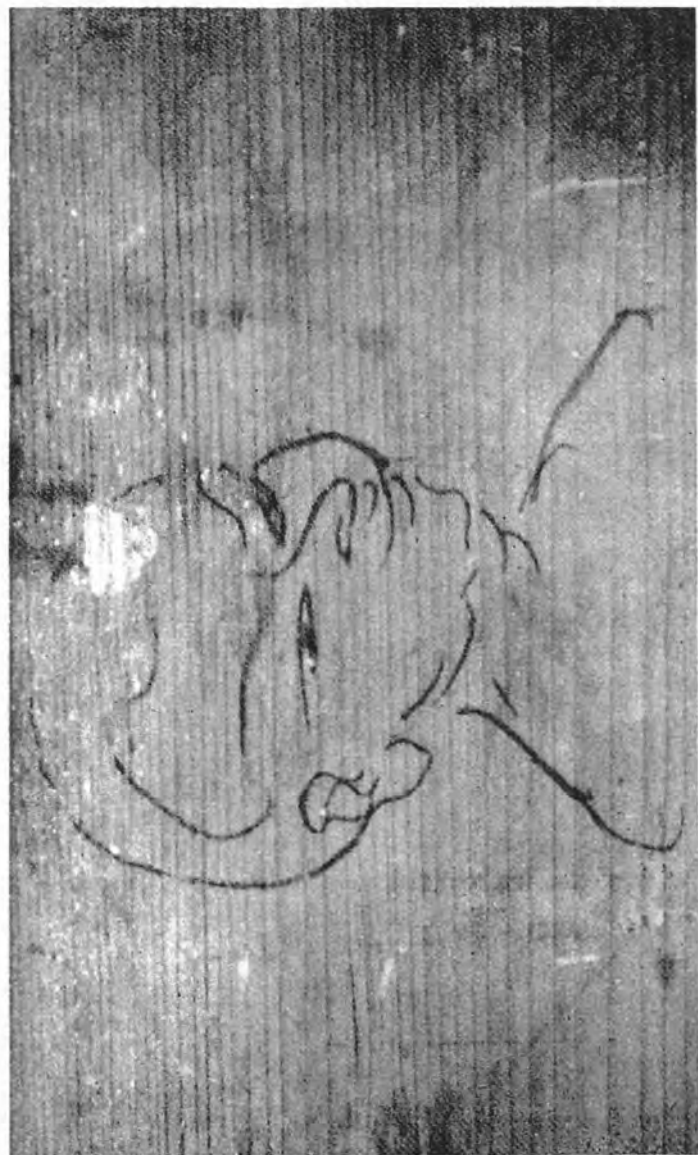
“This book called *Kaikōshingo*,—what’s it about?” “Well,

PLATE X

SCRIBBLING FROM HORYUJI

When Hōryūji Temple, built at the end of the 6th century, was being renovated, many pictures and writings were found scribbled on the ceilings of the Golden Hall and the Five-Storyed Tower, on the plain wood hidden by the beams. In the Kondō there are about 90 sketches and 100 letters, and 10 sketches and 40 letters in the Tower. Many of the sketches are of men's faces, and of eyes, noses, etc., evidently as practice drawings by those who did the wall-paintings. A great many of these pictures are erotic. This shows two things, that artists are more sexual than religious and that nature, as Horace said, "though you drive her out with a pitchfork, will ever return" through the ceiling.

This portrait of a boy, found on the ceiling of the Tower, seems to be that of a non-Japanese, and was chosen not as being the most ludicrous, but because it is remarkably expressive and alive, and is also unique in being a bust instead of merely a head, as all the others are. It makes one wish to see the face and eye, at once penetrating and witty, of the artist himself.



they say it's a book of funny stories in *kanbun*," (漢文, Chinese letters). "Oh, really?" "I heard someone read it. Some of the stories are very short, only one word!" "That must be because it is *kanbun*." "By the way, what is *kanbun*?" "Well, I'm not quite sure, but I suppose it means *hanbun*" (半分, half).

This story makes fun of the illiterate literary people who pretended to a knowledge of Chinese, especially when it had a Japanese transliteration beside it.

Comical Chinese stories began to be translated into Japanese from the Hōreki Era, 1751-1763. Kyōshi, light (Chinese) verse had been written from the Kamakura Period, 1192-1333, and Ikkyū in the 15th century composed the *Kyōunshū*, but it was not until the Anei Era, 1772-1780, that it attained the best that this kind of literature was capable of. It owed much of its effect, of course, to the contrast of the seriousness and difficulty of the form (of Chinese verse) with the flippant (Japanese) content. In the fifth year of Meiwa, 1768, *Hsiaofu*, was published, and two years after, *Ch'ienhsilu*, 前歡錄. *Hsiaofu*, one of the great comic books of all time, appeared at the time (actually just after) the best senryū were produced, about a hundred years after its publication in China.

The first and best collections of comical stories in Japanese literature are *Gigen Yōkishū*, 戯言養氣集, *Kinō wa Kyō no Monogatari*, 昨日は今日の物語, "Yesterday is Today Stories", and *Seisuishō*, 醒睡笑, "Wake-sleep Laughter," 1624-43. *Yōkishū* has about 70 stories; *Kinō wa Kyō no Monogatari*, 154; *Seisuishō* about 990. The *Seisuishō* is the largest of all the hundreds of collections of humorous stories, and was their model.

The best collection of comical stories in Chinese literature is *Hsiaofu*, of the Ming Dynasty. Before this, already in the Sung Dynasty there is a comical literature, *Hsiaolin*, 笑林, *Chiblin*, 志林, and so on, but these are mostly jokes or satire, of little value as

literature. It may well be, however, that there were many masterpieces of story-telling, not now extant. The editor of *Hsiaofu* was Feng Monglung, 馮夢龍, (the pen-name of Mo Hanchai Chujen, 墨憨齋主人; he was born in 1574 and died at the age of 72). The book contains about 720 stories, both traditional ones and those of the editor. There are four volumes, divided altogether into thirteen parts: 古艶, about officials; 腐流, Confucianists; 世譚, poor people; 方術, doctors; 廣萃, priests; 殊稟, eccentrics; 細娛, good-for-nothings; 刺俗, worldly people; 閨風, erotic stories; 形體, cripples; 謬誤, mistakes; 日用, everyday things; 閩語, miscellaneous. It is not quite clear when *Hsiaofu* was completed, but it seems to have been somewhere between 1604 and 1644, the year of the birth of Bashō. During these forty years, China was undergoing rapid changes. In 1616, the liberal Ming changed to the conservative Ching. It is possible that Feng Monglung collected the stories of *Hsiaofu* as a resistance against the rigid Confucian policy of the new government, and because he was afraid the stories would be lost and the tradition of (rustic and erotic) humour would be destroyed.

Chinese popular literature had a great deal of influence upon Japanese semi-popular literature in the Edo Period, particularly upon ghost stories, 怪異小説, moral novels, 讀本, and humorous stories, 噺本. *Seisuishō* resembles *Hsiaofu* strongly. *Seisuishō* appeared some time during the Hōei Period, 寶永, 1624-1643, and may well have been influenced by the more or less contemporary *Hsiaofu*. *Shihwenluichū*, 事文類聚, of the Sung Period, was translated into Japanese in 1666, and stories based on it are found in *Rikuu Monogatari*, 理窟物語, in the next year, and *Hanashi Monogatari*, 噺物語, a year later, and other early hanashibon. But even before the translation of *Shihwenluichū* there were of course copies of various Chinese collections of humorous stories, for example *Fēngyüehhsiaotán*, 風月笑談. In 1752, *Keiō Kai*, 雜誌解頤, (the title was changed to *Kaikōshinwa*, 開口新話, in 1797) was published. It is the earliest Japanese collec-

tion of Chinese humour, and contains 50 stories, mostly from *Hsiaohai's ungchu*, 笑海叢珠, and *Hsiaoyüanchienchin*, 笑苑千金, old books of humour published in the T'ang or Sung Dynasties.

We now come to the question of the origins of Japanese comical tales in Chinese tales, and the changes that occurred in their oral and written transmission. Many of them, more than we suspect probably, have their ultimate origins in India. Buddhism took a thousand years to come from India to Japan, via China and Korea. It would be wrong to suppose that tales, especially humorous ones, took so long, and this shows the wisdom of (oriental) human nature, for the wisdom of laughter is infinitely more valuable than the pessimism and world-denying of primitive Buddhism. Let us take some examples of Japanese humorous tales and the Chinese tales they come from.

In the *Kyōgenki*, 狂言記, there is a play called "A Treasure Hat," 寶の笠, (the hat being the umbrella-like one worn at that time by travellers and farmers). The story is as follows.

A countryman goes up to the capital, and meets a mountebank, from whom he buys a magic hat which is supposed to render the wearer invisible. The master puts it on, and the man says he can't see him. The master says he would like to see the hat make somebody invisible. Then the man says, "There is an exception to this. You can see a man who is faithful to his master; he won't become invisible. Let's put the hat away in the storehouse." The master forces the man to wear it. "I can see you!" "Oh, is that really so?"

This story seems to be one of the many adaptations of the Chinese story in *Hsiaolin* given on page 99. A version of it appears in *Hsiehchuehlu*, 諧噱錄, by Liu Noyen, 劉訥言, of the T'ang Period. The story is called *Chiuni*, 就溺, "Drowning."

A man named Huanhsüan deceived Ku K'aichih, and said,

"This is a changyuyeh, 蟬羽葉, a leaf of invisibility, and if you get under this leaf, you will become invisible." So Ku K'aichih held up the leaf to his forehead and pissed in front of Huan-hsüan, and believed himself to be invisible, and valued the leaf highly.

A similar story comes in *Hsiaotsan*, 笑贊, by Chao Nanhsing, 趙南星, at the end of the Ming Era.

A man was given a kind of grass called yinshents'ao, 隱身草, "hiding-body-grass," supposed to make a man invisible to others. He went to the city, stole money from somebody, who threatened to strike him. "Strike away," he said; "I'm invisible!"

These stories of invisibility, of two kinds, using a leaf or a hat, have probably a Buddhist origin. The Principles of Hiding the Form, 隱形法, or the Art of Concealing the Body, 隱身術, are found in some sutras, for example the *Zekegon Sutra*, 是華嚴經, where it says that if a medicine called Aniana, 安膳那, is put on his eyelids, a man will become invisible. According to one tradition, Nagarjuna, before he became a priest, had already learned the art of invisibility, and one day entered the King's harem and violated one of the ladies-in-waiting. This art could be and was used from the beginning in two kinds of ways, malefic and benevolent, but both have some elements of humour in them. The same is true of all the European forms, which probably derive from the same (pre-Buddhist) Indian source. The taking over and surpassing of such magical practices corresponds exactly to the not altogether unhumorous account of the competition between Moses and the Egyptian magicians.

A great many stories are connected with a mirror, and once again the origin seems to be India, since all the stories are too much alike to have been independently evolved. In one of the Avadanas, the parable sutras, comes the following story:

There was once a rich man who had a new¹ wife; they loved and respected each other very much. The husband said to his wife, "Go to the kitchen, and fetch me a jug of wine; let's drink together." She went to the kitchen and opened the jar, and saw her reflection in it, and cried, "Here is another woman!" and became exceedingly jealous, and said to her husband when she came back, "You beast, you! You keep another woman in a jar, and yet you married me!" The husband went to the kitchen, and, opening the jar, saw someone in it. Now the husband was as jealous and angry as the wife, and shouted, "You are keeping another man!" Both got more and more excited, and insisted on their own rightness and the other's wrongness. A Brahmin who was intimate with the couple came to see them and settle their quarrel. He went into the kitchen, looked in the pot, and saw a Brahmin in it. He also got angry and said, "You have an arbitrator in the jar; why are you pretending to fight with each other?" And he went off indignantly. Then there came a nun, much respected by the rich man, who had heard about the quarrel. She also went to the kitchen and looked in the jar, saw another nun, and also got jealous and went off in a huff. At last came a man of the Buddhist Way. When he looked in the jar, knowing what he saw in it to be only a reflection of his own mind, he grieved and said, "The stupidity of people, who take the false for the real!" He said to the rich man, "Call your wife, and let us look into the jar all together." Then he added, "I will now take out the one who is in the jar." Lifting up a big stone he dashed it against the jar. Only wine ran out all over the place. Husband and wife understood that it was just an illusion, a mirage, and felt ashamed of themselves.

This is an excellent parable, so much more philosophical and so much less moralistic than the Christian parables, and all the easier to

1. I have inserted "new", otherwise we can hardly understand how she should not have seen her face in the jar before.

turn into a comical story. What interested readers more than the fact that all things are illusion, was the illusion itself. Unenlightenment is far more attractive than enlightenment, and this shows that unenlightenment, stupidity, and madness must have some absolute or even super-absolute value.

In the Chinese *Peinêngsoyen*, 北夢瑣言, a collection of stories of famous men of the T'ang Period, brought to Japan in the Sung Period perhaps, the story is simple, perhaps simplified:

A husband takes a mirror home to his wife who looks in, tells her mother her husband has brought home a new wife. The mother looks in, and says, "Yes, and she has brought her mother with her!"

The version of *Hsiaolin* will be found on page 101. What seems to be the first Japanese translation is in the *Hōmotsushū*, 寶物集, Stories of Buddhism, written by Taira no Yasuyori in the 12th century.

The story is the subject of the Nō play called *Matsuyama Kagami*, 松山鏡, in the *Kyōgenki*, 狂言記. It goes like this:

A princess who has lost her mother hides in a building with a Buddhist altar, and sees the image of her mother in the mirror which her mother gave her.

There is a picture scroll called *Kagamiotoko Emaki*, 鏡男繪卷, "A Man in a Mirror," of about the same time as the *Kyōgenki*. The story is as follows:

A poor old man of a mountain village of Omi province came to the capital and bought a mirror as a souvenir, and kept it at the bottom of a chest. His wife saw it and took it as his concubine and began to quarrel.

The whole series of stories concerning the mirror comes from a very early age, when mirrors had just been invented. The invention of fire was of course earlier, but earliest of all, and for that reason also

the most important, was the invention of the excuses for matrimonial quarrels.

Besides the stories themselves, we find certain elements in Chinese comical tales which contributed to the development of what may be called specifically Japanese humour, which is found at its best and most characteristic in *senryu*. For example there is a story in *Hsiaofu* which is precisely in the spirit of *senryu*, since it is an example of debunking without malice or contempt. It concerns Ch'eyin, 車胤, died 397 A.D., and Sunk'ang, 孫康, of the Chin Dynasty. Both were exceedingly poor in their youth and rose to eminence by ceaseless study. The former studied at night by the light of the fireflies he gathered, and the latter by the snow which he heaped at the window. The version in *Hsiaolin* is given on page 115. That in *Hsiaofu* is:

One day K'ang came to see Yin, but could not find him. Asking where he was, someone replied, "He is out catching fireflies." Later, Yin paid a return visit to K'ang, and found him in the garden staring at the sky. He said to him, "Why don't you read?" K'ang muttered, "Somehow I think it's not going to snow today."

The humour here is rather subtle. Both Yin and K'ang are more interested in the means of study than in the study itself. They were like Chaucer's Sergeant of the Lawe:

No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.

Many people spend a lot of time saving time.

Reference was made to comical stories written by Japanese in Chinese. These come partly from *Hsiaofu* and partly from folk tales and original comical Japanese stories. The following is found in *Kaikōshingo*:

A certain man was wading across a river, the water coming up to his breast. Those who came after him, seeing this, took off all their clothes and entered the river. But the water came only up to their knees. When the other man reached the farther bank they found he was a cripple.

This story, rather cruel, but good, is found already in *Nodeppo*, 野鐵砲, 1710, and is used in later stories, and in *Hizakurige*. See also page 514. Another story from *Kaikōshingo*:

A thief, discovered by the master of the house, was at a loss what to do, being unable to run away. He stood with his arms outstretched on the wall, and said, "This is your shadow, sir."

This is imitated from the *Seisuishō*, which has the following story:

A priest who crept into the bedroom of an acolyte was discovered by another one. He spread his arms along the wall, and said, "I am playing at spiders."

One more story from the same book:

There was a certain samurai who had the bad habit of appraising any work of art he saw and estimating the price. Someone advised him not to do this, whereupon he said, "Your words are worth a thousand pounds."

This story is an adaptation of one found in *Yesterday and Today Stories*, and *Seisuishō*.

Another Chinese book, *Shōwa Shukkiroku*, 笑話出鬼錄, published in 1755, and edited by Kantokuken, 乾篤軒, contains many versions of older Japanese stories, for example:

Careful of his Words

A woodcutter asked an old farmer what he was sowing. The old man said "Sh!" and whispered, "The wood-pigeons will

hear us! I'm sowing beans, you know."

This story is found in *Seisuishō*. Of the following there are several versions:

A priest was found plucking a fowl. He stammered out, "It wanted to become a monk, and asked me to shave it!"

This story seems to have come from *Kinō na Kyō no Monogatari*, and is found also in *Hyaku Monogatari*. Another story of this hyperbolical kind:

A man, seeing someone with a rosary round his neck and a big hat on, wondered how on earth he could get the rosary off and on.

This comes from *Seisuishō*. Another, concerning deafness (which is almost as comical as blindness, though not so screamingly funny as death) is the following:

A deaf man was going to cross a bridgeless river, but did not yet know the depth of it. It happened that there was somebody who had just crossed the river and the deaf man said to him in a loud voice, "How deep was the river?" The other was also deaf, but seeing the first man's lips moving, he knew he was saying something, so he raised his hand and pointed to his ear. The deaf man was surprised, and went back, thinking the river was too deep to cross.

Another is a very well-known one, but I myself never tire of it.

There was once a very foolish person. One day he wanted buy a jar, and went to the city. He happened to see one put upside-down in a shop. He examined it, and then said, "Yes, it's a very fine jar, but to my regret, it has no mouth; how can I put anything in it?" It was difficult to leave, and he turned it over. "No, it's impossible," he said, "I could make an opening with a chisel, but this has no bottom to it. What on

earth is the use of it?" And he went off resigned and pot-less. Another of these Chinese-Japanese collections of stories is *Zengyaku-zaiyaku*, 善語隨譚, 1773, by Reishōshi, 靈松子. The following comes from it:

A not very rich man was riding on a hired horse, when he made the man leading the horse pick something up, thinking it to be a coin,—but it was the calyx of a persimmon. "I knew it was that," he said, "but I was afraid the horse might shy at it."

This comes in *Seisuishō*.

Last of all we must consider what changes the Japanese story-tellers made in the Chinese tales which they adapted; and how the Chinese stories affected the telling of the original Japanese stories. As an example of the first we may take A Lavatory to Let, 借雪隠, from *Kanokomochi*, 鹿の子餅, 1771, by Kimuro Uun, 木室卯雲. It is a modification of the story from *Hsiaofu* given on page 131. It will be seen that the excessive particularity of the grossness is somewhat lessened.

There was a man who made a living by a lending-lavatory near the image of Benzaiten at Shinobazu. Another man who heard of this, and consulted with his wife about making one themselves. She said that as there one such lavatory already, another one would make no money at all. But the man insisted on constructing it, and business was very prosperous from the first day. No one used the other lavatory, and the wife wondered how that could be. Her husband said, "I am in it all day long."

In *Kanokomochi* we find a story which got its stimulating hint from the *Ch'ienhsilu*. The story in *Kanokomochi* is this:

House-breakers consulted together and decided not to break into any small shops, but burgle the biggest shop in Edo, called

Echigoya. They bound and gagged the chief clerks, the lesser clerks, the shopmen, the shopboys, and the servant one by one, but so many appeared one after another, that the day dawned before they had time to steal anything at all.

In the *Ch'ienhsilu* we have the following:

All the insects had a meeting at Kyōto, and decided to visit the Great Shrines. The next morning, all of them gathered at Otsu, to start for Ise, but the centipede did not come. A messenger was sent, who came back with the report that the centipede was still putting on his socks and shoes.

One more example, which shows the general tendency of the Japanese writers to soften the slightly harder outlines of the Chinese stories, and make them milder-mannered, comes from *Kikijōzu*, 聞上手, 1771, by Komatsuya Hyakki, 小松屋百亀. It should be compared to the story in *Hsiaofu* given on page 119.

A burglar broke into a very poor house. The master of the house kept lying in bed and took no notice of him. The burglar was astonished to find nothing to steal. "There must be something somewhere surely!" The master of the house laughed. The burglar exclaimed indignantly, "It's no laughing matter!"

In general, we may say that Chinese collections of comical stories are satirical and scornful, but at the same time reveal universal truths of human life. They contain almost every possible type of humour: puns on the sound and meaning of words; jokes of the use and misuse of proverbs and phrases from poems; riddles; gross mistakes; deformities of mind and body; quack doctors; fallen priests; the ignorant and the sententious; poverty and wealth; fools in their infinite variety; sons-in-law, mothers-in-law etc; the various humours, the choleric, the sanguine, the phlegmatic, the saturnine, and the obstinate man, the easy-going man; religion, especially Hell and

Paradise.

The Chinese humorous stories are rather jocular, intended to make us laugh and little more, but the Japanese stories involve the psychology of human and even animal nature, satire, pathos, moral teaching, particular illustrations of general truths, fairy tale and riddle elements, fabulous and classical allusions, etymologies,—in a word, they embrace the whole of life and art in their scope without the hypocrisies of religion or the barrenness of philosophy. The difference between Chinese and Japanese humour is the difference between Handel and Mozart.

CHAPTER XV

Japanese Literature I

Humorous elements may be found in almost all Japanese literature from the earliest times, in the mythological *Kojiki*, the romantic *Manyōshū*, the fairy story of the *Taketori Monogatari*, the anthological *Kokinwakashū*, and so on, but humorous (written) literature as such begins with the *kyōshi*, light (Chinese) poems of the Gozan priests, and the 14th century humorous plays of the *Kyōgenki*, and goes on to the collections of comical tales from about the Keichō Era, 1596-1614, or the Genwa Era, 1615-1623. The highest reach of humorous literature is the *senryū* of the first seven books of *Yanagidaru*, 1765 to 1772. *Hizakurige*, published 1802-1814, is the Japanese *Pickwick Papers*.

A typical Japanese book is the *Tsurezuregusa*, written about 1337-39. It is a compound of ostentatious good taste, humorous anecdotes, pseudo-religious musings, and general cant. It has a good deal of conscious humour in it, but the trouble with Yoshida Kenkō's humour is that, just contrary to Dr. Johnson's friend, solemnity is always breaking in, not to speak of bad taste, downright vulgarity, and ill nature. However, all this humour, whether intentional or unconscious, had a great effect upon later literature, in the end producing or helping to produce the all-embracing comic *Weltanschauung* of *senryū*, which laughs both with and at the *Tsurezuregusa*. The humorous elements of the book are of two kinds: a delicate, sometimes almost intangible humour, or humorous attitude, with which the book begins; and comic stories. The first kind of humour is that of haiku, for example Section 20, in which is recorded the saying of a certain hermit, that though without attachment to the world, he

found it hard to say good-bye to the sky. In Section 31 he speaks of a letter he received, a reply from a friend to whom he had sent a letter one snowy morning, reproaching him (Kenkō) for not having mentioned the snow in his letter, and calling him an insensitive and unpoetical creature.

The next example, from Section 36, is still more dainty, but in dealing with a woman approaches senryu. Kenkō felt guilty at not visiting a certain woman for a long time, and did not know how to apologise for his long silence, but she wrote to him, saying, "I am in need of a servant; do you happen to know of a suitable person?" He appreciated deeply her delicacy. Still in the senryu manner is one of the maxims of Section 39: On being asked what to do about falling asleep while saying the nembutsu, Hōnen said, "Don't stop praying until you fall asleep."

The comic stories begin with Section 45, the story of Bishop Ryōgaku, near whose temple there was a nettle tree, so people nicknamed him "Bishop Nettle". Disliking the name, he cut the tree down, but was then called "Bishop Tree-Stump". When he dug up the stump and had it thrown away, the hole filled with water, and they called him "Bishop Dug-pond". The next section tells of another priest who received the name of "the Reverend Highway-man", not because he was one, but because he suffered from them so often. Section 53 is the painful story of a feast given by some priests for a boy about to enter the priesthood. When they were all drunk, the boy put an iron pot on his head, forcing it over his nose, and danced around to the great delight of the company. However, afterwards they couldn't get it off, and the doctor to whom they led him said there was nothing in his medical books about such things, and could not help him. At length they pulled off the pot by main force, leaving his head on but his nose and ears off. There is a senryu about this, criticising the Shingon Sect to which the monks belonged.

眞言秘密でも鼎ぬけばこそ

Shingon himitsu demo kanae nukeba koso

The pot

Couldn't be got off,

Even by the Shingon Mystery Sect.

Another of these stories about monks is given in Section 60, concerning a certain strong and handsome monk, Jōshin, who was exceedingly fond of yams, ate them even while preaching, and used them as medicine when ill. His manly character and forthrightness remind us somewhat of Dr. Johnson. A more amusing one is Section 68, which tells of a certain Governor in Tsukushi who used to eat two toasted radishes every morning as medicine. On one occasion his house was being attacked, when two warriors appeared and drove the enemy away. On being asked who they were, they answered, "We are the radishes you ate every morning." The mania for rare books is satirised in Section 88. A certain man had a copy of the *Wakan Rōeishū*, said to have been copied by Ono no Tōfu. Someone said to him, "How is it possible for a book compiled by Shijō Dainagon (born 966) to be copied by Ono no Tōfu (died 966)?" The man cried, "That is just what makes it unique!" The next section is the well-told story of a goblin cat. A certain priest, coming back from a poetry party, thought he was being attacked by one, fell into the stream, and was pulled out more dead than alive. But it was his own pet dog that had jumped up to him in the dark.

The next story is not quite explicitly told, and the reader must do his best to understand the meaning. A man named Otozurumaru, the servant of a Minister, often went on errands to a certain person called Yasura. Once, when he came back, the Minister asked him, "Where have you been?" "To Mr. Yasura's." "This Yasura, is he a priest, or a (lay) man?" "How should I know?" said Otozurumaru, "I have never seen his head." As I said, you

must puzzle this one out for yourself. It may be added here that Kenkō is not so ascetic as he pretends to be sometimes.

The opinion of a certain sage, approved by Kenkō, given in Section 111, is interesting: that to be addicted to playing draughts and backgammon all day long is worse than murder, theft, adultery, and lying. I agree. Section 137 must have been useful to the senryu writers, for example when Kenkō says that a really high-class lover of nature hides his admiration, but a countryman bawls out his admiration of the cherry blossoms. A senryu which corresponds to this is the following:

かけものをべらぼうにほめる雑な客
Kakemono wo berabō ni homeru zatsu na kyaku

The rough visitor

Praises the hanging picture:

“Thunderin’ good!”

The senryu writers must also have learned much from Section 190, which begins: “A man should not have a wife.” We may conclude this account of the *Tsurezuregusa* by comparing it with a Chinese book about two hundred and fifty years later, the *Ts’aikent’an*, 菜根譚, by Hang Yingming. It is a not very profound amalgamation of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, still well-known in Japan, but the interesting thing is that there is not a word of humour in it.

In the *Haikai Azuma Karage*, 俳諧あづまからげ, selected by the First Senryu, and published in the fifth year of Hōreki, 1755, we find the following:

死ににゆく身にもよけるはぬかる道
Shini ni yuku mi ni mo yokeru wa nukaru michi

On the way to death,—

But he is avoiding

The mud of the road.

Now look at the following from George Orwell’s *A Hanging*, pub-

lished nearly two hundred years later; he is describing an Indian in Burma going across a yard to the scaffold:

And once, in spite of the men who gripped him by each shoulder, he stepped slightly aside to avoid a puddle on the path. It is curious, but till that moment I had never realised what it means to destroy a healthy, conscious man. When I saw the prisoner step aside to avoid the puddle I saw the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide.

Is the moralising really necessary? Does it not arouse in us the thought that death and murder and capital punishment are more "necessary" than thinking about them?

Senryu is the most remarkable product of the Japanese mind, surpassing even haiku in its breadth and depth, since the Way of Haiku would hardly be possible in a prison, or if blind and deaf, but the Way of Senryu exists precisely because of (spiritual and physical) blindness and deafness. Tragedy is always taken as profounder than comedy, tears than laughter,—but is this really so? The poet says with a painful depth of feeling:

It was because you did not weep
I wept for you.

Not to weep is thus better than to weep. And may we not also say:

It was because you did not laugh
I laughed at you.

The conclusion is that weeping is folly, and something that arouses in the end derisive laughter. We may parody another, the even lesser poet who said,

Laugh, and the world laughs with you,
Weep, and you weep alone.

This is simply not true; the fact is,

Weep, and the world weeps with you,
Laugh, and you laugh alone.

Real laughter is as uncommon as real love or real poetry. This is what makes senryu so remarkable. Senryu was (at length) born at a time when the warrior class (humourless and weeping in Japan as elsewhere in the world) was trying to preserve itself and its ideals without war. The tradesman of Edo and Naniwa (Osaka) saw the folly of this, but also had the gift which Burns prayed for, to see themselves as others saw them, no less foolish, cosmically speaking, than those they laughed at. But the sword is always mightier than the pen. We laugh tyrants off their thrones, but we ourselves are wept (patriotically) into prison, or at least into silence. The Way of Senryu existed at its best for a short time only, let us say from 1765 to 1790, the time between the appearance of the first volume of *Yanagidaru*, (a series of selections of senryu published between 1765 and 1837) and the date of the death of the first and best selector, Senryu Karai.

Senryu, like all literature, is a kind of poetry, in this case with the same form as haiku, 5, 7, 5, syllables. We must say outright that humour which is not poetical is not real humour, and that poetry which is not (in some way) humorous, is not real poetry, but a collection of *purpurei panni*, purple patches, and sublime nothings. Religion is being in love with the universe, and poetry is no less. But love without humour is an odious, a hot-house, an Othello-Desdemona-like thing. And humour is just as necessary in religion and literature as it is in love. In haiku this cosmic humour is so much involved into the poetic attitude that it is almost impossible to point to the humorous element without thus overemphasizing it. But humourless haiku is mere photography or sentimentality or sermonising. To take a haiku of Buson that has a good deal of

humour in it:

我水に隣家の桃の毛蟲かな
 Waga mizu ni tonari no momo no kemushi kana
 In our water,
 A hairy caterpillar,
 From the neighbour's peach-tree.

The water here may be of a small pool, or some other water-holding receptacle. The peach-tree of the neighbouring house is not only tantalising with its fruit, but its overhanging branches drop caterpillars into the water in *our* garden. The hairy caterpillar is itself a rather comical creature, but its comicality is only implicit here, whereas in the following old senryu it becomes explicit:

花の幕毛蟲一つで座が崩れ
 Hana no maku kemushi hitotsu de za ga kuzure
 Within the flower-viewing enclosure,
 A hairy caterpillar!
 And the party breaks up.

A long, parti-coloured curtain is drawn round the merry-makers, but a caterpillar falls from the cherry-tree above, and the fair scream with half-simulated fear, and even the brave are disconcerted.

Senryu has to Western satirical verse somewhat the same relation as haiku has to European nature poetry. In haiku and senryu the general is far more subsumed into the particular, so that the concrete case alone is visible, the philosophical or psychological law being entirely latent. Thus, oddly enough, Bashō resembles Burns much more than he does Wordsworth, as we see when we read the comparison Hazlitt makes between Wordsworth and Burns:

Nothing can be more different or hostile than the spirit of their poetry. Mr. Wordsworth's poetry is the poetry of mere sentiment and pensive contemplation: Burns' is a very highly sublimated essence of animal existence. With Burns, 'self-love

and social are the same'—and “we'll take a cup of kindness yet, For auld lang syne.”

Haiku is “a very highly sublimated essence of animal existence” in its relation to nature, senryu being exactly the same “essence” in its relation to man and society.

The special character of senryu as a form of humour is that though it is satirical it is never wantonly cruel; it is never insulting. Chinese humour is often ruthless; it treats people with derision. Senryu always preserves a certain propriety and suavity. It is not angry like Juvenal; it has not the misanthropy of Swift, or the disappointed cosmic love of Aldous Huxley. The Japanese cannot hate nature, though it take the form of pestilence and earthquake; and neither can they hate human nature, though treachery, murder, and rape be among the least of its habitual failings. It might be said that Japanese people do not laugh because of their own superiority over others, but at the inferiority of others. This is a delicate distinction. The European laugh (of Hobbes) is a laugh of victory. The Japanese laugh (ideally speaking) has some sadness in it. It is more laughing (together) with than (down) at. To express it in other words, there is less sadism in it, or to put it more exactly and less complementarily, the cruelty of the Japanese does not come out in their humour. At the beginning of the Third Tale of the 6th Day of the *Decameron*, Lauretta says that humour “should be such as only nips or touches the hearer, as the sheep nibbles the grass, and not as the dog bites.” This is the Japanese idea of humour.

Besides the laughter of superiority there is that of surprise, the most simple being the astonished delight when someone presses the spring of a Jack-in-the-box. Far more exhilarating than a chance revelation of something hidden is the unmasking of hypocrisy, and most intriguing of all, the disclosure of self-deception. It is hardly possible to deceive others unless we have first deceived ourselves. All pride, boasting, affectation, self-consciousness, and shame are forms of

self-deception, and are naturally enough humourless. The great asset of the Japanese is their ability to deceive themselves to death, without which fanaticism it would probably be impossible for the Japanese to get the material necessary for humour. We see this brought out in the literary field by Lafcadio Hearn's humourless romancing of the sentimentalism of the Japanese. It is to be seen in the neo-shintōism of Chikao Fujisawa, who humourlessly philosophises the poetry, the physico-spiritual intuitions of the Japanese into a vainglorious "Sumeracracry."

The fact is, as Matthew Arnold said, that the world long ago decided to live, to live for comfort, for a higher and higher standard of living, for "peace", and not for poetry, or value, or depth of experience. The Way of Haiku is being trodden by almost nobody now, and the Way of Senryu, which is a sort of parallel road, leading to the same unattainable goal, must become equally disused, since poetry, that is, quietness, greed-lessness, is the essence of both.

The nearest that European literature comes to senryu is perhaps the epigram, which is in verse, connected with religion, and short and pregnant in meaning since it was to be inscribed on some monument or statue or building. Let us take some epigrams and compare them to senryu. Almost the first in time, and profoundest because the irony prevents any tendency towards sentimentality or self pity, the epigram of Simonides engraved on the pillars set up at Thermopylae:

Stranger, tell the Lacedaemonians that here we lie, obedient
to their will.

This is too tragic, too dignified, too destructive for senryu. One closer to senryu but still *zappai*, witty verse, also Greek, translated by Lord Nugent:

I loved thee beautiful and kind,
And plighted an eternal vow;

So altered are thy face and mind,
'Twere perjury to love thee now.

The Roman satirists thought that every epigram should have three things, a sting, and honey, and a small body:

Omne epigramma sit instarapis; sit aculeius illi,
Sint sua mella, sit et corporis exigui.

Senryu do not have precisely a sting; there is no desire to anger or scorn or wound anyone.

The following epitaph, from a tomb said to be still standing in Harsley Down Church, Cumberland, is transcribed as being in the spirit of senryu:

Here lie the bodies of
Thomas Bond and Mary his wife.
She was temperate, chaste, and charitable,
But
She was proud, peevish, and passionate.
She was an affectionate wife and a tender
mother,
But
Her husband and child, whom she loved, seldom
saw her countenance without a
disgusting frown;
Whilst she received visitors whom she despised
with an endearing smile.
Her behaviour was discreet towards strangers,
But
Imprudent in her family.
Abroad her conduct was influenced by good
breeding,
But
At home by ill temper.
She was a professed enemy to flattery, and was

seldom known to praise or commend;
But
The talents in which she principally excelled
Were difference of opinion and discovering
flaws and
Imperfections.
She was an admirable economist,
And, without prodigality,
Dispensed plenty to every person in her family,
But
Would sacrifice their eyes to a farthing candle.
She sometimes made her husband
Happy with her good qualities,
But
Much more frequently miserable with her
Many failings.
Insomuch that in thirty years' cohabitation,
He often lamented that,
Maugre all her virtues,
He had not on the whole enjoyed two years
Of matrimonial comfort.
At length,
Finding she had lost the affection of her husband,
as well as the regard of her neighbours,
family disputes having been
divulged by servants,
She died of vexation, July 20, 1768,
Aged 48 years.
Her worn-out husband survived her four months
and two days, and departed this life
November 22, 1768,
In the 54th year of his age.
William Bond, brother to the deceased,
Erected this stone as a
Weekly monitor to the wives of this parish,

That they may avoid the infamy of having
 Their memories handed down to posterity
 with a patchwork character.

A couplet of Boileau is very near to senryu but still a little too violent:

Il vivait jadis à Florence, un médecin,
 Savant hableur, dit-on, et célèbre assassin.

The following by Gray, also an imitation from the Latin, is too mournful for senryu. His "Epitaph on Mrs. Clark" is:

In agony to death resigned,
 She felt the wound she left behind.

Coming now to haiku, as said before, the cosmic humour of haiku is not obvious, but is clearly present if we carefully attend to it:

夕立にうたるゝ鯉のあたまかな 子規
 Yūdachi ni utaruru koi no atama kana

A summer shower:
 The rain beats
 On the heads of the carp. Shiki

雨蛙芭蕉にのりて戦ぎけり 其角
 Amagaeru bashō ni norite soyogi keru

The tree-frog
 Riding the banana-leaf
 Sways and quivers. Kikaku

In haiku where the humour comes out too strongly there is felt to be a deficiency of poetry, or rather, an unbalance of poetry and humour, for example:

夕だちや家をめぐりて啼く家鴨 其角
 Yūdachi ya ie wo meguri te naku ahiru

PLATE XI

THE CAT AND THE LADLE

お し 猫 ち
と や も い
かり し く は も
な も う
も

し 猫
や は
く 應
し 舉
は 子
蕪 か
村 戯
か 壘
醉 也
畫 也

This is a composite picture by Buson, the haiku poet and artist, and Maruyama Okyo, 丸山應舉, a famous painter, 1733-1795. On the right side is written: "The caricature of the cat was done by Okyo; the ladle was drawn by Buson when tipsy." At the top:

The old man, the old woman,
The cat and the ladle too,—
All dance!

The cat has a towel on his head; the wooden ladle wears a kimono. The meaning of the picture seems to be that all things in the world must dance, in fact do dance, if only we can see them so. It reminds us of Lear's *The Owl and the Pussy-Cat*:

And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon,
The moon,
The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

The first use of the expression "neko mo shakushi mo" comes in one of Ikkyu's dōka:

生れては死ぬるなりけりおしなべて
しやかもだるまもねとも杓子も

We are born,
We die.
All are the same,
Shakamuni, Daruma,
The cat and the ladle.



A sudden summer shower:
The ducks run round the house,
Quacking. Kikaku

山寺や晝寝のいびき時鳥 子規
Yamadera ya hirune no ibiki hototogisu
From the mountain temple,
Midday snores,
And the voice of the cuckoo. Shiki

我宿は口で吹いても出る蚊かな 一茶
Waga yado wa kuchi de fuite mo deru ka kana
In my hut,
I have only to whistle,—
And out the mosquitoes come! Issa

Haiku here is leaning towards senryu. What is more difficult than to show the humour of haiku, is to bring out the poetry of senryu. An example of an old senryu:

來るといふ文で火鉢を拭いてゐる
Kuru to iu fumi de hibachi wo fuite iru
She wipes the edge of the brazier
With the letter
That says he is coming.

We must go back somewhat, chronologically, to speak of kamurizuke, which began about the time of the death of Bashō, 1794. An offshoot of haikai, it is in its form an example of the increasing tendency for 17 syllables to establish their independence from the 31 syllables of waka. In spirit it looks forward to *Mutamagawa*,¹ which was half senryu, half haiku in its blending of (natural) humour and (human) nature. Kamurizuke corresponds to bouts-rimés, the writing of verses after the rhyming words have been decided, begun in France in the 17th century.

1. See page 243.

The word *kamurizuke* means “putting (12 syllables) to the crown,” the word “crown” signifying the first five syllables of the verse. *Kasazuke* was the name used in Osaka, *kasa* being “hat”. The one who first wrote *kamuriku*, verse made by adding the two second parts to the first part of the verse given by the selector, seems to have been *Suishōken Unko*, 吹簫軒雲鼓. The following is an example from the first selection, *Natsu kodachi*, 夏木立, “The Summer Grove,” collected in 1696, and published in 1698. The given subject was 自慢して, “Boastfully”:

自慢して辻うらかたの寒げ也
Jiman shite tsuji urakata no samuge nari

Proudly,
 But the street-fortune-teller
 Looks chilly.

The selector, *Unko*, comments on this verse:

The meaning is: He speaks boastfully about all the things in the world as though he knew everything, but when we look at him objectively he has a lean, cold, and hungry look: his neck is skinny and his shoulders shrunk,—a pitiful sight.

Nara Miyage, 奈良土産, “A Present from Nara,” was published in 1697, the selectors being poets of the *Danrin School* of *haikai*. It was a collection of *maekuzuke*,¹ 前句附, but with some *kasazuke* added. An example is the following, the subject given being 夜も寝ずに, “Without Sleeping at Night”:

夜も寝ずに生きて百年人の命
Yo mo nezu ni ikite hyakunen hito no mei

Though not sleeping at night,
 Only a hundred years to live,—
 The life of a man!

1. In *maekuzuke*, the first (last) 14 syllables were given, and the 17 syllable verse was added.

Two years later, *Haikai Sumiyoshi Odori*, 俳諧住吉踊, "Haiku Sumiyoshi Dancing," was published. This was kasazuke only, and from this time up to its period of greatest prosperity, kasazuke (kamurizuke) had its unique flavour; an example from the above, the given phrase being 餅一つ, "A Rice-Cake":

餅一つ喰ひかく跡や三日の月
Mochi hitotsu kui kaku ato ya mika no tsuki

A rice-cake remains
Half bitten,—
The crescent moon.

The new moon is shining perhaps; on the shelf is seen the remains of a round cake bitten into by someone's (semi-circular) teeth. Another on the same theme:

餅一つ百人前や雛の膳
Mochi hitotsu hyakunin mae ya hina no zen

A rice-cake
Is good for a hundred:
The dais for the dolls.

The rice-cake is enough for a hundred small dolls to eat. It should be noted that these verses are strictly speaking a title of one line, and a verse of two, so that the first line is to be read, then a pause made, at least in the mind, before the other lines are read. *Waka-ebisu*, 若えびす, "The Young Ebisu," was published in the 15th year of Genroku, 1702, the selector being Hakubaïen Rosui, 白梅園鷺水. This time was the most flourishing period for kamurizuke.

とりついて蠅も越しけり大井川
Toritsuite hae mo koshi keri ōi gawa

Sticking closely,
The fly also crossed
The River Oi.

The danger of the crossing of the Oi River was a frequent subject of poetry and painting.

何ものかいのり出して雲のみね
Nanimono ka inori idashite kumo no mine

Someone
Must have prayed,
And raised the towering clouds!

In a time of drought, people would pray for rain at the shrine, and the poet says here, ironically, "Look at the clouds! Somebody must have been praying for rain."

The first kamurizuke collection published in Edo, by Shōshū, 松州, and Kishi, 喜至, was *Kandoku Hokō*, 冠獨歩行, 1702, more like senryu than the kamurizuke of Osaka and Kyōto.

うれしさはかしこの跡の一時雨
Ureshisa wa kashiko no ato no hi:oshigure

Happiness,
Is a passing shower
After the letter is finished.

By Hōreki and Temmei, kamurizuke was falling into decay, but there are still some good ones, for example from the Temmei Era, 1781-88:

能い日和人に酔ふたる渡し守
Yoi hiyori hito ni yōtaru watashi-mori

Halcyon weather:
The ferry-man gets sick
From over-crowding.

The humour of this is the idea of the ferry-man getting ill because of the bad air breathed out by so many people crossing in the ferry-boat.

An example from the Meiji Era, 1868-1912:

善し 惡し 向ひへ 出來て 派出所が
 Yoshi warushi mukai e dekite hashutsujo ga

Both good and bad:
 The police-box
 Put opposite our house.

It is useful in case of thieves, but we find it difficult to do our own little underhand businesses.

From about the 5th year of Shōwa, 1930, there was a return to the spirit of three hundred years before, and some quiet and poetical verses were written, not of course without the necessary humour, faint or even imperceptible though it might be. An example:

何思ふ 秋風の 僧暮れ残り
 Nani omou akikaze no sō kure nokori

What is he thinking?
 A priest left in the dusk:
 The autumn wind.

These keys of Heaven made of human clay, these childless children have a poignant humour that is deepest in Christ's, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

One of the most important, most interesting, and most neglected books of Japanese literature is *Mutamagawa*, which began to appear fifteen years before Volume I of *Yanagidaru*. The verses of *Mutamagawa* are often less poetical than haiku, and sometimes less humorous than senryu; they soon came to an untimely end, in 1761 to be precise. Here are two examples, from the 8th volume:

五月闇互に咳の突きあたり
 Satsuki yami tagai ni seki no tsukiatarari

In the darkness of the June night,
 Their coughs
 Jostle one another.

Many verses are 7, 7, instead of 5, 7, 5:

子の手を曳と年の寄る妻
 Ko no te wo hiku to toshi no yoru tsuma
 Leading our child by the hand,
 My wife looks older.

From the 9th volume:

冬瓜を案山子が抱て初嵐
 Tōgan wo kakashi ga daite hatsu-arashi
 In the first storm,
 The scarecrow is embracing
 A white gourd-melon.

Here the balance between poetry and humour is justly kept, as also in the following from the 10th volume:

松風は風の中での通り物
 Matsukaze wa kaze no naka deno tōri mono
 The wind among the pines
 Is the most popular
 Of winds.

持参千両あばた千粒
 Jisan sen ryō abata sen tsubu
 Her dowry, one thousand ryō;
 Her face, one thousand pits.

懸人隣へ腹を立てに行
 Kakaryūdo tonari e hara wo tate ni yuki
 The hanger-on
 Calls on a neighbour,
 To get angry.

Many of the verses of *Mutamagawa*, like a few of *Yanagidaru*, are too poetical for *senryū*, but the general tendency, the weakness of *senryū* is to overemphasise the comical element, and fall into joking, or downright vulgarity. For drama a good plot is indispensable. A novel must be dramatic. But the drama is the drama, and the novel

is the novel. In the same way haiku must have humour, and senryu must be poetical. The ingredients are the same in both; but the proportions are different, the emphasis is different. As the Greeks well knew, in art and in life, balance is the all-important thing,—not necessarily a symmetrical one of course. And there is not merely this delicate relation between humour and poetry in haiku and senryu respectively, there is also a balance between them; one completes the other, as women do men and men do women, haiku being the feminine and senryu the masculine in this case perhaps.

To return to senryu, when the humour of senryu is separate or separated from the senryu, senryu has become zappai, which means unpoetical senryu. A joke is no more humour, in our sense of the word, than it is poetry. That is to say, only poetry which is in some deep sense humorous is real poetry. This may seem somewhat far-fetched, but the corollary, that only humour which is poetical is real humour, is just as difficult to grasp, and equally difficult to practise.

Kyōka, mad (light) waka, which had their flourishing time at the end of the 18th Century, are usually a kind of parody, but not so much making a fool of the original writer as in European verse; rather “lightening” it, in the sense of omitting all the seriousness that so easily falls into sentimentality. An example based on the following famous waka of Saigyō:

吉野山去年の妙折の道かへて
まだ見ぬ方の花をたづねん

Mount Yoshino;

I will change my path

From last year's broken branch,

And go and view flowers

I have not yet seen.

Saigyō had broken off a branch to show the way to the best of the cherry blossoms, but this year he will purposely avoid this part of

Mount Yoshino, and go to “fresh woods and pastures new.” The kyōka based on this is by Ki no Sadamaru:

吉野山去年の枝折を見ちがえて
うろつくほどの花盛りかな

Mount Yoshino;

The cherry blossoms in full bloom,
I wander about,
Having mistaken the branch
I broke last year.

The kyōka writer means that instead of super-humanly avoiding the branch he broke off last year to remind him of the path, he very ordinarily made a mistake and followed the direction of some other broken branch. However, the point is the similarity of sound; the waka and the kyōka are very close:

Yoshino yama kozo no shiori no michi kaete
Yoshino yama kozo no shiori wo michigaete

Ki no Sadamaru was the nephew of the greatest of the kyōka poets, Shokusanjin. Another example of the debunking of false poetry, here the absurd claims for it made by Ki no Tsurayuki in the Preface of the *Kokinshū*, 922 A.D., where he writes of poetry:

力をも入れずして天地を動かし
Without strength, it moves heaven and earth.

Concerning this hyperbole Yodoya no Meshimori says:

歌よみは下手こそよけれ天地の
動き出してはたまるものかは

A writer of poetry
Had better be unskillful:
It would be a terrible thing
If Heaven and Earth
Began to move.

The following is one of the most technically remarkable *kyōka*; it is by Shokusanjin:

羽根の子のひと子に二子みわたせば
嫁御にいつかならんむすめご

Hane no ko no hitoko ni futako miwataseba
Yomego ni itsu ka naran musumego

Looking at a young girl playing battledore:

Gazing at this child
And those two children
Playing battledore and shuttlecock,
They are all girls
Who will one day be brides.

When children play at battledore and shuttlecock, they sing: “Hitori kina, futari kina, mite kina, yotte kina,” Come one, Come two! Come to see (three)! come here (four)! *Hi, fu, mi, yo*, are one, two, three, four, which continue *itsu*, (*itsutsu*) *mu* (*mutsu*) *na* (*nanatsu*), five, six, seven. When we go back to the *kyōka*, we see that the writer has playfully used the song of the playing children to speak of them. This is poetry. Another example:

あらそはぬ風の柳の糸にこそ
堪忍袋縫ふべかりけり

The bag of patience
Should be sewn
With the strings
Of willow branches,
Which do not resist the wind.

The idea of this, by Magao, comes from a moralistic haiku by Ryōta:

むつとしてもどれば庭に柳かな
Mutto shite modoreba niwa ni yanagi kana

When I come home moody,—
 The willow tree
 In the garden!

The same thought is seen in Keble's *April*:

Though the rudest hand assail her,
 Patiently she droops awhile,
 But when showers and breezes hail her,
 Wears again her willing smile.

Thus I learn contentment's power
 From the slighted willow bower,
 Ready to give thanks and live
 On the least that Heaven may give.

Kyōka is in a way more moral than both haiku and senryu.

An example which may interest the student of the art of poetry:

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^
 ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^

Hé-hé-hé-hé-hé
 Hé-hé-hé-hé-hé-hé-hé
 Hé-hé-hé-hé-hé
 Hé-hé-hé-hé-hé-hé
 Hé-hé-hé-hé-hé-hé

This kyōka was composed by Kabocha no Motonari, 1754-1828, who was in charge of part of the Yoshiwara. His kyōka pen-name, *kabocha*, "pumpkin," derived from the shape of his head. On a certain occasion, one man farted and another laughed, whereupon Kabocha no Motonari was asked to make a kyōka upon it which should also be a *mawariuta*, a palendrome.¹ The above verse was the result. It expresses both the farting and the laughing. I have a high opinion of this verse both as poetry (onomatopoeia) and as

1. One of the best English palindromes is: "Lewd did I live, evil did I dwell."



PLATE XII

THE HUNDRED DAYS LAW-PREACHING

これ
茶食
のて
め

This picture, "The Teaching of the Law of a Hundred Days," 百日の説法, is by Sengai. The "hundred days" seems to mean of always, every day. At the side is written:

Now then! Eat away!
Drink up your tea!

[and fart like mad, without the repression of good manners.] The picture shows the beatific pleasure of the farter, perhaps a child, and his helping the farting with the right hand stretched to the rear. From the Freudian point of view we must say that farting is a sexual pleasure, and a sexual symbol. But more profoundly, the universe is God's fart. Most of us find that it stinks, and hold our noses. We should, instead, take a deep breath of it.

philosophy. It should be remembered on the Judgement Day, and every day before it. The following *kyōka*, by Taiya Teiryū, 鯛屋貞柳, 1654-1734, reminds us of Pearsall Smith's *Trivia*, where he thanks God the sun has set, and he does not have to go out and admire it:

不盡の山夢に見るとそ果報なれ
路銀もいらす草臥もせず

To see Mount Fuji
In a dream,—
What a blessing!
No weariness of the journey,
No travelling expenses.

Another by the same author, who began as a haiku poet but afterwards became a *kyōka* writer, and is said to have been the first to make *kyōka* a profession:

親もなし子もなしさのみかねもなし
望む義もなし死にとりもなし

No parents,
No children,
Not much money.
I don't wish for anything,
But I don't want to die.

But die he did, and just before, at the age of eighty, he wrote the following death-verse, a very good one:

百居ても同じ浮世に同じ花
月はまんまる雪はしろたへ

Though I should live
To be a hundred,
The same world, the same cherry-blossoms;
The moon is round,
The snow is white.

Another example of the parody of a famous waka is the following by Zeniya Kinratsu, 錢屋金埒, a disciple of Shokusanjin, who died in 1807:

雪ならばいくら酒代をねだられん
花のふぶきの志賀の山駕

In this mountain-palanquin of Shiga,
How much extra
Should I be charged,
Were it snow,
This storm of petals falling?

English and Japanese poets compare, *ad nauseum*, the falling cherry-blossoms to snow. Here the kyōka poet says that if the petals had really been snow, the palanquin bearers would have made him pay for it. Besides this, the kyōka parodies a waka in the Nō play *Shiga*:

雪ならばいくたび袖を拂はまし
花の吹雪の志賀の山越

Were it snowing,
How many times
Should I have to shake my sleeves,
The storm of petals falling,
Crossing over Mount Shiga!

Kyōka was not mere trifling; it was an arduous task to include all kinds of meanings in one short verse. In addition, many of these verses were part of kyōbun, short sketches in prose, the verses being interspersed at intervals. The following, an example of pathos and humour mingled, is by Yomo no Akara, 四方赤良, that is, Shokusanjin, and is found in *Manzai Kyōkashū*, 萬載狂歌集. It is called *Skylark*, and tells us of the ancient practice of keeping the birds in a square bamboo cage about three feet in height, sometimes taller, with a cloth cover over the top.

雲雀

舞ひ雲雀籠の鳥屋が手に落ちて
かふ値も高くあがりこそすれ

Skylarks

Dancing skylarks
In their cages;
They have fallen into the hands
Of the bird-shop-man,
And the price is high.

Skylarks which danced high in the sky have been trapped, and they pass into the clutches of the bird-shop-men. They are kept in cages, and cost a lot of money, which goes to their sellers. The birds' falling contrasts with the height of the price. But the verse may be read in a different way, bringing out the feeling of pathos:

Dancing skylarks,
Kept in their cages,
Have come down to earth,
But the voice of their song
Rises high in the sky.

Even Wordsworth does not seem to have felt any pity for the thrush in the cage hanging at the corner of Wood Street, in *The Reverie of Poor Susan*. Is this partly because he did not like puns?

Shokusanjin is a typical, or rather model writer of the later Tokugawa Era, and we may speak at some length of him.¹ Shokusanjin, 蜀山人, is one of the many pen-names of Ota Nampo, 大田南畝, some of the others being Yomo no Akara, 四方赤良, Neboke Sensei, 寝惚先生, and Chikura Sanjin, 竹羅山人. He was born of a samurai family in 1749, studied Japanese and Chinese literature under Uchiyama Gatei, 内山賀邸, and Chinese literature again under a famous Con-

1. For a portrait see the author's *Japanese Humour*, page 153.

fucian, Matsuzaki Kankai, 松崎観海. In 1765, when only sixteen, he published a book *Minshitekizai*, 明詩擢材, "Selected Materials of Ming Poetry." His attitude to life is seen clearly in the last two lines of a Chinese poem he wrote the next year:

時人若問行樂意。萬年江漢向東流。

If I am asked what is happiness,—
The Yangtse Han River flows eastward for ever.

During the Anei Era, 1772-1780, he made Chinese poems and writings, *kyōka*, and *sharebon*, that is, humorous stories. In the summer of 1773 he swam with other samurai in the Sumida River before the Shōgun, and received a prize. In the 7th year of Temmei, 1787, the Military Government ordered the literary and military arts to be strengthened, and popular morals to be stiffened. Someone wrote a skit on this, using the words *bumbu*, ぶんぶ. *Bumbu* means both the sound of the hated mosquitoes, and "literary and martial arts." Being famous for his *kyōka*, Shokusanjin was suspected of being the author of this lampoon. He denied the charge, and was acquitted, but thereafter stopped writing *kyōka*. He died in 1824.

Shokusanjin liked music, but did not play a musical instrument. He loved nature, but kept no pot-plants. He was always reading, but did not collect books or curios. One day in 1804 he was enjoying himself in a boat on the Sumida River, and heard someone reciting *gidayū*¹ in another boat. It was wonderfully done, and Shokusanjin listened to it with rapture. A geisha in his boat told him it was the famous Takemoto Tsunadayu, 竹本綱太夫. Shokusanjin wrote in his diary something that reminds us of the last lines of Wordsworth's *The Solitary Reaper*: "Though the river wind has blown it far away, that voice I hear still, clearly." Listening to the *gidayu*, Shokusanjin wanted to present Tsunadayu with one of his *kyōka*, but as he

1. *Gidayū* is a dramatic recital together with the *samisen*; it is named after Takemoto Gidayū, 1651-1714, who popularised it.

韓

信いゝ愧へ

世のやゝ

勝てゐるぬ

人志やぬ

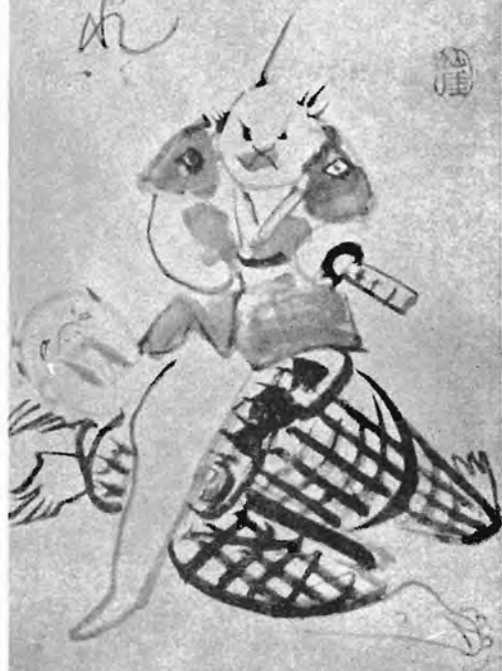


PLATE XIII

KANSHIN

韓
 信
 勝 は
 よ 世 い
 人 り の か
 志 出 中 て
 な て に 愧
 け ぬ へ
 れ き
 ば

The story of Hanhsin is given on page 253. This caricature is by Sengai, 1751-1837, a monk of the Rinzai branch of Zen, and a haiga artist of an individual and astonishing quality, the only other artist-monk worthy to be compared with Hakuin Zenji. In the last years of his life he lived at Kohaku-In, in continual zazen.

The sketch shows a very fat bloke who can hardly get through the other's legs in spite of his willingness to humiliate himself in order to avoid causing bloodshed. With all the good-will in the world we cannot always do what we would. The inscription says:

Why need Kanshin
 Be ashamed?
 In this world,
 Who does not come
 From between the legs?

Kanshin was willing to crawl through the man's legs for the sake of avoiding useless fighting; this is the Chinese spirit, and Sengai approves of it, and makes it even more universalistic.

had no writing materials he borrowed a rouge-brush from one of the geisha and wrote:

三味線にひくでふ舟のつなで蠅
長きためしとかたりつたへん

The rope of the boat,
Pulling it,
And playing the samisen,—
I will tell of it
For many long years.

Tsuna is both the name of the singer and the word for rope; *biku* means both "play" and "pull."

An interesting contrast of the mentality of the Chinese and Japanese is seen in what Shokusanjin wrote in his *Ayamegusa*. あやめ草:

A Eulogy of a Picture of Kanshin creeping between someone's legs. China is China. Japan is Japan. Do not forget the sword of Japan, while picking up the thrown-away paper of China.

道なかにたつの市人きりすてゝ
またはぐらぬやまとだましひ

The Japanese Spirit
Will not creep between the legs
Of the townsman
Standing there in the street,
But will cut him down!

This concerns the famous story of Hanhsin, 韓信, who was a man of the Han Dynasty, born poor, but rising to high rank. One day some men told him to creep between the legs of a boy standing there. Hanhsin did so without hesitation, thinking that this apparent indignity and ignominy was better than bloodshed. Shokusanjin says that no Japanese would or at least should submit to such a thing. The Chinese has the more humour and practicality, the Japanese more self-respect and transcendentalism.

Besides *kyōshi*,¹ Shokusanjin also wrote *kokkeihon*, comical story books, *hanashibon*, short witty stories, *sharebon*, humorous stories of the Yoshiwara, and *kibyōshi*, books with illustrations, light and witty. The following is the one he wrote for the *kibyōshi* called *Teren Itsuwari Nashi*, 手練偽なし, "There is no Lie in Technique," published in 1787:

A certain Governor was grieved that there were so many lies and liars in this world, so he promulgated a decree that no more lies were to be told. As a result of this, the pine-tree decorations of the New Year became trees with roots, the streets appearing like a plant-market. Those who exchanged New Year greetings said what was true, namely, that the greetings were a nuisance, and that the other person must have had a lot of money troubles the year before. Every house at this time put up a notice, "No visitors! Just leave your card!" The lotteries said that the whole thing was a swindle, and nobody bought any; the wrestlers said that it was all pretending, and no one went to see them. The courtezans said what they really thought of their clients, and gave them no pleasure. In the theatre they used a real horse (instead of two men acting as a horse) and it made a mess on the stage. At last people begged the governor to rescind the law. The story ends with the following words:

Truth is the skin of untruth, untruth the bone of truth.
The world cannot exist without being half truth, half untruth,—but even so, do not tell only lies!

This reminds us strongly of Nietzsche, who tells us that the false is as necessary, as life-giving, as the true.

Shokusanjin thought that *kyōka* had its own character, a particular spiritual quality. In *Kyōka Santai Denju Batsu*, 狂歌三體傳授跋, he says that, unlike *waka* or *haiku* or *senryū*, *kyōka* needs no teacher or special initiation into its secrets. It requires a thorough knowledge

1. See page 268.

of the Chinese and Japanese classics, but must not be treated too seriously. It is poetry, and difficult in that it is a delicate balance between humour and pathos and criticism and playfulness, in a word, between tragedy and comedy. The following are representative *kyōka* by Shokusanjin. They will be found very similar in spirit to the haiku of Issa. The first is, "At the Beginning of Spring."

春のはじめに

呉竹のよの人なみに松たてゝ
やぶれ障子に春は來にけり

Like everyone else
In this world of ours,
I set up the pine-branches,
And the spring came in
Through the tattered paper-doors.

Real humour is impossible without poverty.

世の中はわれより先に用のある
人のあしあとと橋の上の霜

There are people
In the world
Who have business before I have:
The footprints
On the frost of the bridge.

He got up early to do some business one cold, frosty morning and found that there were still earlier birds, or worms. Humour and poetry and the feeling of human toil and trouble are here combined.

雀どのおやどはどこかしらねども
ちょっちょとござれさゝの相手に

My dear Mr. Sparrow,
I have no idea
Where you reside,
But won't you just come
And have a drink with me?

This must have been written about the same time as Issa's famous verse:

我と来て遊べや親のない雀

Come and play with me,
Fatherless, motherless
Sparrow.

ゆうべみし川の花火にくらぶれば
さかり久しき庭の朝顔

Compared to the fireworks
Over the river
I saw last night,
How long is the prime
Of the garden's morning glories!

Everything, as Chuangtse said, is relative. But some things are not. The morning glories bloom with peace and tranquillity; they have an "organic beauty," to borrow Wordsworth's expression, which is as it were eternal compared with the bang and whizz and flashiness of the fireworks. Shokusanjin understood that the true, the only, the really human happiness and heaven is looking at the flowers blooming in the early morning.

生酔の禮者をみれば大道を
よこすぢかひにはるは來にけり

A tipsy
New Year caller,—
And I see the spring
Coming across the street,
Aslant.

The already half-drunk man is walking from house to house to say the New Year greetings. He walks askew and aslant over the road. We feel the peace and tranquillity of those times of Edo.

空と海ひつたりつきの中川の
 ばらばら松にたつ千鳥かな
 Sky and sea
 Stuck together
 Beyond the Nakagawa River,
 Plovers flying
 Over the scattered pine-trees.

The words are the words of *kyōka*, but the voice is the voice of poetry. The *kyōka* poet thus eludes all the enemies of poetry, sentimentality, pretence, hyperbole, poetic diction, anti-climax. The same applies to the following verse, where it is rather morality and religion which are thus disinfected.

食ひつぶす六十年の米粒の
 数かぎりなきあめつちの恩
 The grace of Heaven and Earth,
 Infinite!—
 Like the grains of rice
 I have eaten
 In the past sixty years.

Five years later, at the New Year, he wrote:

お出には及ばぬことを老らくの
 はるは來にけり春はきにけり
 It was not necessary
 That it should come,
 But it came,
 Spring came,
 To my old age.

In the two following *kyōka*, he asks the Barrier-Keeper in the first to be allowed to live a year more; in the second that he should not become a year older, but remain the same age. We think of Omar Khayyam, and the "Angel of the darker Drink."

此者は花の春へとまゐり候
お通しなされ年の關守

This person
Has come
To the spring and its flowers;
Let me pass,
O Barrier-Keeper!

願はくば通り手形をうち忘れ
跡へ歸らんとしの御關所

I could wish
That I had forgotten
My passport-paper,
And might return, instead of passing
The Barrier of the New Year.

Spring and the New Year are the same thing. In the next verse we have something more like senryu, the debunking of a favourite subject for Chinese painting, The Seven Wise Men in the Bamboo Forest:

七賢人の繪に
竹林はやぶ蚊の多き所とも
しらでうかうかめそぶ生酔

The half-tipsy fellows
Are thoughtlessly enjoying themselves,
Forgetting
The many mosquitoes
In the bamboo grove.

The next verse is the Zen of the ordinary man:

めでた百首歌の中に無常を
世の中の諸行無常をやめにして
是生滅法界のめでたさ

Impermanence, expressed in a Hundred Celebrating Poems:

Let's stop
This talk of
"All is transitory!"
Then how happy will be
This world of birth and death!

He died in his sleep at the age of seventy five.

There is nothing screamingly funny in the life and works of Shokusanjin. The humour by which and in which he lived was of an all-pervading, "organic," natural kind that is hardly to be separated from his daily life and thought. This humour has subsumed all things into itself, and the capacity of humour to do this shows its universal, indeed its divine nature.

CHAPTER XVI

Japanese Literature II

Going back to the first half of the 14th century, kyōgen, comediettas or comic interludes of Nō plays, were a dramatic expression of the notorious defects of the daimyō and officials and priests of the period. Like most comedies they had no (real) reformatory object, so that these satires are really farces. This we see from the fact that farmers, apprentices, devils, and women were also satirised, for who would be so bold as to try to reform women? The old canon of kyōgen was fixed to about 250 plays, each of which occupies three or four pages of a small book. The following, *Miss Hanago*, is a little longer than the usual. This kyōgen, including as it does a lyrical episode in the middle, shows us that the aim of kyōgen was after all poetical, just as the sober but beautiful colours of the costumes point to their preoccupation with art. There is a kabuki version of *Miss Hanago*, called *Migawari Zazen*, "Substitute Zazen." The three characters are a Lord, his Lady, and a kanja (kaja) or retainer. The fourth character, Miss Hanago, the Lord's concubine, does not appear on the stage.

Miss Hanago

Lord: Kaja!

Kaja: Here I am, sir.

Lord: I haven't been to Lady Hanago's lately, and she'll be wondering if I have given her up.

Kaja: That's true.

Lord: I'm going to see her this evening. Will you do me a favour?

Kaja: It's funny to ask me like that. Please tell me to do

PLATE XIV

FAN-SHAPED PICTURE OF HOKKE KYO

This is one page of fan-shaped booklets of the *Hokke Kyo*, 法華經, twenty five centimetres in height, made in the Kamakura Period. It is owned by the Shitennoji Temple in Osaka. There remain extant four chapters of this *Lotus Sutra*, with the introductory *Kan Fugen Kyo*, 觀普賢經, and the concluding *Maryōgi Kyo*, 無量義經. This page is the beginning of the 20th chapter, but the picture, like all the rest, has no connection with the sutra. It shows a summer scene with two women of the district and two women travellers, the one on the left with a hat on, drinking from a ladle, the other with the well-bucket in her hand.

Where is the humour? It lies in the subtle and almost unconscious contrast of the sutra and the pictures. The sutra is a decorative background for the romantic scenes portrayed. The human figures humanise the transcendentalities of the sacred scriptures. In these fan shaped leaves Nichiren, the fanatical patriot-priest, and Hikaru Genji, the Don Juan of Japan, are juxtaposed and superimposed.

妙手蓮華鉢量不特主情不主
 个特佛告得夫特是蓮華詞度亦知
 父比父尼優婆塞優婆塞持去名姓
 有無口馬名排勝羅大罪報不
 總口口口口口口口口口口口口
 樹有蓮華鉢量不特主情不主
 妙手蓮華鉢量不特主情不主



anything you want.

Lord: Thank you. As a matter of fact, I deceived my wife,¹ and she allowed me some time off. I said I would do *zazen* for seven days, and told her not to come near me for that period of time. She agreed at last, so I'll go and see Miss Hanago, and "smooth out the wrinkles." Now I want you to sit for me in my meditation robes. Even if my wife comes and says something, just shake your head and be silent. Don't get found out. This is what I want you to do.

Kaja: That's too much to ask of me. If the trick is discovered, she'll beat me to death. I'm sorry, I can't do that.

Lord: You can't? You mean you are more afraid of her than of me? Sit straight up! I'll cut your head off!

Kaja: Wait a minute! After all, I am more afraid of you. I'll do as you say.

Lord: Really?

Kaja: Yes. What lie should I tell her?

Lord: Oh, my dear fellow, I frightened you only because I wanted to go to Miss Hanago so much. I rely on you in every way. So put on these robes and let me see you, or rather, not see you. That's good. I'll soon be back. Remember! say nothing to her! Bye-bye.

Kaja: Lord, please come back early.

Lord: Don't worry!

Kaja: Lord, please, when you are at Miss Hanago's, give my

1. The Japanese is 内々山の神, which means literally, "the goddess of the mountain, of our house." This is translated shrew, vixen, termagant, but has a different connotation. Wife is *oku-sama*. *Oku* means inner (boudoir). *Oku* is associated with *Kōbō Daishi's* syllabary, where we get "*oku yama*," the depths of the mountains. *Kami* is god, but also a high official, who of course is arrogant and boastful. Thus, a strong-minded woman is called by her hen-pecked husband, "the god of the mountain," *Yama no kami*.

love to her lady-in-waiting, Miss Kōbai.

Lord: All right. Next time, you shall go with me to see her.

That's something to look forward to!

Kaja: It is indeed very kind of you.

Lord: How lucky I am! I must be off in a hurry.

(Lord goes out. Lady enters)

Lady: (My husband asked for time off, saying he was going to do zazen, but he doesn't drink even any hot or cold water. That's odd. He said I should not visit him during the zazen, but I can't bear it. I must at least greet him.) You are wearing your meditation clothes. They must be uncomfortable and oppressive, my dear! What sutra do you need, as you are still young? It's bad for your health not to have something to eat. It's funny you don't say anything, only shake your head. Don't say no, take off the clothes. I'll take them off for you.

(Takes off the zazen robes)

Kaja: What an awful thing I have done! Please forgive me.

Lady: Good heavens! I thought it was my husband! What on earth are you doing here? How mortifying! Where is he? If you don't tell me I'll kill you!

Kaja: I'll tell you everything. Life is sweet.

Lady: Hurry up! How maddening!

Kaja: My lord went to Miss Hanago.

Lady: What! You call her "Miss" Hanago?

Kaja: I meant, "to that Hanago." He made me put on these clothes with a hood, and I declined, but he pulled his sword out and threatened to kill me, so I simply had to do what I did. It wasn't my idea, so spare me!

(Kaja weeps)

Lady: You said no, but he was going to kill you, so there was

no help for it?

Kaja: Yes, that's right.

Lady: Well, perhaps that's what happened. Anyway, I have a favour to ask of you.

Kaja: Of course. I would give up my life in your service.

Lady: That's sweet of you. Please put these zazen clothes on me and let me sit in your place.

Kaja: That's a bit awkward. If my lord comes back he'll certainly kill me this time, so ask me to do anything but that.

Lady: You are more afraid of my lord than of me? I'll kill you!

Kaja: All right! All right! I'll put them on you! Nothing is more precious than life.

Lady: Hurry up! Now do I look like my lord?

Kaja: Yes, the very image of him.

Lady: Oh, my dear fellow, you must go to your aunt's in Kami-Kyōto. I'll call you back according to my lord's humour. Off with you!

Kaja: All right. Please send for me at the proper time! What an unlucky thing! I must go to Kami-Kyōto.

(The Lord comes back, with a woman's kimono over him, huddled up, and with unkempt hair. He sings:)

The brocade laces of the silken underwear
Were undone and seductive.

The heart sways like the hanging branches of the willow.
How can I forget her?

(Sings again)

She came to see me off,
And when I looked back to where her image was,
The slender moon alone remained there,
With my longings.

(As I was so happy I was speaking to myself.) Hallo, Kaja! You must have been waiting and waiting for me. (I must say something to please him. It's nice to be the master. He sits disconsolately there just as I told him to.) Tarō Kaja, I'm back! Why don't you say something? How bored you must have been! Be happy! When I saw her she asked of you first of all, so I'll tell you all that happened. When I got there I heard a sound inside, and I wondered what it was, and approached stealthily and listened. Miss Hanago was singing a song:

Will he come when the lamp is low,
And all is so dreary?

So I felt thankful and tapped at the door. Then she sang again:

One so famous,—how should he come?
Is it the creaking of the door? a cricket?

So I sang a return song to her:

Who would come all wet on a rainy night like this?
Do you ask so challengingly because you are expecting
Two men to come?

And then Miss Hanago appeared from within, and took me by her hand into the inner room, and said, "Ah! you came so kindly, on such a rainy day! Take off your clothes!" She put some garments over me and spoke of this and that. We danced, and sang, and enjoyed ourselves, and the crow of dawn had already cawed. "I came only a little while ago," I said to her, "and we hear the crow cawing already. I must go back." Hanago sang:

Here in the shadows under the mountain, under the trees,
The crow on a moonlight night calls all night long;
This silent night of sleep is night.

And I said, "But when the day breaks, people will look at me, so I must go." Then Hanago said something unexpected. She said, "You must be wanting to see your wife," so I sang of the looks of my wife in a short song:

When I look at my wife after seeing the wives of other men,

She is like a mossy¹ monkey in the deep mountains,
crouching wet in the rain.

Then Hanago laughed aloud. These clothes are a souvenir of her to me. But if my wife saw them, there'd be trouble, so I'll have to get rid of them.

(He sings, from the Nō play *Matsukaze*)

But how can I throw them away?

When I take them up, I see her image.

Whether awake or asleep love comes to me from the pillow.

How sad to sink into helpless tears!

Anyway I'll give you them, and don't let her see them. Take off these meditation clothes and I'll get into them.

Lady: What! Not show them to your wife? A fine meditation!

Lord: Good heavens!

Lady: You needn't speak of heaven!

Lord: Forgive me, I beg you!

Lady: Where are you off to? Don't think you can escape me! Don't think you can escape me!

This kyōgen should be compared, in technique, to the kobanashi of the last chapters of this book. The materials are the same, but differently used. Kyōgen, though short, allow for the humour of

1. Old and foolish.

parallelism and repetition. They are prevented from falling into indecency and vulgarity, even on the stage, by the fact that they are to be acted before the audience of Nō plays. In a sense, senryu is the further compression of kobanashi, and this tendency towards brevity reflects perhaps the increasing tempo of human life, so that to watch kyōgen is a true relaxation,—and is humour anything but this?

The English are said, in a quotation of uncertain origin, to take their pleasures sadly, “selon la coutume de leur pays,” but not seriously. The Japanese take sports with intensity; they play religiously. Religion, on the other hand, they take lightly, playfully even. However, the members of the Nichiren Sect have always been noted for their intolerance and (causative) lack of humour. The Jōdo Shinshu Sect is not devoid of humour, as Issa shows, but even the Zen Sect, in Japan, is inclined to be rather grim and rude. The two notable exceptions to this are Ikkyū of the 15th century and Sengai of the 19th. The humour of Ikkyū is found in his dōka, Buddhist waka, which are a mixture of Buddhist sentiment and the strange humour of Zen. Some examples of the latter:

釋迦といふいたづらものが世に出でて
多くの人をまよはするかな

Shakamuni,
That mischievous creature,
Having appeared in this world,—
How many, many people, alas,
Have been misled by him!

According to Buddha, the object of life is *satori*, enlightenment, and this continued and continuous state is Nirvana, but since sin is only the illusion that sin is sin, since enlightenment is illusion and illusion is enlightenment, all this business of salvation and the endeavour to be enlightened is the most blithering nonsense.

つくりおく罪が須彌ほどあるならば
えんまの帳につけどころなし

If the sins we commit
Are as great as Mount Sumeru,
There will be no room for them
In the records of Emma.

Mount Sumeru is the highest mountain in the Buddhist universe. Emma is the Lord of Hades. The unforgivable sin must be forgiven by the infinitely forgiving God.

Besides composing these satirical *dōka*, a great number of stories attached themselves to Ikkyū; how many, if any at all, are authentic we have no means of knowing, since they were written down for the first time about two hundred years after his death. All we can say is that there can be no smoke without fire. One of the stories is particularly interesting, as dealing with sex. It is of course apocryphal; there are several versions, and it is probably quite untrue, but the whole thing is a rare satire on Zen.

Tatsu-jo, the wife of Ninakawa Shinzaemon, Ikkyū's friend, came to the temple one day to complain of her husband's (suspected) infidelities. Ikkyū only laughed, and said, "Let him do what he wants to," and, as they drank wine together, Ikkyū began to hold her hand, and Tatsu-jo was surprised and said she would be going. Ikkyū asked her to stay the night, and she became indignant, and returned home. In tears she told her husband what had happened, but he just laughed and said, "Yes, Ikkyū is a real living Buddha, so it's quite all right for you to sleep with him. Off you go!" His wife unwillingly dressed herself up, powdered and painted herself to the limit, and returned to the temple. Knocking at the door, she said, in a small voice, "I was wrong to refuse you today. My husband says it's all right for me to come, so here I am." Ikkyū chuckled, and said, without opening the door, "I don't want to any more, thank you. I felt like it then, but not now."

Please go back home.” Tatsu-jo was angry, but there was nothing to be done, so she went back home and told her husband the conclusion of the story. He clapped his hands and said, “When he moves, he moves, but no one can move him.”

The point of the story is that Ikkyu is in the world but not of it, in the sense that he is the master. There is no repression; there are no complexes. Ikkyu does what he (really?) wants to do at each moment, and never does what he does not want to do.

As with Hakuin, the humour of Sengai comes out best in connection with his sketches, one of which is seen in Plate XIII. There is also a picture of a man crossing a log-bridge, similar to that of Hakuin's, Plate XVII. A fat man is creeping on all fours along a very shaky-looking bridge, and there is a reference to a poem by Fu T'aishih, 傅太士, 497-569 A.D.:¹

戰々兢兢人過杉橋上不知橋流水不流
He creeps along the log in fear and trembling;
He does not know that the bridge is flowing,
and the water is not.

On another sketch of a cat-like looking tiger Sengai has written:

厓公是何。日虎。人皆笑。厓亦大笑。

(Sen) Gai was asked, “What's this?” “It's a tiger!” he replied. People all laughed. Gai also laughed, still more loudly.

The meaning of this is a little delicate. It is not necessary to ask whether it is a cat or a tiger; either is all right. It is not necessary to ask if God exists or if the soul is immortal or not. But we do. That is how laughter arises.

It is very difficult to give a foreign reader an idea of the meaning and value of *kyōshi*, light Chinese verse. The appearance is that of

1. See 禪門公案大成, No. 803.

ordinary classical Chinese verse, but it is read with a Japanese pronunciation, and deals with non-classical, topical, erotic, even vulgar matters, at least events of daily life. Kyōshi illustrates once more the Japanese tendency (and indeed genius) to bring any kind of art down into the life of common people. Japanese poets, and men of culture generally, succeeded in doing what Wordsworth tried but failed to, express the loftiest sentiments in the everyday speech of the people, yet preserving an unspoiled sensitiveness to words. The Japanese writers felt that the emotions and ideas of Chinese verse were suited to misanthropists, hermit-like people, disappointed statesmen, and poetic exhibitionists, but they wanted to see their own daily life or at least the more exciting parts of it, and the colourful life of man in society, expressed as vividly and with as much charm as the Chinese had given to wild nature and things of the past.

As said before, it is difficult to convey in English the impression of this free-moving, easy-going Japaneseness portrayed in stiff, solid Chinese characters. It is something like a bird singing in a cage. It resembles macaronic verse, which was a parody of the poor Latin of the monks, and began in the 15th century in Italy, and is found in Dunbar and Skelton in English literature. An example which has the spirit of kyōshi is this, the first and last verses of *A Treatise on Wine*, found in a notebook of Richard Hilles, died 1535:

The best tree, if ye take intent,
 Inter ligna fructifera,
 Is the vine tree by good argument,
 Dulcia ferens pondera.

Plenty to all that love good wine
 Donet Deus largius,
 And bring them some when they go hence,
 Ubi non sitient amplius.

However, though the irreverent and bibulous spirit of this is similar

to kyōshi, the form is an alternation of English and Latin, so that to get a more exact parallel we should go back to the Goliardic Latin poets of the 12th to 17th centuries, for example from a poem attributed to the 12th century Abelard:

Fronde sub arboris amena,
dum querens canit philomela,
suave est quiescere
suavius ludere
in gramine
cum vergine
speciosa.

A line by line translation:

Under the pleasant green boughs,
While the plaintive nightingale sings,
Sweet it is to repose,
Sweeter to play
In the grass
With a girl
Good to look at.

One more example:

Que cupit
hanc fugio,
que fugit
hanc cupio.

Mr. Whicher translates this:

She who's effusive
I flee;
The girl who's elusive
Suits me.

A kyōshi composed by Gion Yoichi, 祇園興一:

朱三起磯浪。
 朱四吹松風。
 月逢追剝否。
 丸裸出雲時。

The waves breaking over the rocks are worth three guineas,
 The wind blowing in the pine-trees four;
 The moon comes out all naked from the clouds;
 Did he meet with a footpad?

Here are four verses entitled *Enjoying oneself in Edo in the Four Seasons*, by Neboke Sensei 寢惚先生, that is, Shokusanjin:

上	High	三	Three
野	Field	絃	strings;
兼	and	茶	tea;
飛	Flying	辨	carriage
鳥	Birds;	當	lunch;
花	Cherry-blossoms	多	many
開	opening,	有	are
日	the sun-	幕	curtains
暮	declining-	之	at
里	village:	裏	back.

Translating this in the spirit of the original:

On the hills at Ueno and Asuka
 Flowers open their doors in the hamlet-where-the-sun-sets.
 Three-stringed lutes and light lunch everywhere
 Behind the party-coloured curtains under the trees!

The other three verses, Summer, Autumn, and Winter:

The river is long under the Bridge of the Two Counties;
 Before and beyond it flash and flare the fireworks.
 Songs echo out from under the roofs of the house-boats;
 All the singing-girls are waving their long sleeves!

It is the Eighth Month and out we come from Edo!
 Getting on the boat, we pass along the Embankment.

The lanterns are lighted; much there is to see;
All enter within the Great Gate of the Yoshiwara.

Now there is the début of the actors for the coming Year,
The cry of the programme-seller!
This is all for the theatre-lover,
Making his way through the misty evening.

The flowers of spring, the fireworks of the summer river, the Yoshiwara and its red lanterns, the play and all its excitement—what have Buddha and Christ to give us in exchange for these?

As in the case of senryu and kyōka, kyōshi were often published with pictures; haiku and waka seldom, if ever. The illustration given here is that of a kyōshi concerning the famous story of Lord Huang Shih, 黃石公, Kōseki, fl.c. 210 B.C., and Chiangliang, 張良, Chōryō, died 189 B.C. The account is found in the Chinese *Historical Memoirs*, 史記, finished about 99 B.C., but the kyōshi seems based upon the 14th century Nō play, *Chōryō*. According to this, Chōryō dreamed that at a bridge in Kai, 下邳, an old man came along on a horse. One of his shoes fell off, and Chōryō picked it up and put it back on, and the old man told him to come five days afterwards and he would teach him the essence of the Art of War. Five days later, remembering his dream, Chōryō went to the bridge again, but



the old man was already there, angry at his lack of zeal. He told him to come five more days later. The next time Chōryō went before daybreak, and was taught the secret art. The very poor illustration, showing Chōryō picking up the shoe, by Ike no Kichin, 池己陣, is the first one in *Kyōshi Gafu*, 狂詩雅譜, "Illustrated Mad-poems." The Chinese verses are by Dōmyaku Sensei (Hatanaka Tanomo), died 1802, a contemporary of Shokusanjin, and the twenty three pictures, all equally unskilful, are by "well-known" unknown people. The editor was Zeniya Sōshiro, a disciple of Dōmyaku. The verse is:

黃石本何者。天竺浪々身。
兵法僅口過。弟子有一人。

After all, just what was Kōseki?

Only an old chap wandering about in some remote place,
Earning his living peddling the Art of War!

He got just one listener.

The *kyōshi* is of the debunking kind, but as usual without spitefulness or contempt.

There is a small but interesting amount of humour in the Edo Period connected with foreign (Dutch and Portuguese) culture. Quaint foreign words and things were used, especially in haiku and senryu, to enhance the poetry and make a contrast. The first foreign word in haiku is *Egerechi* (English) which comes in one of Teishitsu's verses in 1648. Later examples of such words are:

紅毛も花に來にけり馬に鞍
Oranda mo hana ni ki ni keri uma ni kura

Red-haired-people also come

To see the cherry-blossoms,

Saddle on horse.

Bashō

This was written in the 7th year of Genroku, 1679, when the Dutch were allowed to go up to Edo for some special purpose. The saddle

is used, as in Yorimasa's waka, which the haiku is based on, to give the aristocratic flavour, to express the feeling of urgent desire, and in the haiku also perhaps because the Dutch saddle was different from the Japanese.

硝子の魚おどろきぬ今朝の秋 蕨村
Biidoro no uo odorokinu kesa no aki

The fish in the *biidoro*
Were surprised,—

This morning of autumn! Buson

The manufacture of *biidoro*, Portuguese vidro, Latin vitrum, glass, was taught by a foreigner who came to Nagasaki at the end of the Muromachi Period, about 1570. Buson is expressing the nature of the beginning of autumn through the appearance of goldfish in a glass bowl. It is suddenly cooler, the water in the bowl is also cooler. The fish swim a little more slowly, their mouths and eyes wide open as if astonished at the sudden change of the season. A senryu with the same word:

びいどろの中で泳ぐを猫ねらいひ
Biidoro no naka de oyogu wo neko nerai

The cat is lying in wait
For what is swimming
In the *biidoro*.

To the cat the fish look as if floating in air. Another senryu about glass, which expresses its nature when broken, as well as the feelings of the person who broke it:

びいどろのかけ拾っても拾っても
Biidoro no kake hirotte mo hirotte mo

The *biidoro*,—
Though I pick up the pieces,
And pick them up . . .

One more senryu, concerning the *kabocha*, pumpkin; the word comes

from the place of origin, Cambodia:

かぼちやどろぼう雪隠を引き倒し

Kabocha dorobō setchin wo hikitaoshi

The pumpkin-robber
Pulls down with it
The field-lavatory.

A senryu which uses the word *miira*, mummy, which comes from myrrh (mummy itself comes from the Arabic *mumiya*, wax):

番頭がやうやうみゐら取りおゝせ

Bantō ga yōyō miira tori ose

The clerk
At last succeeded
In bringing back the mummy.

There is a saying that a man who collects mummies will himself become one. A man who goes to fetch another one back from the Yoshiwara will also be a long time returning.

The next and last example uses the word *meriyasu*, a song whose subject and mood are very similar to those of *dodoitsu*.¹ The word comes from Spanish or Portuguese, *medias*, *meias*, which means middle, between long and short. It was used first, in the 17th century, of a certain kind of cloth, then in the 18th century of a song accompanied on the samisen, because it was sung by a man called Meriyasuji, 目利安二; or because when the song was heard the courtezans felt melancholy, *ki ga meiriyasu*; or because the material, being knitted, could be made long or short. The following senryu is simple but good:

めりやすと御經の聲は大ちがひ

Meriyasu to o-kyō no koe wa ōchigai

The voice of the *meriyasu*,
And that of the sutra,—
How different they are!

1. See the next page.

Which is the real voice, the one that comes from the bowels of mercy, or that which comes from an even lower place?

A form of verse called *dodoitsu*,¹ which became first popular in the Tempō Era, 1830-1843, is a rather low-brow love song for the courtesan class, in form 7, 7, 7, 5 syllables, and sung to the *samisen*. Most *dodoitsu* are lacrimose, sentimental, and rather shaky in their morals. Some of them have delicacy of feeling, for example:

すまぬ顔色見てとる實は
他人に知れない惚た中
I see your look
Of apology;
The fact is, nobody knows
Of our love.

The two love each other, but cannot show it, so the man looks at the woman with something of commiseration and regret. As *dodoitsu* deal with love they cannot altogether avoid humour. Here follow a few examples in which satire is predominant:

よけて通せばいゝ氣になつて
かたで風きり言葉すて
When somebody yields him the right of way,
He gets puffed up,
Swaggers along,
Spits out his words.

女房がかはゆくなる様になれば
そんなが惚ぬで身がもてる
When a man
Is sweet on his wife
He can easily be faithful to her,—
Other women won't love him.

1. The name is onomatopoeic probably, from the sound of the *samisen*; or from the short cries accompanying it.

河豚にゃいのちも打込むぬしが
 なぜにわたしにゃすげなかる
 You would give your life
 Even to a poisonous swell-fish!¹
 Then how is it possible for you
 To be so cold to me?

否にすかるるよりましかいな
 きらわれた身に好きな人
 It is better to be disliked
 By someone you like,
 Than liked by someone
 You dislike.

ぐちも戀路の一つの道具
 さつぱりすぎたも情がない
 Grumbling also
 Is a means of love;
 Being quite unattached
 Is unfeeling.

雨は降りだつ屋根の薪やぬれる
 背中でがきや泣飯やこげる
 Rain begins to fall,
 Firewood on the roof gets wet,
 The baby on my back cries,
 And the rice burns!

金がほしさに惚たと言へば
 いやな命もやるといふ
 When I say, "I love you!"
 To get some money out of him,
 He says he would give me his life,—
 That I don't want in the least!

1. A delicious but dangerous dish.

嘘いふてなととめおく智慧が
 でたよ ^いふせたそのあとで
 The wisdom to keep you here,
 By telling a lie,
 Came to me
 After you had gone.

汲どへらない汲まねど増ぬ
 井戸の水性うわき性
 Though drawn, never decreasing,
 Though not drawn, never increasing,
 The water of the well
 Of fickleness.

あきらめましたよ何様あきらめた
 あきらめられぬとあきらめた
 "I have resigned myself."
 "Resigned yourself to what?"
 "I have resigned myself to
 Never being resigned."

Let us now take the Japanese riddle. The difference between a riddle and a poem is that a riddle is completely solvable, but a poem is a question without an answer, an inexhaustible wonder. Strictly speaking, riddles are intellectual things, and as such should be neither humorous nor poetical, but as the Anglo-Saxon poets showed, a riddle may have both humour and poetry, for example the one about the book-worm "which grows no wiser, however much it may eat." Thus, since the intellect is never pure, or at least the human beings that use it, as we see in the case of a "beautiful" geometrical proof, the riddle often hints at surprising uniformities and unexpected identities which experience may confirm. Many kinds of playing with words have a faintly philosophical or magic significance, for example, putting all the letters of the alphabet in one sentence: Get nymph, quiz sad brows, fix luck; anagrams (CHRISTIANITY: I cry that

I sin); chronograms (My Day Closed Is In Immortality: MDCIII, the date of Queen Elizabeth's death); lipograms (a letter or letters avoided, for example a play, *Pièce sans A*, by Ronden in 1816). To these may be added conceits, euphuisms, macaronic verses, mosaics, or centos, palendromes, and puns. In all these the mind is not so much working as playing, and here perhaps is the birth of comedy.

The people of Edo were even more interested in word-play than the Europeans of the same age; this implies a stronger feeling of the fact that the universe is playing with us just as we with it. "I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist." The same author said of Shelley:

The universe is his box of toys. He dabbles his fingers in
the day-fall. He is gold-dusty with tumbling amidst the stars.
He makes bright mischief with the moon.

Riddles were most popular in Japan in the Edo Period among the tradesmen class, but this was an example of the rule that the various forms of Japanese culture usually appeared first among the aristocracy and then came down to a lower class where they were finally perfected.

There were already riddle contests in the 8th century, as recorded in the *Nihon Shoki*. Riddles are found in the 10th century *Shūinwaka-shū*, 拾遺和歌集, and in the *Tsurezuregusa* of the 14th century, chapter 135. The following are some of the best old riddles.

Setchin no nenrei?	Akete kusai.
How old is the privy?	At the New Year, nine years old.

But *akete kusai* also means, "If you open it, it stinks." The next too is poetical:

Ikiteru uchi wa nakazu; shinde kara ōki na koe wo dasu;
I-horai-gai.

lends"; but the Japanese also means, *kashwa* and *kaki*, "oak tree and persimmon tree," which are two trees.

4. Mojiri: (verbal) parody.

お祖師様	瓜の皮
Ososhi sama?	Uri no kawa.
The Founder of the Sect?	Melon peel.

The resolution is:

{	有難たかりし
	蟻がたかりし
	Arigatakarishi
{	A feeling of gratitude.
	Ants collect round it.

If the reader has ploughed through all this so far, he will have realised that the oriental mind is indeed a subtle thing, and finds pleasure in subtlety *per se*. Subtlety is not humour, but is indispensable for the highest reaches of the spirit of humour.

The Japanese never went in for epitaphs; they have nothing in their graveyards like the following from a Yorkshire one:

Beneath this stone, in hopes of Zion,
Is laid the landlord of The Lion.
Resigned unto the heavenly will,
His son keeps on the business still.

What is good about this is the more or less unconscious humour combined with an equally unconscious pathos, for Zion is only a greatly enlarged Lion, and the heavenly will is that we should carry on our business. The Japanese felt perhaps that the nature of humour, its mobility and intangibility, unsuited it for engraving on stone. But the humours of rhyme or rhythm or sound-echoing, onomatopoeia and so on they enjoyed to the full,—almost indeed as excessively as Shakespeare and the Elizabethans. Byron's outrageous

rhymes in *Don Juan* are as if transported in the same age to the opposite side of the world:

But, oh, ye lords of ladies intellectual,
Inform us truly, have they not henpecked you all?

There's not a sea the passenger e'er pukes in
Turns up more dangerous breakers than the Euxine.

Practical jokes are very uncommon in Japan. I don't think there is such a word in the language. The famous Berners Street hoax of 1810, perpetrated by Theodore Hook, would have been impossible in Japan. On the morning of November 24, there drew up at No. 54, the residence of Mrs. Tottingham, a widow lady, a waggon-load of coal, a hearse with a coffin, two famous physicians, a dentist, carpet-manufacturers, wig-makers, footmen, cooks, nursery maids in search of a situation, the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chief Justice, the Commander in Chief—the whole day passed in altercation and violence outside the house and terror inside. In Japan this would have been followed by decapitation and harakiri. But let us end this chapter on a more cheerful note.

There are fifty verses by Tachibana Akemi, who died in 1868, entitled *Dokurakugin*, "Happy Singing Alone." Akemi lived in poverty, but found in that same poverty all that was necessary for a poetical life. Every verse begins, "My happiness is" *Tanoshimi wa* and ends with "at that time," *toki*. The following are three examples:

たのしみはまれに魚煮て兒等皆が
うましろましと云ひて食ふ時

What a pleasure it is,
When I cook some fish,
(Seldom it is indeed!)
And all my children eat it,
And say, "It's scrumptious!"

The poor father sits there and looks at the faces of his children, and we look at him too, and like him, hardly know whether to laugh or weep.

たのしみは錢なくなりてわびをるに
ひとのきたりて錢くれし時

What a pleasure it is,
When I haven't a penny,
And feel so worried,
And then someone comes
And brings me some money.

This is a pleasure which only poverty can give us. It is comical enough, and pathetic,—and is it not also a poetical pleasure?

たのしみはいやなるひとの來りしが
ながくもをらで歸りける時

What a pleasure it is,
When the unwanted guest
Soon departs,
Not staying as long
As I thought he would!

This also is one of the minor pleasure of life. How pleasant it is when a chapter ends sooner than we thought it would!

CHAPTER XVII

The History of Japanese Caricature

We must say at the outset that just as humorous literature must be literature, that is, "poetry" in verse or prose, so caricature must be art. In England, Hogarth and Rowlandson, in France, Daumier, in Spain, Goya, were all artists. To put the matter more strongly, just as it is doubtful whether completely humourless literature may be called literature (even Satan in *Paradise Lost* has his comic side; even Lear and Macbeth and Othello have their ludicrous moments) so it would not be an altogether impossible task to show that there is something wrong with all art that lacks (implicit) humour. At least we may say this, that it is caricature in some form or other which has taught art that the fundamental thing in art is not beauty, and still less pleasant feelings, but an expressiveness that transcends beauty and ugliness. Be this as it may, oddly enough Japan has few humorous artists of the first rank. So has every country, but in the case of Japan, Bishop Toba is perhaps the only one, unless we include Sharaku. Hokusai had a rather crude sense of humour. Sengai is too rough, Hakuin too grim.

Any orthodox religion is always opposed to, and opposed by, humour. Zen only, in its being (and remaining, if it remains so) unorthodox, or rather non-orthodox, is humorous, and must be humorous, but Zen is not a religion; it is religion. The famous Sixteen Rakan (Buddhist saints) by Kankyu, 関雪, (Zengenetsu, 関元) 832-912, are caricatures, but as such represent the truth that cannot be grasped or expressed in any other way. Plate IV shows one of these gentle monsters.

Plate I is an example of seventeenth century Indian caricature.

It shows six saints, which correspond to the Chinese sixteen arhats in their lack of outward saintliness. This kind of thing "must have" existed in the earliest times, and "probably" influenced the Chinese religious idea, which was "no doubt" already Plate II shows a humorous version of one of our old friends, how old it is difficult to say, but perhaps of the 12th centry A.D.

The history of world caricature is even more fragmentary and the remains even more inaccessible than those of written literature. Further, it must be remembered that much of what appears to us, to our conscious minds, as comic, would not have so appeared to the original artists. An example of this is Plate III, a Chinese sketch of the Han Dynasty.

As for Korcan caricature, we must not overlook the serpent-like dragons, and caricatures of monsters, but the earliest example, indeed coming from a time when Korea had not yet separated from China, the first century A.D., is the basket illustrated in Plate VI. It was discovered in a grave. The same kind of nonchalance, to say the least of it, is seen in the painting, Plate VII, 1,500 years later, a man having a *kugyong*, a look, in this case at a river. The pictures of Dogs, Cats, and Birds, Plate VIII, from about the beginning of the Li Dynasty, show a sense of the fun and frolic of animal humour rare in China and Japan, and in the world.

The history of caricature in England is different from that in Japan. Roman comic figurines and sketches went all over Europe. Reformation satire and caricature began in Germany, then affected France and England in the first half of the 16th century. France and Holland were the leaders in the 17th century, England still imitating, but in the eighteenth century, with Hogarth, Burney, Gillray, and Rowlandson, English caricature became entirely independent. Japanese caricature seems little affected by Chinese, and rises and falls in value together with the literature of satire. The English word caricature, used first in the 18th century, comes from

the Italian caricatura, from caricare, to load, which seems to imply the excessive, exaggerated, grotesque element. The Japanese word *manga*, which again seems to have been first used in the 18th century, means simply sketches, with no specially humorous significance, except as implying freedom of matter and manner. True caricatures are found before and during the Nara Period, 710-784 A.D., drawings of faces on the ceiling of the Golden Hall of Hōryūji Temple. Plate X shows such a sketch, of a Korean or Chinese boy perhaps. Another example of these spontaneous creations is the pictures of people, horses, frogs, and rabbits, drawn on the pedestal of Bonten, 梵天, in Tōshōdaiji Temple. What is interesting is that humour, at least humanity, found its way back into religion by simply being added to it, written over it, or under it. So the Fan-paper Album of the *Hokekyō* Scriptures, of the Heian Period, has paintings added to the sutra which have nothing whatever to do with it; the subjects are taken from the *Genji Monogatari* and other romances. Little children especially appear before our eyes as we read the sacred text.

In the Heian Period, 794-1185, the satirical spirit was using literature. Seishōnagon, in her *Makura no Sōshi*, shows us the world of her time even more wittily and ironically than Jane Austen did hers seven centuries later. In the later part of the age, many humorous picture scrolls were made, one of the first and best being by Bishop Toba, 1053-1114, a monk of the Tendai Sect who lived in Toba (Yamashiro). His age was one of political, social, artistic, and religious languor and decadence, a preparation for the spartan Kamakura Period to follow. Toba seems to have been far from unlike the witty and jovial monks of the European Middle Ages. He was the 9th child of Minamoto Takakuni, the author of *Ima wa Mukashi*.¹ The following anecdote is told of Toba. One day he visited the mansion of the Kwampaku, Fujiwara Yorinichi, riding on

1. See page 222.

an exceedingly small horse through the Gate. When scolded, he replied. "I'm not on horseback, only on clogback," punning on 馬 and 足駄. His four scrolls of *Chōjugiga*, 鳥獸戯畫, "Bird and Beast Comical Pictures" are now world-famous, though recently some critics have assessed them lower, as art, than formerly.

It is not easy to say what precisely Toba's object was in drawing these pictures of monks as monkeys, Buddhas as frogs, and so on. When we remember that all preaching is really to oneself, all criticism of others a secret self-criticism, we may take these pictures as a kind of penance, a confession of that hypocrisy and time-serving without which even the best of men cannot make their way through this world. The use of animals, which we find also in ancient Egypt, is not a camouflage, but to show that we human beings are even lower than the so-called lower animals, in our dishonesty and cunning.

Until about thirty years ago, Toba was thought to have painted also the *Shigisan Engi Emaki*, 信貴山縁起繪卷, "Chronicle of Mount Shigi," which is artistically speaking one of greatest masterpieces of picture-scrolls. This scroll has comical elements, for example, the faces and attitudes of the people who watch the rice-granary flying off on the begging bowl, and those who see the rice-bales that the bowl brings back after it.¹

Another scroll-picture attributed to Toba is the *Shukyuzu*, 臭尻圖, "Stinking Fart Picture." This is what is known as a *kachi-e*, 勝繪, which seems to mean Competition Picture, or Winning Picture. The retired Emperor Enyu, who died in 984, seven years after his abdication, suffered from hypochondria, and when all other medicines and magical arts had failed it was suggested that he needed to be made to laugh, so Bishop Toba kindly obliged with the above pictures of men and women farting. This may seem a little on the vulgar side, but is not the good Bishop trying to save the world, and

1. For illustration, see the author's *Japanese Humour*, Japan Tourist Bureau.

in a far more effective way than the Bishop in *Les Misérables*?

One of the earliest picture scrolls is the *E-Inga Kyō*, 繪因果經, "Picture Karma Sutra," a Chinese work copied in the Nara Period. We see humour in the contrast between the enlightenment of Buddha and the illusions of the demons that are attacking him. It is to be noted that illusion (the comic figures) is nearer to (our) enlightenment than the enlightenment (of the serene and sublime figure of Buddha). Another picture where the humorous delineation of various classes of human beings is associated with Buddhism, is the copy, made in 1792, of an old picture scroll, *The Yūzūnembutsu Engi*, 融通念佛緣起, "The History of the Circulating Nembutsu."¹ Humour is the true equality in any age, even the most feudalistic; the pictures of the 12th century *Tomo no (Ban) Dainagon E-kotoba*,² 伴大納言繪詞, reveal common humanity long before literature did.

The Jigokuzōshi, 地獄草紙, "The Book of Hell," of the end of the Heian Period or the beginning of the Kamakura, is one of the most remarkable, because unexpected, productions of the Japanese Middle Ages. It is more ruthless than Juvenal, more devilish than Dante. Swift would have enjoyed it, and the early Church Fathers. It is of course a parable of life on this earth, the Hell within and without us at almost every moment of our lives, whether we are conscious of it or not. An example is given in Plate XV.

Though the Kamakura Period, 1185-1333, was a time of warfare, art, and with it the art of caricature was free to portray anything, in any way, unlike the Edo Period, in which there were all kinds of prohibitions and ordinances forbidding this and that. (Caricature, like freedom itself, requires restriction and oppression). The painters were aristocrats, for example Fujiwara Nobuzane, 1177-1266, and Fujiwara Nitsunaga, his contemporary. The latter painted the *Ban Dainagon*, mentioned above, in which both upper and lower class

1. Repeating *Namuamidabutsu* to save all beings.

2. See the author's *Japanese Humour*, pages 58 and 68.

THE FLAMES OF HELL

This is part of the *Jigoku-zōshi*, 地獄草紙, "The Book of Hell," the painter Tosa Mitsunaga and the writing by Priest Jakuren, just as in the case of *Gaki-zōshi*. All who make drunk and shameful those persons who have vowed to obey the Buddhist laws will fall into this hell of cloud, fire, and mist. We see the sinners surrounded by flames each about two feet thick. The writing of the scroll (2 metres 42cm. long, 26 cm. wide) is taken from the *Shōbōnenjōgyō*, 正法念處經, in which the 6 ways of life and death are described. The hot hells are 8 in number, the illustration being that of the sixth, Tapanā, 燒炙, the hell of flames and burning. The devil with the club on the right seems to believe in "ladies first" in Hell too. The writing at the side says: "[From top to toe the bodies of the damned are burned up.] but are re-formed, then are burned up again. This is never-endingly repeated, and their cries of anguish echo up to the lofty vault."

The following senryū seem as if written for this picture:

繪で見ては地獄の方が面白い
E de mite wa jigoku no hō ga omoshiroi

By the pictures,

Hell looks far more interesting
Than Heaven.

地獄でもいつちゐの利く鐵の棒
Jigoku de mo itchi i no kiku tetsu no bō

In Hell as well,

An iron club

Most inspires fear.

地獄の繪坊主を替かぬ得手勝手
Jigoku no e bōzu wo kakanu ete-kate

No priests painted

In pictures of Hell,—

That's *their* idea!

ゑやくれはまたよみかへるよみかへれはまた
天をひくのかす
ゑやくれはまたよみかへるよみかへれはまた

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely from a manuscript, appearing at the top of the page. The text is written in dark ink on aged, yellowed paper.



people are portrayed with a freedom and élan that is beyond objectivity and subjectivity. As with Daumier's caricatures, and Sharaku's, the lines themselves are humorous, but also natural, not as in Hokusai, perverse.

The *Jigokuzōshi*, mentioned before, scenes of the Buddhist Hell, is no more and no less comical than the European counterparts. But Hell is not so funny as Earth, with all its pains, as we see in the *Yamai-zōshi*, 病草紙, "Book of Maladies," said to be another of Mitsunaga's works, though the writing is by Jakuren Hōshi, 寂蓮法師, a poet famous at the time; he died in 1202. This work was done not as a caricature so much as to teach people about diseases, and act as a reference book to doctors. One of the most amusing scenes is of a family, the wife and husband quarrelling. The father and the two children have black noses, and even the baby at the breast shows that the wife was faithful to her black-nosed partner.

The *Gakizōshi*, 餓鬼草紙, "Pictures of Hungry Spirits," is in a way the most original of all the picture books. These monsters, with enormous stomachs, but the rest of the body skin and bones, eat the excretions of anyone defecating at the side of the road. The creatures are comical, not in the last degree disgusting, only pathetic. They represent our animal nature, which is not so much repulsive as pitiable in its weakness, its foolish desires, its imagined (skin-deep) beauty. Here again we see one of the freedoms of the Kamakura Period.

Another picture series of the time is *Tenguzōshi*, 天狗草紙. Tengu seem to be of two kinds, long-nosed feathered creatures, and those with beaks like birds. *Tenguzōshi* was painted by Tosa Yukimitsu, and satirises the monks of the time. The tengu are divided into seven groups, corresponding to the temples of Tōdaiji, Kōfukuji, Miidera, Emryakuji, Tōji, Daigoji, and Koyasan, that is to say, almost all the sects.

The Zen of the Kamakura Period is not without a connection

with the spirit of caricature found often in the picture scrolls. We must however, as always, distinguish between Zen and the patriotic and nationalistic, in a word, non-humanistic and un-humorous Zen Sect. The effect of this false Zen was seen in the next age, or to speak more exactly, the un-humaneness of the Japanese of the Kamakura Period came out more clearly in the Muromachi Period.

The Muromachi Period, 1392-1490, was a time of decadence and imitation, though some of the fantastic pictures, for example *Hyakki Yakō*, are more or less original. The *Kasuga Gongen Reikenki*, 春日権現靈驗記, painted by Takashina Takakane, 高階隆兼, depicts the habits and customs of all classes of society, from the highest to the lowest; the details are careful, and the attitudes expressive. The *Fukutomi Zōshi*, 福富草子, by Tosa Mitsunobu, 土佐光信, a famous painter, is definitely caricature. The fall from humour into vulgarity is as easy as that from seriousness into vapidity, though less dangerous perhaps, because the real Hell is alienation from God, that is, meaninglessness. Vulgarity we find plenty of in the *Fukutomi Zōshi*; it is seen in the paper cover of this book. The *Tōhokuin Uta-awase*, 東北院歌合, the author unknown, is a book of capping poems by blacksmiths, doctors, carpenters and so on, perhaps of the Kamakura Period. The pictures and the verses are extremely out-painted and outspoken. The *Hyakki Yakō*, 百鬼夜行, by Tosa Yukihide, or Tosa Mitsunobu, is pictures of shoes and kettles and musical instruments and so on dancing and playing together during the night. At the end, the sun rises, and they all run off together. We find similar stories in Anderson and Grimm. Such Midsummer Night's Dreams were often imitated in later times, for example by Hakuin Zenji.

During the Muromachi Period, Chinese paintings of the Sung Dynasty were brought from China by the monks who went there, particularly by Zen monks. These were masculine, free-spirited, and direct, and had humorous elements, coming from Zen. Zen pictures are somewhat alien to the Japanese spirit, which inclines to the

sentimental and vague. However, the spontaneity and momentariness of the Sung pictures, imitated by Japanese Zen priests, was agreeable to the Japanese artists, and belong of course to the humorous attitude. A good example is *The Loach and the Gourd*, painted about 1410 by Josetsu, which is a Zen picture of a man about to catch a fish with a smooth gourd, an impossibility. This is a Lear-like situation, with a strange contrast between the softness of the lines of the picture and the formidable strength of the man with the gourd. Again, during this period many pictures were made of monkeys trying to catch the moon. The Buddhist meaning, the Zen meaning, and the humorous meaning of such pictures were not well distinguished, the humorous one being the easiest, though not therefore necessarily the most shallow.

The fairy-tale, nursery-rhyme element of humour is seen in Plate XXVI, an illustration from a 1764 copy of the original *Tsuchigumozōshi*, 土蜘蛛草紙, "The Story of an Earth-Spider," painted by Tosa Nagataka, the words being by Kenkō Hōshi.

During the Muromachi Period the satirical spirit expressed itself rather in literature, that is to say drama, than in art. Kyōgen made fun of daimyō, monks, and over-clever women, but in a truly Japanese way, with no revolutionary or conscious political intentions whatever. Of course the underlying effect, corresponding to the unconscious intention, was destructive, or rather, levelling, in a word, humanistic.

The Tokugawa Period, 1603-1868, also called the Edo Period, is one of caricature, military and political resistance to it, and popular resistance to that resistance through caricature. Hishikawa Masanobu, 菱川荘宣, Moronobu's disciple, made *tan-e*, 丹繪, "Brown-red Pictures," a simple form of ukiyo-e, and Harunobu made *nishiki-e*, brocade-pictures. These were purely pictures, with beauty of line and colour as the sole object, but after Utamaro and Toyokuni, Hokusai painted for the people many caricatures, in connection with

kyōka, senryu, and novels, including ghost stories. Also during the the period we have a large number of beautiful picture scrolls by Moronobu, Masanobu, and Chōshun, but though these portray the customs of the time, there is no satire, no comedy even; they are pictures of an Tokugawa Earthly Paradise.

Zen caricature is seen at its best in Hakuin Zenji, 1683-1768, and Sengai in the next century. The self-portrait of Hakuin Zenji, Plate XVIII, is Falstaff's portrait of Falstaff, and just as Falstaff had his philosophy of life which every word and act of his expressed, so Hakuin shows us the humour of folly, the attractiveness of illusion, in its danger and indeed attempting the impossible, by the picture of the two blind men crossing a log bridge, Plate XVII. This kind of art, like Zen itself, has no history. Sengai, 1750-1837, also attained to expressiveness in his religious caricatures. Plate XIII illustrates the story given on page 253. The picture of farting, Plate XII, is remarkable in that it unites the very lowest with the very highest, and when this is done we have humour, poetry, and the whole truth.

Popular art, in the sense of real art produced by ordinary people, is found seldom in world painting, but often in pottery and embroidery, in ballads and so on. Otsu-e, pictures from Otsu, in Gifu Prefecture, dealt from the first with religious subjects, in a humorous but not contemptuous way. The subjects were Buddhas, the Thunder God, an Ogre saying the Nembutsu, gallants, blind masseurs, falcons, a monkey catching a (slippery) loach with a (smooth) gourd, a woman carrying wistaria flowers, and so on. The pictures were used as souvenirs of travel, and as charms against certain specific calamities and diseases.

The earliest Otsu-e seem to have been painted in the Kanei Era, 1624-1643, and the subject to have been Buddhas only. Bashō's well-known haiku is the first reference to Otsu-e by such a name.

大津繪の筆の始めは何佛
Otsu-e no fude no hajime wa nani-botoke

With what Buddha
Did the painting of Otsu-e
Begin?

Kyoroku, Bashō's disciple, also has a verse that brings together art and poetry:

藤かざす人や大津の繪のすがた
Fuji kazasu hito ya Otsu no e no sugata

Carrying a branch
Of wistaria blossoms,
She looks like an Otsu-e.

Saikaku in *Kōhoku Ichidai Otoko*, 好色一代男, mentions five kinds of Otsu-e. Later they became connected with *dōka*, Buddhist waka, which were written beside the pictures, and Otsu-e thus became the more popularised.

Otsu-e had to be made quickly and cheaply by quite uneducated painters, often perhaps by a whole family who did the work simply as a means of making money—that is to say by artisans rather than artists. The work was done mechanically, but with a subconscious mechanism. The question then arises, why are they so good artistically? Why so comical? The answer to the first question is, to parody Thoreau, “Man, not Michelangelo or Sesshū, is the great artist.” To the second question, we must say that nature itself is comical. Otsu-e were uninhibited, unartificial and spontaneous, without theory or philosophical justification. Humour was not added to nature and art, but the three arose together, as one thing. The inimitableness of the art was recognised by Itchō.¹ He wrote on an Otsu-e of a Sumō-wrestler:

大津繪に負けなん老の流れ足
Otsu-e ni make nan oi no nagare-ashi

I shall probably be defeated
By this Otsu-e,
Old legs wabbling.

1. See the next page.

Plate XIX, depicts Fudō, 不動, said to be uncommon as a subject with Otsu-e; it brings out the Japanese feeling of the comicality of devilry. It was painted before the middle of the 17th century.

Besides Otsu-e, there are *doro-e* and *garasu-e*, but these two both lack humour. *Doro-e*, 泥繪, literally "mud-pictures," appeared later than Otsu-e, using coarse paints, originally for use with a magic-lantern. The subjects were mostly landscapes, and the pictures lacked poetry as well as humour. Glass-pictures were still later, coming from China, with Chinese and European subjects. The artistic value, also, is nil.

Haiga, which are pictorial comments on or additions to haiku, or pictures independent of haiku and thus haiku in line and mass, come originally from Nanga, Southern Chinese Pictures, which were freer and more humorous than those of North China. Buson's haiga are good, and far better than his ordinary Chinese-style pictures. The illustration given, Plate XI, of the cat and the ladle dancing, has the animism of *senryu* rather than of haiku.

One of the best artists of the time, Hanabusa Itchō, 1652-1724, was a true caricature artist, of the obstinate tribe of Hogarth and Goya. He got into trouble with the publication of a book of pictures called *Hyakunin Jorō*, 百人女藪; the explanation is a little complicated. There was a boat called Asazuma full of courtezans who snapped up (not so) unwary travellers, and the name Asazuma-bune, Asazuma-ship, was used to mean courtesan. The 5th Shōgun Tsunayoshi had a large number of concubines, and often went on a boat with them on a lake in the Court, and this became known in Edo. (This Shōgun, by the way, is famous in history as being a patron of the arts, but in adjusting the finances he made himself unpopular by the increase of prices of the necessities of life. He also forbade the killing of any animal, especially dogs, and was called Inu-kubō, 犬公方, "Dog-Lord".) Itchō painted a picture called Asazuma-bune, portraying Tsunayoshi in it, and was arrested



中務勘次郎

小松

PLATE XVI

KAGEKIYO BREAKING OUT OF PRISON

This colour print was done by Torii Kiyonobu, 1664-1729. The painters of the Torii School were very much connected with actors, since their ancestor Kiyomoto was an actor, and also painted his own bill-boards. (From this time his descendents continued to paint Kabuki bill-boards.) As such pictures must be seen from a distance, the drawing is simple, with thick lines and strong colours. The name of the actor and his crest are seen in the picture. Nakajima Kanzaemon, who impersonated Kagekiyo, is shown after breaking out of prison, and assuming a posture. Taira no Kagekiyo was taken prisoner at the battle of Dan-no-Ura, 1185, but starved himself to death. He was of a violent character, and legend says that he plucked out his own eyes so as not to see the triumph of his enemies. The humour of this picture is the hyperbolical humour of Kabuki.

This kind of picture is known technically as a *tan-e*, a colour print using Indian ink, red lead, and the yellow juice of the Cape jasmine.

The similar extravagance of the scene when Kagekiyo is arrested and tied with a huge rope is described in the following *senryū*:

輪をふやすやうに景潜縛られる

Wa wo fuyasu yō ni Kagekiyo shibarareru

Kagekiyo

Is bound

With many a loop.

and exiled to Hachijōjima or Miyakejima Island for 12 years, for some other, imaginary crime.

To be humorous, gentle, and unsentimental is difficult in art, but it is what we see in Plate IX, *San-pei Ni-man*, by Ogawa Haritsu, a pupil of Itchō. In its sweetness and yet purity the picture is typical of the age between Bashō and Buson; Ogawa died in 1747.

Of the same age, but representing a quite opposite tendency, is Plate XVI, *Rōgoku Yaburi no Kagekiyo*, 牢獄破りの景清, by Torii Kiyonobu, 1664-1729; we see the violence, hyperbole and fantasy which came later in kabuki, ukiyo-e and (humourless) bushidō.

Kanō Tanyū and Tsunenobu (both hated by Itchō) painted humorous pictures, found for example in *Kyōgaen*, 狂畫苑, but these are sketches of Daikoku (god of wealth) and tengu (ornithological monsters) Ebisu and Hotei fighting, Shakamuni catching and eating fish, Daruma drawing a long sword, and so on; none are of ordinary human life.

With the Temmei Era, 1781-1788, humane and humorous literature increased rapidly, Santō Kyōden, Jippensha Ikku, Shikitei Samba, and Shokusanjin being among the best authors. Aohon, "blue books," kibyōshi, "yellow books" appeared, all requiring illustration. Santō Kyōden, among others, painted the humorous pictures for his own stories. Hokusai made both his own sketches and many illustrations for the stories of Bakin, Santō Kyōden and so on. When he was mature, at the age of 40, many of his pictures went to Europe through Nagasaki, but the Japanese Government soon put a stop to this sort of international nonsense.

An example of the interest of the true humorist in portraying the comedy of his own surroundings rather than criticising the rich and powerful on the one hand, and low-class stupidities on the other, is *Meguro Mōde*, 目黒詣で, "A Pilgrimage to Meguro," by Watanabe Kazan, seen on the inside of the cover. At the beginning, Kazan says:

On October the 14th of Bunsei (1818-1829), Kichu, Kambi Watanabe no Nobuo, Ueda Masahira, and Suzuki Shaken were told to rest after working hard, and enjoyed themselves at Meguro.

Kazan has written and painted some of the things they said and did. The first sketch shows a servant hurrying along with gourds (of wine). In the next we see the rustic house they were to go to. The third sketch shows them drinking to their heart's content. Then they went off to Shinfuji, but mistook the road. When they got there they enjoyed themselves, but were surprised at the bill, and staggered back. The last picture shows them all excited because the paper lantern caught fire. There are various *kyōka* and Chinese poems and haiku interspersed among the sketches. We cannot help being reminded of Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat*, though there are four men here, and no boat.

Games, toys, legerdemain, circuses and so on are on the fringe of humour, and this fringe is wide. War itself is, or was, a game, and at the other extreme is the *kyōkugei*, acrobatics with music, used to draw the crowd and sell things. An interesting example of *kyōkugei*, from the early Tokugawa Period, is seen in the frontispiece. Netsuké should be mentioned here. They were small ornaments worn by merchants (not by samurai) to hold the tobacco-, medicine-, or money-pouch to the girdle. Made of wood, ivory, metal etc., they were almost all humorous in subject or treatment.

This account of Japanese humorous art is only too appropriately sketchy, but a serious and methodical history of comic art is possibly impossible.

CHAPTER XVIII

Japanese Proverbs

One of the most important functions of a proverb is a therapeutic one, to assuage feelings of grief and anger and disappointment by universalising them, and showing them to be common to all persons and all ages. Again, the relation between proverbs and humour is so close that we are not surprised to find that in Japanese history the periods of the flourishing of humour are those of the abundance of proverbs. Militarism and romanticism are the enemies of humour, and therefore the Heian, 794-1185, and Kamakura, 1192-1333, Periods are poor in proverbs.

A proverb is a concentration of the wisdom of tradition, memorable from its unusual identity of sound and meaning. In all countries its origin has been considered to be a divine one. Proverbs are the words of the gods, in Japanese, *kotowaza*, "speech-doings," magical phrases which have the same value as action itself. The first proverb in Japanese literature is said to be 雉の頓使, *Kiji no hitazukai*, "A (pheasant) messenger who goes alone, without taking any servant with him." This comes from the *Kojiki*, xiii, 31.

An often forgotten essential of a proverb is that it should be known by everyone; in other words, proverbs, whether aristocratic or plebeian in origin, are chosen and approved by the common people. They are the final arbitrators. Another point to note, a corollary of the saying that *vox populi vox dei*, is the fact that no proverbs are wrong. Like the fables of Aesop, they are infallible, even when, as is often the case, they contradict each other. Yet another point. Proverbs have this in common with great poetry, that the meaning snowballs with time, for example a *senryu* of the Tokugawa Period

which is also a proverb:

孝行のしたい時には親はなし

Kōkō no shitai toki ni wa oya wa nashi

When we wish to be dutiful

To our parents,

They are no more.

When this was written it expressed a universal truth, that it is only after our parents are dead that we realise how kind and thoughtful and self-sacrificing they were to us. But we now add to this the more cynical yet true realisation that we wish to be dutiful to them when they are dead, *because* they are dead and we no longer need perform the duties that we neglected as long as they were practicable.

The aristocrats of the Heian Period produced waka, Nō, calligraphy, feudalism, and the knightly code (made explicit very much later, in the 18th century) and the proverbs and moral didactic maxims derived or imitated from Confucianism and Buddhism. The common people produced haiku, senryu, kabuki, and the proverbs of common life and experience. The following are some of the most interesting (though not necessarily the commonest) Japanese proverbs. Their humour is very various: witty, profound, playful, admiring, despising, hopeful, despairing, Buddhistic, atheistic.

馬の耳に念佛

Uma no mimi ni nembutsu

Repeating the Name of Buddha in a horse's ear.

Most of the art, music, and poetry of our world is little more than this.

盗人の晝寝もあてがある

Nusubito no hirune mo ate ga aru

Even when a thief is asleep, it is in anticipation of something or other.

Every part of the sea is salt, and a thief's sleeping and eating are all

part of his thieving.

買ふはもらふにまさる

Kau wa morau ni masaru

It's cheaper to buy than to receive as a gift.

To be given something is so hard on the feelings. An inextinguishable inferiority, an unpayable obligation, a deficiency of gratitude,—it is difficult indeed to forgive a giver.

こわし、みたし

Kowashi, mitashi

The more fearful, the more we wish to see it.

It is worthy of note that a great many Japanese proverbs have a kind of rhyme, just as English proverbs often use assonance, for example, "A stitch in time saves nine." The above proverb, together with 負けるが勝ち, *Makeru ga kachi*, "To lose is to win," and the English proverb, "Comparisons are odious," comprise such a vast field of truth that they are practically inexhaustible in application. What is dreadful, we want to see, that is, we want what is dreadful, that is, what we really want (and therefore what we actually have) is a world in which each of us struggles and suffers and fails and dies and becomes nothing for ever.

武士は食はねど高楊子

Bushi wa kuwanedo takayōji

The samurai picks his teeth, even though he has not broken his fast.

This is a brilliant piece of hyperbole which nevertheless does not exaggerate the power of men to defy their fate.

一寸の虫にも五分の魂

Issun no mushi ni mo gōbu no tamashii

A worm one inch long has half an inch of soul.

This is not so much an expression of animism as of a respect for

the thing-ness of things, their existence-value, without which all nature poetry is impossible.

人を見て法を説く
Hito wo mite hō wo toku

Look at the congregation before you begin to preach.

This is a proverb for teachers. If an author could see the reader, perhaps the book would never be written at all.

借りる時の地藏顔、
なす時のえんま顔
Kariru toki no Jizō-gao, nasu teki no Emma-gao
When borrowing, the face of Jizō;
When returning, the face of Emma.

Jizō, the patron saint of children, has a very bland countenance Emma is the Buddhist Pluto. We all, in different degrees, do what the proverb says. This is our human nature, our illusion: enlightenment would reduce all to meaningless uniformity. "Blessed are the impure in heart."

うには男女の仲をやはらぐ
Uta wa danjo no naka wo yawaragu

Poetry softens the relations of the sexes.

This is perhaps upside-down. The relations of the sexes soften them into becoming poets.

合せ物は離れもの
Awase mono wa hanare mono
Things that join, separate.

There is an Arabic proverb, "Birth is the messenger of death." This is deeper than comedy or tragedy; it is the essence of Buddhism.

戀に上下のへだてなし
Koi ni jōge no hedate nashi

There is no difference of high and low in love.

This is true financially and socially, but not in other ways. Lowness and highness in matters of taste, in intellect, in morality, in the desire for truth, are the death of love.

情氣は戀の命
Rinki wa koi no inochi

Jealousy is the very life of love.

Even Jehovah is "a jealous God."

秋の扇
Aki no ōgi

A fan in autumn.

This refers to an unwanted, that is, deserted woman.

夜目, 遠目, 傘のうち
Yome, tōme, kasa no uchi

A woman should be seen at night, in the distance, or under an umbrella.

This is true of all things, not only women. It is not that distance lends enchantment to the view, or that ignorance is bliss, but that there is something in the nature of the universe which requires us, the eye of the universe, to see it indirectly, through a glass darkly, never face to face.

一寸先は闇
Issun saki wa yami

An inch ahead is pitch darkness.

The feeling of the impermanence of life must have been innate in the Japanese, though it was of course brought out by the influence of Buddhism. The same applies to the following:

朝の紅顔, 夕の白骨
Ashita no kōgan, yūbe no hakkotsu

In the morning, a ruddy face; in the evening, white bones.

One of the most important things in our life of thought is to be constantly reversing the order, temporal and metaphysical, of cause and effect. An effect is always a cause of its cause; the cause is always an effect of the effect. So with the above proverb, to what extent time is real no one knows, but if we see the white bones bleaching under our own ruddy face and that of others, all our faces will be ruddier,—and the white bones, no whiter.

のれんに腕押し

Noren ni ude-oshi

To have a trial of strength with a shop-front curtain.

Most of our life is spent in doing this, controlling desires for things we don't really want, trying to love what is unlovable, and to understand what is of its nature beyond the understanding.

目も口程に物と言ふ

Me mo kuchi hodo ni mono wo iu

The eyes say as much as the mouth.

This seems to me a rank understatement.

毒食らはば皿までなぶれ

Doku kurawaba, sara made nabure

If you eat poison, lick the plate.

The universe is poison. All truth is disagreeable. We must swallow it with gusto.

無くて七くせ

Nakute, nana kuse

He thinks he has none, but he has seven bad habits.

This is Burns'

O wad some Power the giftie gie us,
To see oursel's as ithers see us!

親馬鹿子利口

Oya baka, ko rikō

The parents foolish, the child wise.

We learn more from evil than from good, from error than from truth, from vulgarity than from refinement. Bernard Shaw said he learned to be a teetotaller from his drunkard father.

猿の尻笑ひ

Saru no shiri-warai

Monkeys laughing at the red bottoms of other monkeys.

When we really know this, and still laugh at other red bottoms, this is true laughter.

鬼も十八，蛇も二十

Oni mo jūhachi, ja mo hatachi

Even an ogre is beautiful at eighteen, a snake charming at twenty.

This is the expression of a very low opinion of women, but not unjustified, I think.

忘れねばこそ思ひ出す

Wasureneba koso, omoidasu

If I don't forget, how can I not remember?

This proverb is rather mysterious, and seems to imply the corresponding mystery of both conscious and unconscious memory. It is astounding what (apparently) trivial things we remember, and what (apparently) important things we forget.

金銭は他人

Kinsen wa tanin

Money makes strangers.

Reversing this (as we should always do by habit) it is our lack of love for one another that allows us (or causes us) to make profit out of one another.

なうちわ
Hidari uchiwa

A fan in the left hand.

This is a most poetic proverb, because it implies that the right hand is engaged in drinking tea or eating cakes, or some other pleasant and gracious actions.

二階から目薬
Nikai kara megusuri

Eye-lotion from upstairs.

This proverb is used to describe actions which are useless and fruitless.

悪事千里を走る
Akuji sen ri wo hashiru

Bad news flies a thousand leagues.

This fact shows that what we call bad news is really Good, in the sense that it is significant, interesting, and belongs to the essential nature of things which is bad, that is, Good.

坊主がにくけりやけさまでにくい
Bōzu ga nikukerya, kesa made nikui

If we hate the monk we hate even his surplice.

This proverb again is poetical, as we realise when we see that it is an example of synecdoche.

藝は身を助ける
Gei wa mi wo tasukeru

Art provides livelihood.

Value and use have no connection whatever, and yet use uses value. Even the poet coins his heart and drops his blood for drachmas.

裸で物を落したためしなし
Hadaka de mono wo otoshita tameshi nashi

No naked man ever lost anything.

The English form is, "Nought is never in danger." This is an expression of Zen, which goes a step further, and says *Mu ichi motsu chū mujinzō*, 無一物中無盡藏, "Possessing nothing we possess all things."

金持とたんはきはたまる程きかない

Kanemochi to tanhaki wa tamaru hodo kitanai

Rich men and spittoons,—the more they collect, the filthier they are.

When this proverb is taught in the elementary schools, we shall be on the way to the millenium.

夢の浮橋

Yume no ukihashi

A bridge of dreams.

Here and now a dream, there and then is a dream, and what joins them is equally a floating, fairy, unreal, non-existent thing. In this proverb we get close to the Japanese character.

ならぬかんにんするが勘忍

Naranu kannin suru ga kannin

To bear what cannot be borne is truly to bear.

This is the dreadful but not ignoble fate of man.

The above are thirty four proverbial sayings, and to these, out of an estimated 20,000 Japanese proverbs, are added the following thirty four, as being especially witty or paradoxical.

痘もえくぼ

Abata mo ukubo

Pockmarks seem dimples to the lover.

This not because "love is blind," but because "all but lovers are blind."

鴨の火事見舞

Ahiru no kaji mimai

A duck visiting victims of a fire.

This is an unusually rude proverb, for Japanese. It is used of a woman who walks in a waddling manner.

悪女の深情
Akujo no fukanasake

An ill-favoured woman loves violently.

This reminds us of Miss Spence in Huxley's *The Gioconda Smile*.

馬鹿程怖いものはない
Baka hodo kowai mono wa nai

Nothing is so dangerous as a fool.

If you don't know this you are an example of it.

比丘尼に櫛をさゝせるやう
Bikuni ni kushi wo sasaseru yō

Sticking a comb in a nun's hair.

Nearly all of our life is spent doing this.

町内で知らぬは亭主ばかりなり
Chōnai de shiranu wa teishu bakari nari

In the whole district, the husband is the only one that doesn't know.

The district extends to the whole inhabitable area of the globe.

泥棒に鍵をあづける
Dorobō ni kagi wo azukeru

Putting the thief in charge of the key.

This applies to our statesmen and politicians. It is Juvenal's, "Who shall guard the guardians?"

枝を矯めんとして根を枯らす
Eda wo tamen to shite ne wo karasu

Killing the roots by straightening the branches.

Here we have the Education Ministry and all the teachers.

下駄は鼻緒がら，亭主は女房がら

Geta wa hanao gara, teishu wa nyōbo gara

We know the clogs by the thongs, a man by his wife.

However, a clever and beautiful wife often shows a cunning man.

石が流れて木の葉が沈む

Ishi ga nagarete konoha ga shizumu

The stone floats away, the leaf sinks.

This is almost too profound for a proverb.

駕籠に乗る人擔ぐ人，そのまた鞋つくる人

Kago ni noru hito, katsugu hito, sono mata waraji tsukuru hito

There are people who ride palanquins; there are those who carry palanquins; and there are those who make straw sandals for those who carry palanquins.

God has made the world so, but we human beings do not approve of it.

かつたいの瘡恨み

Kattai no kasa urami

The leper envies the syphilitic.

This is almost any two human beings. What is noteworthy and admirable is the violence of the expression.

松の木に蟬

Matsu no ki ni semi

A cicada on a pine-tree.

This is used, only too aptly, of a married pair extremely different in height or build.

木乃伊とりが木乃伊となる

Miira-tori ga miira to naru

The mummy-hunter turns into a mummy.

This reminds us of Johnson's, "Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat," which is itself a parody of Brooke's "Who rules o'er free-men should himself be free." But the Japanese means that we can't avoid becoming fat if we drive fat oxen.

泣く子と地頭には勝てぬ
Naku ko to jitō ni wa katenu

We have no power over a crying child or a magistrate.

Extremes meet.

落書に名筆なし
Rakugaki ni meihitsu nashi

Scribbling on the wall is always in a poor hand.

This may possibly be true of all writing on anything.

千疊敷で寝ても畳一枚
Senjōjiki de nete mo tatami ichimai

Even if you sleep in a thousand-mat room, you can only sleep on one mat.

After all, nature is democratic in a way.

杓子は耳搔の代りにならぬ
Shakushi wa mimikaki no kawari ni naranu

You can't pick your ears with a ladle.

This is asserting one half of truth. The other is that we can pick our ears with the Galaxy, and annihilate the universe with our eyelids.

死んだ子の年を数へる
Shinda ko no toshi wo kazoeru

Counting the years of a dead child.

It is foolish indeed,—but what is not?

生者必滅會者定離
Shōja hitsumetsu esha jōri

Those who live must die, those who meet must part.

This is more strange than comical, but tragedy is as essential for comedy as vice versa. Those who weep must laugh.

小敵と見て悔るべからず
大敵と見て恐るべからず

Shōteki to mite anadoru bekarazu, taiteki to mite osoru bekarazu

Don't despise a weak enemy, or fear a formidable one.

This is the whole wisdom of life; smile at all things.

大奸は忠に似たり
Taikan wa chū ni nitari

Great treachery looks like loyalty.

This is why we believe the prime ministers and presidents.

大賢は愚の如し
Taiken wa gu no gotoshi

Great wisdom looks like folly.

That is why no one pays any attention to Hakurakuten or Bashō or John Clare.

立つている者は親でも使へ
Tatte irumono wa oya demo tsukae

Make use of anyone standing up, even a parent.

The busy may use the idle, whoever he may be.

亭主を尻に敷く
Teishu wo shiri ni shiku

A husband tied to his wife's apron-strings.

But the Japanese says, "the husband spread under his wife's bum." Freud would have enjoyed this expression.

天下は天下の天下
Tenka wa tenka no tenka

The world is the world for the world.

This is an interesting expression of democracy. It must be Chinese, for this is not the Japanese spirit, which loves one, not the many.

使ふ者は使はれる
Tsukau mono wa tsukawareru

We are used by those we use.

This is the obverse of "Let him who would be master be servant of all."

魚心あれば水心
Uogokoro areba mizugokoro

The fish swims in the water, the water swims the fish.

The one thing appears to be two, but their activity is really indivisible.

一押し, 二金, 三男
Ichi oshi ni kane san otoko

The first, boldness; the second, money; the third, good looks.
To gain a woman's love.

言ひ出しのとき出し
Iidashi no koki dashi

The one who begins to talk about it is the one who farted.
All farters are also (would-be) cunning deceivers apparently.

まだ早いが遅くなる
Mada hayai ga osoku naru

Saying "It is too early," makes it too late.

This is mathematical as much as psychological, for it is difficult to be exactly on time.

一瓜實に二丸顔
Ichi urizane ni ni marugao

The first is an oval face; the second is a round one.

This is the grading of women's faces. It continues: the third, a

flat face; the fourth, a square one; the fifth, a long one.

名物にうまいものなし

Meibutsu ni umai mono nashi

No noted product is delicious.

This is because really delicious things have no need to be "noted."

目糞鼻癩を笑ふ

Mekuso hanakuso wo warau

Eye-rheum laughs at snout.

All human beings may be put into one of these two classes.

The greater part of all proverbs are humorous, and the above sixty eight Japanese proverbs were chosen simply because the humour was more or less explicit, or explainable. A proverb is wisdom, that is, humour, in its briefest form. It is a kind of poetic brevity.

CHAPTER XIX

Yanagidaru Book I

The whole collection of *Haifū Yanagidaru* consists of one hundred and sixty seven books, twenty four being published during the lifetime of Senryu himself. The first few books are the best, the quality gradually becoming inferior with time. In this respect the history of senryu is quite different from that of haiku, which has four "peaks," let us say 1680, 1750, 1800 and 1900, corresponding to the flourishing of Bashō, Buson, Issa, and Shiki.

Old senryu have a remarkable purity; they do not strive nor cry. And however much they deal with the sordid or sexual side of life, "the soul of pure delight is never defiled" in them. A great many old senryu have the power seen in Shakespeare, of revealing a whole world of life in a single line, a single phrase. We find in senryu yet another illustration of the strange law that the more we wish to reveal a thing, the more we must hide it; and another, that the smaller the circumstance, the greater its significance.

Old senryu have a poetry in them that is "far beyond singing." By despising the poetical, by disdaining all its artifices and subterfuges, its half-truths and silent omissions of the poetically intractable, senryu attain a region that can be lived in, but is hardly capable of description in terms of the geography of the mind. It goes down to the dark secret life of things, the compulsion, the destiny which rules us, from whence come

Airs and floating echoes that convey
A melancholy into all our day.

To many people, this may seem too great a claim for these expres-

sions of the trivia of our daily life, but in truth, as Blake says, such things are "portions of eternity too great for the eye of man." The following are from the first collection, published in the second year of Meiwa, 1765.

じれったく師走を遊ぶ針とがめ

Jirettaku shiwasu wo asobu hari-togame

With her finger injured by a needle,
Free from work at the end of the year,
But peevish and fretful.

This senryu portrays the mind of a woman, and especially her feelings just before the New Year. She can't work because she has pricked her finger and it has festered, but unable to take the matter philosophically, she wanders about the house, a finger with a woman attached to it.

勘當も初手は手代に送られる

Kandō mo shote wa tedai ni okurareru

At the beginning,
The disinherited son is
Sent away with a shop-assistant.

In the end, the ne'er-do-well son is turned out of the house, but at first, when he began lying and thieving and going off to the Yoshiwara, he was sent away together with a serving-man. The senryu summarises a kind of "Rake's Progress." Hogarth would have been in his element in Japan at this same time. (The first volume of *Yanagidaru* appeared in the year after Hogarth's death.)

乳貰ひの袖につっぱる鰯節

Chi-morai no sode ni tsupparu katsuo bushi

A piece of dried bonito
Shows its shape in the sleeve
Of one who asks to suckle his child.

The baby has lost its mother, and the father must go round

getting milk for it. Instead of money he takes a stick of dried fish, and carries it in his sleeve, where it shows itself unmistakably. If we suppose this senryu to be written by the person from whom the milk is received, we get a picture of her wondering what he has brought this time, and looking at the shape of something hard and long in his sleeve.

けいせいも淋しくなると名を變へる

Keisei mo sabishiku naru to na wo kaeru

The courtesan also,
When she gets lonely,
Changes her name.

When business is bad, the courtesan, like other professionals, tries to change her luck by changing her name.

初物が來ると持佛がちんと鳴り

Hatsumono ga kuru to jibutsu ga chin to nari

The first thing of the season comes,
And in the family Buddhist altar
The bell goes "chin!"

This senryu has something peculiarly mature in it. We are made to feel the animism, the distant historical past of Buddhism, the piety of people; and at the same time, their greediness, their love of the first thing, their puny and trivial religiosity. The senryu is a miracle of brevity, for it shows us in a single action, a single sound, the life of the inhabitants of Edo two hundred years ago.

すてる藝はじめる藝にうらやまれ

Suteru gei hajimeru gei ni urayamare

The thrower-away of an accomplishment
Is envied
By the beginner of an accomplishment.

This verse refers to the rather pathetic fact that singing-girls and

others always wish to get married, and when they do so and leave their arts behind them, they are the objects of envy of those just beginning in their profession.

病上り頂くことが癖になり

Yamiagari itadaku koto ga kuse ni nari

The convalescent

Gets into the habit

Of expecting everything to be done for him.

This widely observed fact brings out the nature of human beings, who are only too quick and ready to accept the kindness of others. *Itadaku* means lift to the head in thanks.

醫者の戸をほとほと打つはただの用

Isha no to wo hoto hoto utsu wa tada no yō

The one who only taps

At the doctor's door

Must have come on some ordinary business.

If it were for the doctor's professional help, for a childbirth for instance, the man would be hammering on the door, and bawling at the top of his voice.

稲妻のくづれやうにも出来不出来

Inazuma no kuzureyō nimo deki fudeki

Even with thunder and lightning,

Some is well done,

Some unskilfully.

Here we have a kind of anthropomorphic poetry peculiar to senryu. In nature as well as in human beings, some things are done well, but others are bungled. Flowers fail to form properly, butterflies are one-sided, rain is convulsive and thwarted, clouds are misshaped.

掛人寝言にいふがほんのこと

Kakaryūdo negoto ni iu ga hon no koto

The parasite;
What he says in his sleep
Is the truth.

All day long the hanger-on must be pleasant and polite, flattering and obsequious, very 'umble indeed. Only at night, when he talks in his sleep, does he say what he really thinks and feels. "No, you old bitch! Go and get it yourself." "Who do you think you are, pimply-faced whippersnapper!" "If only she'd fall down the stairs and break her fat neck!" "I wonder if I could get another key made for the pantry door?"

たいともち宗旨ばかりは負けてゐず

Taikomochi shūshi bakari wa makete izu

The buffoon
Gives in, every other way,
But not about his religion.

This is a very remarkable and indeed encouraging fact. The *taikomochi*, or professional jester of the Yoshiwara is the lowest of the low. He will be more vulgar than the vulgarest. He will agree to anything, laugh at anything, add mud to mud and dirt to dirt. But when it comes to the matter of his religion, a poor and superstitious one it may be, he won't give way. He suddenly becomes rather serious, forgetting what his profession is. This is indeed "man's unconquerable mind."

傘かりに沙汰の限りの人が来る

Kasa kari ni sata no kagiri no hito ga kuru

Preposterous as it is,
He has come
To borrow an umbrella.

He has no right, no excuse even, to borrow an umbrella, but the

rain is so heavy that it overwhelms all his feelings of propriety, and he comes shamefaced and woebegone to ask for it.

剃った夜はゆうべの枕きたながり

Sotta yo wa yūbe no makura kitanagari

The evening he shaves his head,—

Last night's pillow

Seems filthy.

Thoreau says, "Things do not change; we change." It is the same pillow as always, but since his head (the front part) has been shaved, the pillow looks dirty to him.

棟上げの餅によごれぬそだてやう

Muneage no mochi ni yogorenu sodateyō

Too well brought up

To dirty himself with the rice-cakes

Scattered at the stone-laying ceremony.

This "stone-laying ceremony" is in Japan rather different in appearance from the foreign one, for it takes place when the wooden frame-work of the house has been set up. At the top, white paper emblems are fixed, and after the Shintō ceremony rice-cakes are distributed. This particular child is too well-bred to pick up the dirty cakes of rice, and the senryu surveys him with the usual mingling of admiration and contempt.

人の物ただ遣るにさへ上手下手

Hito no mono tada yaru ni sae jōzu heta

Even in just giving things to people,

There's a clever way,

And a clumsy way of doing it.

There is a time for everything, a place for everything, and there is always a perfect way of doing the most trifling things. Too much, or too little politeness, too much or too little kindness or consciousness,—these will spoil the simplest action.

月ふけて下戸の衰れはひだるがり

Tsuki fukete geko no aware wa hidaru gari

As the moon-viewing gets later,
The teetotaler
Is pitifully faint with hunger.

People are moon-gazing, drinking and eating and enjoying themselves more and more as time goes on. But the man who doesn't drink gets more and more pathetic as it grows later. The senryu writer pities, or pretends to pity, the virtuous and conscientious.

家持の次に並ぶが論語よみ

Iemochi no tsugi ni narabu ga rengo-yomi

Next to the landlord
Sits the student
Of the *Analects*.

When there was a local meeting, the order of precedence was: the land-owner, the house-owner, the tenants. The man who could read the Chinese classics was both respected and despised, respected for his learning, despised for his poverty and lack of common sense.

丸薬を貰ふ座頭はちっこまり

Ganyaku wo morau zatō wa chijikomari

The blind man
Receives the pills,
And huddles himself up.

Senryu has, like Great Nature, no pity for blind men or cripples. It mocks their defects, and shows us here the way in which the blind man screws up his body so as not to drop the little balls of medicine.

町内の佛とらへて猿田彦

Chōnai no hotoke toraete sarudahiko

The townspeople make
"The Buddha of the street"
Be *Sarudahiko*.

TWO BLIND MEN ON A BRIDGE

Hakuin Zenji was very fond of certain subjects, for example people going over a bridge; Daruma, Kannon, and famous Chinese Zen monks; himself. The verse on the present picture says;

わだるまの
 養生も
 後生も
 丸座頭の
 よき心がし
 手びき也

For health,
 And for the next world,
 A blind man
 Crossing a log-bridge
 Is a good guide.

This verse was written by Taiko Dokuon, a monk of the Rinzaï branch of Zen who died in 1910. It means that a blind man is oblivious of the danger that he cannot see-imagine. There is another such picture by Hakuin of a single monk crossing a log-bridge. The verse is similar in meaning.

世の中のうへにもかけて見よ
 誰か心のまゝのつきはし

Try and build
 A patchwork bridge
 Over this world,
 Whoever has
 A heart intact and fancy-free!

The "joke" of all this is that it is only the blind man, the unromantic, unsuperstitious, whole-hearted man who can pass by in safety and tranquillity the imaginary dangers, the illusory profit and loss, the liking and loathing of this world.



Sarudahiko is the name of a long-nosed goblin. In the festival parade, a man with a mask of the long-nosed goblin walks ahead with a sacred tree as his stick. Nobody wants to play this part as his face is not visible, the mask being so big. They got the most good-natured (and least clever) man of the street to act the part.

銭なしのくせにいつでも采をふり

Zeni-nashi no kuse ni itsudemo sai wo furi

No money,
But always
Bosses everybody.

The world is after all ruled by character, not by possessions; by spirit, not by material.

ぬけた齒に禿のこぞる片っすみ

Nuketa ha ni kamuro no kozoru katassumi

The *kamuros* gather
In the corner,
To the tooth fallen out.

These little girls are adepts at flattery, seduction, and unmentionable vices, but all the more the senryu writer will have us notice that they are still children, and when one of them loses a tooth all gather to examine it and exchange anecdotes on dental matters.

産ノ籠の内でいしゅをはゞに呼び

Sankago no uchi de teishu wo haba ni yobi

While she is in childbed,
She calls her husband
Haughtily.

It is said that there are still savage tribes that do not recognise the (physical) responsibility of the husband for the production of children. Do such women call their husbands haughtily? Or is it part of a more general feeling that the strong must help the weak?

御一門見ぬいたやうな錢遣ひ

Goichimon minuita yō na zeni-zukai

The whole family
Spend money
As if seeing it through.

The house is going bankrupt, and no one wants to be economical; every member of the family spends money like water. This feeling is of course not merely the effect, but the cause of the decline and fall of this family. It reminds us of Martineau's *The Last Day in the Old Home*.

だんぎ僧すはると顔を十ッしかめ

Dangisō suwaru to kao wo tō shikame

Before the sermon
The priest sits down
And screws up his face ten times.

Before he begins to preach he says *Namuamidabutsu* several times, in order to quieten his mind and that of the audience. There is something of a professional trick in this.

居酒屋で念頃ぶりは立てのみ

Izakaya de nengoreburi wa tatte nomi

To show his patronage
At the grog shop,
He drinks standing.

It is odd (and this is the humour and the poetry of it) but by standing instead of sitting down he shows his friendliness and good feeling.

藥箱初にもたせてふりかへり

Kusuri-bako hatsu ni motasete furikaeri

Having his medicine chest
Carried for the first time,
He looks back.

The doctor goes out for his first visit, the attendant walking behind him carrying the saw and bottles or whatever it is. The doctor feels so pleased with himself he cannot forbear looking round at the attendant,—and is caught by the senryu writer. It should be noted, however, that the two make an ukiyoe picture as they go along the street. Without this element of beauty the humour would grovel in mere sneering, snobbery, and cynicism.

大勢の火鉢をくぐる禿の手
 Ozei no hibachi wo kuguru kamuro no te
 The hand of the *kamuro*
 Makes its way through many
 At the brazier.

Many people were sitting around a big brazier at the Yoshiwara, talking and laughing. As there were so many hands over the fire, it seemed there was no more space for any hand. But the little *kamuro* ran to the brazier and her little hand got so skilfully through the other hands, and warmed it like the others. Here again we see something of charm, that is, of value in odious surroundings and the person of a budding prostitute.

ほうばいを寝しづまらせてくけて遣り
 Hōbai wo neshizumarasete kukete yari
 Making her fellow-servants
 Sound asleep,
 She sews for him.

In love with a man-servant in the same house, she wants to sew something for him, but must wait till all the other maid-servants are asleep, and do it as quickly as possible. See the power of love, that it not only sews for the one loved, but also makes sleep the others!

乳母に出て少シ夫トをひづんで見
 Uba ni dete sukoshi otto wo hizunde mi

Coming as a wet-nurse,
 She began to look at her husband
 A little askew.

While she was living with her husband, she thought he was all right, better than most, but after she works some time in a rich house, he begins to look a bit common and uninteresting.

兩介は第一めしがうまく喰へ
 Ryōsuke wa daiichi meshi ga umaku kue

Above all
 They eat with an appetite,
 The two Suke's.

Tamamonomae, 玉藻の前, is said in the story to be the incarnation of an old fox who came to the Emperor Toba, 鳥羽, 1108-1123, to trouble him, making him fall in love with her. After some time she was found out, and Miuranosuke Yoshiaki, 三浦介義明, and Kazusanosuke Tsunetane, 上總介常胤, were ordered by the Emperor to shoot her. It is said that they practised shooting by making dogs run and shooting at them from horseback for a hundred days. So the senryu writer says, "Above all things, the exercise of shooting was good for your health, and your meals must have tasted delicious!"

生酔はおどかすやうなおくびをし
 Namayoi wa odkasu yō na okubi wo shi

The half-drunk man
 Suddenly belches,
 As though threatening someone.

Like the eye of God (indeed it is His eye) the eye of the senryu writer is ever open. However charming, however disgusting the scene, his eye is unwinking and unchanged.

御りんきのもふ一足で玄関迄
 Gorinki no mō hitoashi de genkan made

Her jealousy:
 One step more
 To the entrance!

In the evening her husband went out,—to that woman's house again! Unable to restrain herself the wife also went out in the direction of *that woman's* house, nearer and nearer, until one step more would have taken her to the entrance!

言ひ出して大事の娘寄つかず
 Iidashite daiji no musume yoritsukazu

As she said it,
 The valued girl
 Did not come any more.

This is a good example of *multum in parvo*. A rich beautiful girl came to learn the koto, and the teacher treated her very politely, she being a good customer and an advertisement. A certain young man fell in love with her and asked the teacher to help him. She was reluctant to do so, but at last talked about him to the girl. But she did not come any more, and so she lost a valuable pupil.

かみさまと取揚婆が言ひはじめ
 Kami-sama to toriage-baba ga iihajime

The one who first of all
 Called her "Mrs",
 Was the midwife.

The maid had a child by the master and thus became a kind of unofficial second wife. No one addressed her as madame or Mrs. until the midwife did.

手付にて最々神木とうやまはれ
 Tetsuke nite mō shimboku to uyamaware

The earnest-money being paid,
 It was now respected
 As a divine tree.

The tree was being bought to build a shrine, and the deposit was paid. From that moment the quite ordinary tree suddenly appeared to be sacred and holy, quite different from all the others.

唐人を入^り込にせぬ地獄の繪

Tōjin wo irigomi ni senu jigoku no e

A picture of Hell;

No foreigners

Among them.

All the sinners being tortured in the picture of Hell are Japanese. Why are there no foreigners there? Are the different nationalities kept separate also in the nether world?

針明のすわった形^りで燈がとぼり

Shimmyō no suwatta nari de hi ga tobori

The seamstress;

The lamp is lighted

As she sits sewing.

A woman is sewing in a rich house. It begins to get dark, but she is afraid to spend so much time lighting the paper lamp, and she keeps on working in the twilight. Someone brings the lamp. She bows, says, "Thank you very much," and continues to sew, her shadow moving on the wall.

身の伊達に下女が髪迄結て遣り

Mi no date ni gejo ga kami made yutte yari

She does the hair

Even of the maid-servant,

Just for her own sake.

She would not do this if the maid were going out by herself. She wants to be smartly attended, that is all.

姑^めと違ひ舅のいじりやう

Shūtome to chigai shūto no ijiriyō

How different the teasing
Of the father-in-law,
And the mother-in-law!

One is so good-naturedly reproachful, the other so ill-naturedly corrective.

目合イ見てそっといふ程高く請
Maai mite sotto yūhodo takaku uke

Looking for an opportunity:
The more softly he asks,
The more loudly the other responds.

He is asking somebody for something, probably money, and he doesn't want the others to hear, but scenting this, the one he asks speaks to him in such a loud voice he cannot repeat his request.

料理人客に成日は口がすぎ
Ryōriain kyaku ni naru hi wa kuchi ga sugi

When the cook
Becomes a guest,
He talks too much.

He cannot help criticising each dish put before him, offering unwanted advice and making odious comparisons.

ばらませたせんぎは是で山をとめ
Haramaseta sengi wa kore de yama wo tome

The investigation
Into her being made pregnant
Was discontinued.

At first everybody was indignant when the maidservant was found to be in the family way, but upon closer examination it seemed as if the responsible person might well be in the house itself, so the enquiry was dropped. 山をとめ, "to close the mountain" comes apparently from 山を開く, "to open the mountain," that is, to begin (to build a temple there).

親ゆへにまよふては出ぬ物狂ひ

Oya yue ni mayōte wa denu mono-gurui

They never become mad
And haunt a place
Because of their parents.

There are many Nō plays on the subject of becoming mad and haunting places and people, for example, *Sumidagawa*, 隅田川, *Mii-dera*, 三井寺, *Sakuragawa*, 櫻川, in which the parents became mad because of anxiety for their children. No child ever becomes insane from anxiety about his parents.

座頭の坊おかしな金のかくし所

Zatō no bō okashina kane no kakushi-doko

The blind man
Hides the money
In an odd place.

Being blind, he hides the money in a place an ordinary person would not think of, perhaps a very visible one.

寒念佛ざらの手からも心ざし

Kannebutsu zara no te kara mo kokorozashi

Mid-winter chanting of Buddha's name:

Alms also

From ordinary hands.

The single file of men and women marching along through the snow beating drums and intoning *Namu-Miōhōre gekyō* looks so earnest, so unmercenary that even non-religious people feel some kind of respectful pity and give them money.

女房は酔はせた人をにちに行

Nyōbō wa yowaseta hito wo nichi ni yuki

The wife goes
To reproach the one
Who made him drunk.

Wives and mothers, even more than husbands and fathers, incline to think that other people are worse than the members of their own house. She blames the drunkenness of her husband on his "bad friends."

欠落もきよふにすればおしがられ

Kakeochi mo kiyō ni sureba eshigarare

Even elopement,
If done cleverly,
Is admired by people.

Even robbery, even murder, when skilfully performed, compels our admiration; this is an important part of the value of detective stories. And if people only clope, with astuteness and well-ordered planning, we regret not being able to see such interesting people.

太夫職百で四文もくからず

Tayū-shoku hyaku de shimen mo kurakarazu

Though a courtesan of the highest rank,
She also knows all about
The four *mon* from a hundred.

Usually the money which was called "a hundred mon" in the Edo period was really 96 mon; a real hundred mon was called "just a hundred." The high class courtesan was like an Empress among the prostitutes; her power and dignity was supreme, and she never touched such a vulgar thing as money, and looked as though she knew nothing about it—but in actual fact she knew just as well as anybody else that "a hundred mon" consisted of 96 mon, and the senryu writer knows she knows it.

家内喜多留ちいさい戀はけちらかし

Yanagidaru chiisai koi wa kechirakashi

The wine cask
Kicks away
All the little loves.

In the Edo Period a small cask of wine, *yanagidaru*, was presented as a betrothal present, and this put an end to any love affairs she might be having or going to have. The name of the first collection of senryu, *Haifu Yanagidaru*, is taken from this, and suggests that senryu are connected with wine, women, and song.

蠅打でかき寄せて取^ル關手形
Haeuchi de kakiyosete toru seki-tegata

The barrier pass:
He rakes it to him
With the fly-swatter.

A *seki-tegata* was a kind of passport carried by a woman. We have a picture of summer-time in Old Japan. This barrier seems to be a small country barrier, in which the officials are more than ordinarily lazy and insolent. When the woman places the pass on the tatami, the barrier official does not lean forward to receive it, but pulls it to him by what he has been killing time and flies with.

押入の戸やきぬ張で人をよび
Oshiire no to ya kinubari de hito wo yobi

When the sliding door sticks,
Or silk is to be stretched,
She calls for help.

And there are always people ready to do it instead of her. Lamb says in *The Two Races of Men*:

The human species, according to the best theory I can form of it, is composed of two distinct races, *the men who borrow*, and *the men who lend*. To these original diversities may be reduced those impertinent classifications of Gothic and Celtic tribes, white men, black men, red men.

There are evidently the same two species of women.

樽捨ひ目台^イを見ては風を上^メ
Taru-hiroi maai wo mite wa tako wo age

The keg-collector
 Flies a kite,
 Seizing a chance.

The poor boy who collects the wine-kegs has to work harder still in the New Year, but even he must play, and flies a kite and watches it rise far, far above the smelly barrels. This pity of senryu is very much like that of Blake for the chimney-sweeper. It is devoid of sentimentality.

勞瘁に母はおどけて叱られる
 Rōgai ni haha wa odokete shikarareru

The mother was scolded
 By the consumptive
 For being merry.

It is hard to know which to pity more, but our feeling is rather different towards the two, some hatred of the daughter, and some contempt for the mother.

座頭の坊せくと淺黄に目をひらき
 Zatō no bō seku to asagi ni me wo hiraki

When the blind man is flurried
 He opens his eyes,
 Pale blue.

The white of the eyes, without a pupil, is a faint bluish colour. The senryu writer will not omit something because it is disagreeable; quite the reverse.

能々笛はわすれたやうな勤かた
 Nō-bue wa wasureta yō na tsutome-kata

The flute of the Nō drama
 Sounds as though
 It is forgetful.

It is peculiarly inconsequential, with long absences, playing in fits

and starts, piercing and long drawn out, then silent again.

盗人にあへばとなりでけなるがり

Nusubito ni aeba tonari de kenarugari

When they were robbed,

Next door

Was envious.

Robbery is like taxes; it's nice to have something worth stealing.
It is like death, which alone shows us the value of life.

小間物屋箱と一所に年が寄

Komamono-ya hako to issho ni toshi ga yori

The fancy-goods-seller;

He is getting old

Along with his boxes.

How eloquent these inanimate things are! A man's walking-stick, a woman's mirror, the salesman's boxes. "Grow old along with me!" they say.

CHAPTER XX

Yanagidaru Book II

小便所談義で母へそうだんし

Shōbenjo dangi de haha e sōdanshi

During the sermon,
She consults with her mother
About going to the toilet.

This is the senryu criticism of religion, and how just indeed it is! The girl has come with her mother to the temple, and gradually hears or feels what is euphemistically but rightly termed “the calls of nature”; the voice of the priest has become an incoherent mumbling. She no longer wants enlightenment or Paradise; she simply wants to go to the lavatory. But there is also her fear for her reputation, her so-called shyness, and she asks her mother what to do in this dilemma.

ふせ勢イにえり残されし笑ひ好

Fusezei ni erinokosareshi waraizuki

The man who giggles
Is omitted
In the selection for the ambush.

The merry man is not of course likely to burst out laughing just before an ambush, but he is rightly enough deemed unreliable and unsuitable.

ぬいはく屋のびをしてから飯を食ヒ

Nuihakuya nobi wo shitekara meshi wo kui

The embroiderer
Has his meal
After stretching his back.

It is such minute work and he is stooping all day, so when he was called for his meal, he had to stretch his arms and back. This is yet another example of senryu's "seeing into the life of things" with its sensitive eye.

すい付けてけむをいたゞくのかけ道

Suitsukete kemu wo itadaku nogakemichi

Out for the day;

Lighting his pipe on the way,

And bowing to the smoke.

Some people were going along the path through the fields, when one of them begged a smoke from a farmer. He bowed a little in thanks, and the smoke flew over his head in the spring breeze.

突出しは七十五日客が来る

Tsukidashi wa shichijū-gonichi kyaku ga kuru

When the courtesan "comes out,"

She is popular

For seventy five days.

When the courtesan appears for the first time she has many followers; especially Edo people are fond of new things. "When a man eats the first thing of the season his life is lengthened for 75 days." It is said that a thing is called "new" for 75 days. There is also a saying, "Gossip lasts for 75 days." Another example of the use of 75:

初花に命七十五年ほど

Hatsuhana ni inochi shichijūgo nen hodo

At the new flower,

My life is longer

By seventy five years.

This must be a new concubine.

下女の髪二三度立ってやっと結

Gejo no kami nisando tatte yatto yui

The maid-servant
 Did her háir at last,
 After several intervals.

When the maid-servant was going to do her hair in her own room, she was called, and she had to stop and go. This was repeated a few times. This verse shows the position of a servant, however well treated she may otherwise be. After all, she is not free.

見つかって馬盗人は乗って逃げ
 Mitsukatte umanusubito wa notte nige

When discovered,
 The horse-thief
 Ran away on it.

There is something comical, even profound, in the fact that the man uses the object of his crime to escape from the results of it.

通丁うろたへて来た蟬の聲
 Tōrichō urotaete kita semi no koe

The Tōri street:
 The voice of the cicada
 Comes so flurried.

The Tōri street of Nihombashi was the busiest street also in the Edo Period. The cicada has made a mistake in coming here, and seems to show it in its voice.

やわやわと引立てきくぶどうの値
 Yawayawa to hittatete kiku budō no ne

Taking them up circumspectly,
 He asks the price
 Of the grapes.

Grapes are so easily damaged, but it is difficult to see them in the bunch, so the customer picks it up softly, gently, carefully. And the eye of the senryu writer sees this action with the same or even

more delicacy.

ぼたもちをいさぎよく喰ふ嫁の里

Botamochi wo isagiyoku kû yome no sato

At her parents' house

The bride eats *botamochi*

Valiantly.

The young wife is shy and well-mannered and a small eater in front of her parents-in-law, but back at her own home she stuffs herself like a female Goliard with the rice-cakes covered with bean-paste jam.

女房が死すと夫はふみを遣り

Nyôbô ga shinu to otto wa fumi wo yari

When his wife dies,

The husband

Sends a letter.

Officially and publicly he is the bereaved and disconsolate widower—but he cannot wait even one day before he sends a letter to some light-o'-love. This is the heart of a man, of every man.

蟻一つ娘ざかりをはだかにし

Ari hitotsu musumezakari wo hadaka ni shi

A single ant

Makes the flowery girl

Naked.

△ better verse on the same subject:

貞女にも帯を解かせる蚤一つ

Teijo nimo obi wo tokaseru nomi hitotsu

A flea

Makes the most faithful woman

Undo her sash.

Here again there is perhaps a subtle criticism of morality.

ふきがらを飛を呼んでたづねさせ
Fukigara wo kamuro wo yonde tazunesase

She calls the *kamuro*,
And makes her look
For the tobacco-ash.

A courtesan was smoking and dropped the ash somewhere. Not at all flurried she calls the little girl, her servant, and makes her look for it. This shows not only a courtesan's lordly attitude, but also her desire to make someone else responsible for whatever damage is done.

降るならば一日むだにしようぞへ
Furunaraba ichinichi muda ni shiyōzoe

"If it rains,
Let's waste
The whole day!"

When people have decided to enjoy themselves (here, cherry-blossom-viewing) they find it almost impossible to spend that time in working.

證文を淋しくたゝむ座頭の坊
Shōmon wo sabishiku tatamu zato no bō

A blind man
Folds up the certificate
Lonelily.

Blind men used to become shampooers, and saved money by living economically; many of them became money-lenders. Here someone is borrowing money from a blind man. The one who borrows should feel more "lonely", but when we see the blind man folding up the note of certification so carefully, we feel something tragic in it.

やせぎすは乳母がしまんの亭主なり
Yasegisu wa uba ga shiman no teishu nari

The wet-nurse is proud
Of the slenderness
Of her husband.

A wet-nurse is usually broad in the beam. Strangely enough (but what is not strange in this world?) she is proud of her husband's slender figure.

ぶんさんの禮にあるくは色男
Bunsan no rei ni aruku wa iro-otoko

The one who goes
To apologise for his bankruptcy
Is a handsome man.

A millionaire became insolvent, and had little money, as the remaining money was divided among the creditors. The man who comes to thank them is, as expected, a very handsome man, who has got through all their own money.

めしびつをかわる夜伽へ引渡し
Meshibitsu wo kawaru yotogi e hikiwatashi

A boiled-rice box
Is handed
To the next vigil.

To sit up all night with a sick person is hard work, and people become hungry, so the rice-box is the first thing handed over when they take turns. After all, our duty to ourself comes first. If we do not have our daily bread we cannot even pray for it, let alone look after people who have perhaps overeaten.

旅立は貳度めのさらば笠でする
Tabidachi wa nidome no saraba kasa de suru

Off on a journey,
He says good-bye the second time
With his *kasa*.

They made the farewell greetings, and the man walked off. When he looked back, the family were still standing there. It is too far away now to say good-bye, so he takes off his umbrella-like hat and waves it. Faintly perceived here is the weakness of mankind in regard to time and place, whose power over human sentiment is absolute.

田樂の口は遠くであいて行き
Dengaku no kuchi wa tōku de aite yuki

The mouth for *dengaku*
Opens
From far.

Dengaku is baked bean-curd daubed with bean-paste. As it is soft and easily falls to pieces, and the *miso* may drip, he opens his mouth wide when he lifts it up, to be ready to receive it. This is very good. It makes us feel the Virgilian *lachrimae rerum* in the mere act of eating, though it may be of kings and queens at the most gorgeous banquets.

下女の文ほん字をひねるやうに書き
Gejo no fumi bonji wo hineru yō ni kaki

The maid-servant's letter,—
She writes as if twirling
Sanskrit letters.

Sanskrit is written turning the writing brush in many ways. The maid-servant is bad at writing, and is using too much energy.

氣狂ひの膝をそばからかけて遣り
Kichigai no hiza wo soba kara kaketeyari

They cover
The mad woman's knees
From the side.

The woman is mad, and cares nothing for the conventions. The people sitting beside her are not free as she is, nor can they allow her to be so.

去り狀の跡へ紺屋が出かして來

Sarijō no ato e kōya ga dekaishite ki

After the letter of divorce,
The dyer brings
What he has dyed.

The wife was divorced, and went back to her home. Some days later the dyer brought what she had ordered to be dyed. The husband's feelings are very mixed,—annoyance, regret, thoughts of his wife's pitifulness, his own inconstancy, the certain uncertainty of sublunary things.

スゝはきに一人りか二人りばかな形り

Susuhaki ni hitori ka futari bakana nari

Spring-cleaning;
One or two
In idiotic costumes.

スゝ拂きに装束すぎて笑はれる

Susuhaki ni shōzoku sugite warawareru

House-cleaning:
Laughed at,
For too much costume.

When people do the spring-cleaning they suddenly forget all about appearances and look like wild animals, or as if they were in fancy dress.

色娘男の顔へなんをつけ

Iromusume otoko no kao e nan wo tsuke

A sexually-minded girl
Finds defects
In men's looks.

What we criticise, we love, and this applies to senryu itself.

瓜喰ふた所に忘れる柄袋

Uri kūta tokoro ni wasureru tsukabukuro

He left
The hilt-bag
Where he ate the melon.

When a man was on a journey the hilt of his sword was enclosed in a sort of little bag to protect it. The senryu writer sees one of these on the ground beside some melon peelings. He knows that the one who peeled the melon with his dirk is not a samurai; they were very particular about such things.

見ぬ顔をすれどちよっちょっと針が止ム
Minu kao wo suredo chotcho to hari ga yamu

Though she pretends
Not to see anything,
Her needle stops now and then.

The mother-in-law is doing the needle-work with her body, watching her daughter-in-law with her mind, and sometimes the fingers cease to move, corresponding to the intenseness of her feeling.

笑ふにも座頭の母は遠慮がち
Warau nimo zatō no haha wa enryogachi

The mother of a blind man;
Even when she laughs,
It is in a constrained manner.

She cannot laugh freely, as her son may feel bad when people laugh at something he cannot see.

小じゅうとめ母が歸るとそばへ寄り
Kojūtome haha ga kaeru to soba e yori

When the mother comes back,
The sister-in-law
Goes to her.

The young sister-in-law tells all she has observed about her elder sister-in-law while her mother was absent. This shows the merciless nature of women.

薬取り出来て一ぶくふみつぶし
 Kusuri-tori dekite ippuku fumi-tsubushi
 The medicine at last made up,
 He knocks out his pipe,
 And stamps on the ashes.

Two hundred years ago, the making up of prescriptions was notoriously slow, and people were bored to tears waiting for it. A man is about to receive the medicine he has been sent for, and knocks out the pipe, grinding the dottle under his feet. There is a kind of finality about his action which is significant.

角力場に氣のない男頼杖し
 Sumō-ba ni ki no nai otoko hōzue shi
 At the wrestling ring,
 The man who has no interest in it
 Cups his chin in his hands.

Strangely enough, resting the chin on the hands is a sign of boredom or abstraction, conspicuous in this place of frenzied excitement.

米つきはとりをかゝへて休んで居
 Kome-tsuki wa tori wo kakaete yasunde i
 The rice-cleaner
 Having a rest,
 Holding a hen in his arms.

He holds the hen in his arms so that she cannot eat the rice. There is something delightfully natural and rural about this picture, —but the hen does not appreciate it.

基敵は憎さにもくしなつかしき
 Go-gataki wa nikusa mo nikushi natsukashiki
 His opponent at go
 Hateful, yes,
 But dear also.

The mixed feelings we have for our opponent in games (especially strong in go, a kind of checkers,) is well grasped and expressed here.

傘をしづくで返す律氣者

Karakasa wo shizuku de kaesu richigi-mono

The man of integrity

Brings back the borrowed umbrella,

With rain-drops dripping from it.

The man who has borrowed the umbrella comes back with it immediately after he has used it, before the rain has stopped, so that it is still wet. The senryu is laughing at his over-conscientiousness, his moral fussiness.

店賃の早く済むのが圍い者

Tana-chin no hayaku sumu noga kakoi-mono

The one who pays the rent

Early in the month

Is a concubine.

Other people have to struggle to pay their rent, but this woman pays it at the beginning of the month. This is not because she is honest or conscientious, but rather for precisely the opposite reason.

本ぶくの元の如くにしはくなり

Hombuku no moto no gotoku ni shiwaku nari

Recovering,

He became just as stingy

As before.

This is the senryu version of

When the devil was sick, the devil a monk he'd be;

When the devil was well, the devil a monk he'd be!

檢校のなりたちをいふ三味線屋

Kengyō no naritachi wo iu shamisen-ya

The samisen-seller
Tells the life stories
Of blind court-musicians.

This is because these pathetic stories are (distantly) connected with his money-making.

去ったあと物を探すにかゝつて居
Satta ato mono wo sagasu ni kakatte i

After the wife is gone for good,
He spends a lot of time
Looking for things.

The man has sent away his wife, in other words, has divorced her, and now for the first time realizes that there are advantages as well as disadvantages in having a wife. Whenever he wants something, he has no one to ask to find it for him.

鳥の毛を捨てるに風を見すまして
Tori no ke wo suteru ni kaze wo misumashite

Going to throw away the feathers,
He feels the wind
Carefully.

This verse describes something very slight, yet the senryu writer feels that there is something significant here, in the way in which the man who has come to throw away the feathers does not drop them just anywhere, but thinks carefully about the direction of the wind before he drops them. The man knows the feathers, and we know the man.

子を持つた大工一足おそく来る
Ko wo motta daiku hitoashi osoku kuru

The carpenter
Who had a baby,
Comes a little later.

The poetical point is the “one step” later; the little lateness shows such a great deal of fatherly love. It’s love that makes the world go round, but sometimes it makes it go round a little slower.

戀むこの下着はみんな直しもの
Koi-muko no shitagi wa minna naoshimono

Her beloved husband,—
His underclothes
Are all patched!

A rich girl loved a man who was poor, so much that she overrode the objections of her parents and married him (he entered her house as an adopted son.) To her surprise and discomfiture, she found that his underclothes were all darned; nothing underneath was new.

醫者衆は辞世をほめて立たれけり
Ishashū wa jisei wo homete tatarekeri

The doctors stand up,
Praising
The death-verse.

The patient has died on the doctors, so there’s nothing left for them to do. But they can’t march silently from the room, so they praise the death-poem which the man composed just before he died, and escape.

あうた日を覚えてゐるも女の氣
Ota hi wo oboete iru mo onna no ki

She remembers
The day they first met:
This is a woman!

Women, it cannot be too often said, desire two things, love, and the appearance, the manifestation, the publicity of it. They want the real thing *and* the imitation, sincerity and sentiment, devotion and romance,—the latter more than the former.

よめのつまえんやらやっと五寸明き

Yome no tsuma enyarayatto go-sun aki

The skirt of the young married woman
Opens, with an effort,
Five inches.

The Japanese bride, particularly of olden times, would never open her legs, but on this occasion, having to get on or over something, she was forced to open the skirt of her kimono a little.

火の見番人の拾ふを見たばかり

Hinomi-ban hito no hirō wo mita bakari

The look-out man
Just saw somebody
Picking it up.

A man who was on the look-out on a high fire-tower saw something lying in the road. But he could do nothing about it, and when he saw someone come along, pick it up, and walk off with it, he knew no more than you and I do what it was.

母親は百度参りのたち番し

Hahaoya wa hyakudo-mairi no tachiban shi

The mother keeps watch,
While she walks before the shrine
A hundred times.

Her daughter had made a vow or had prayed for something vital to her happiness, and was going back and forth before a shrine in token of her devotion. Her mother, fearing something untoward might happen to her if she were quite alone, is standing guard nearby. The point of this senryu, well and properly hidden, is perhaps Cromwell's "Trust in God and keep your powder dry." In other words, it is odd that the mother trusts the god to give her daughter what she wants, but not to protect her from any prowling rascal.

うつゝにも團扇のうごく蠅ぎらひ
 Utsutsu nimo uchiwa no ugoku hae-girai

Even while adoze,
 The fan of the fly-hater
 Still moves.

Just as love is said to be triumphant over death, so here hate is stronger than sleep.

此の部屋に一人寝ますと氣をもませ
 Kono heya ni hitori nemasu to ki wo momase

"I sleep alone
 In this room . . ."
 She holds him in suspense.

This is a moment when the most virtuous man feels somewhat confused.

藥取やっぴし犬に手をもらひ
 Kusuri-tori yappishi inu ni te wo morai

The medicine-receiver
 Asks the dog to give him his paw
 Frequently.

As said before, in old Japan apothecaries were famous for taking a long time to make up prescriptions. The man is not perhaps particularly fond of dogs, but has to kill time somehow.

はしごうりぬき身と聞て屋ねへ逃
 Hashigo-uri nukimi to kiite yane e nige

The ladder-seller,
 Hearing "Swords out!"
 Escapes to the roof.

Two samurai start fighting in the street, and the ungainly, awkward ladder suddenly becomes a thing of power and value.

川越しも日なたで石を手だまにし
 Kawa-goshi mo hinata de ishi wo tedama ni shi

The river-forders too
Are playing at dibs with stones
In the sun.

This is a very poetical picture. In this rather remote place, these men live an amphibious, half-human life all the year round. Now it is winter, and in a sunny spot on the shore they are playing a children's game like knuckle-stones.

たがかけに四五間先で犬がじゃれ
Taga kake ni shi-go-ken saki de inu ga jare

Hooping a barrel:
Nine or ten yards away
A dog is playing.

The long strip of bamboo is gradually being twisted round the tub. In the distance a dog is having a game with the other end. The obliviousness of man and dog of each other has a kind of humorous pathos in it.

ぬりもの師表だゝずにひるねをし
Nurimono-shi omote-datazu ni hirune wo shi

The lacquerer
Takes a nap
Unnoticed.

A lacquerer worked inside a paper mosquito-net to avoid dust, so even if he took a nap, nobody knew it.

きりもみはおさへた人がふいて遣
Kiri-momi wa osaeta hito ga fuite yari

Driving a gimlet into a plank:
The one holding the plank
Blows for him.

Someone is driving a gimlet into a plank. Someone else is holding the plank for him, and he blows the scobs away. Anyone who

has taken part in such an activity knows that this blowing away the dust and shavings has a peculiarly human and empathetic significance.

掛人ちいさな聲で子をしかり
Kakaryūdo chiisana koe de ko wo shikari

The hanger-on
Scolds the child
In a small voice.

However naughty the child may be, the satellite can't grumble at him openly and freely.

髪を切る所をびくには髪をたて
Kani wo kuru toko wo bikuni wa kami wo tate

Instead of cutting her hair,
The prostitute priestess
Lets it grow.

An ordinary prostitute would cut off her hair, the most important thing she has, to show her love and faithfulness to her lover. But a prostitute whose head was shaved like that of a priest couldn't do this, so she must let it grow, the senryū writer ironically supposes.

お局は日の暮れそうなうしろおび
O-tsubone wa hi no kuresō na ushiro-obi

The sash at the back
Of the old court-lady
Is like the twilight.

This is an unusually poetical senryū. A young court-lady's sash was as gay as a flower. But the old lady's is greyish or black like the dusk.

そり橋へ來ると禿は對になり
Sori-bashi e kuru to kamuro wa tsui ni nari

When the little brothel girls
Come to the arched bridge,
They make a pair.

It was the custom for two little girls employed in a brothel to follow a courtesan, all three in resplendent kimono. One went ahead, the other fell behind, for it was difficult for them to walk together, especially on poor roads. But when they came to an arched bridge, the one ahead stopped, being afraid, and the other caught up with her.

じゅずを持遣手は内が不首尾なり
Juzu wo motsu yarite wa uchi ga fushubi nari

The matron of a brothel
With a rosary
Is unpopular with her master.

A brothel requires ruthlessness, not mercy.

あいさつに女はむだな笑ひあり
Aisatsu ni onna wa muda na warai ari

There is a useless laughter
In the greetings
Of women.

Even the most rabid feminist might possibly admit that there is some truth in this.

かこわれは隣で死ぬとこしたがり
Kakoware wa tonari de shinu to koshitagari

The concubine wants to move
When somebody dies
Next door.

A concubine always has to live by herself, or with only a maid-servant, so when someone dies next door, she feels too keenly the uncertainty of life.

だいた子にたゞかせて見るほれた人
Daita ko ni tatakasete miru horeta hito

She makes the child in her arms
 Strike the person she likes,
 In fun.

This action is almost painfully obvious in its meaning.

見世さきへ出てはていしゅをにくがらせ
 Mise-saki e dete wa teishu wo nikugarase

Coming out into the shop,
 She makes her husband
 Hated.

It is difficult to say why the customers hate the shopkeeper when they see how beautiful his wife is. Perhaps they feel, rightly enough, that business and pleasure should be kept strictly apart.

むこのくせ妹が先へ見つけ出し
 Muko no kuse imoto ga saki e mitsukedashi

His sister-in-law
 Was the first to find
 The bridegroom's bad point.

The younger sister is keen to see the faults of the man she can't marry.

登人もの行ていやれと連へかぎ
 Hitori-mono itte iyare to tsure e kagi

"Go ahead!"
 And the bachelor
 Gives his key to his companion.

A single man was taking his friend home with him and as he had something to do on the way, he gave his door-key to his friend, telling him to go on first and wait for him in the house. This kind of senryu seems to me extraordinarily good. It brings out the life and character of the bachelor, his way of thinking and feeling about his "home."

生酔に安い分別かしてやり
 Namayoi ni yasui fumbetsu kashite yari

He lent
 His cheap idea
 To the half-drunk man.

Both are drunk, only the one who asked for the other's "good idea" is more drunk. The point of this senryu is that when we read it we wonder if all giving and receiving of advice is not like this.

せきばらひごぜも少々にが笑ひ
 Seki-barai goze mo shōshō niga-warai

At his cough,
 The blind female street singer
 Forces a smile.

The blind woman was making water, supposing nobody was around. A man cleared his throat, and she seemed to feel shy, trying to smile. Senryu finds human nature in the most unpromising circumstances; nothing is ignored or refused.

うしろから能貌の出るかどみとぎ
 Ushiro kara ii kao no deru kagami-togi

From behind
 The mirror-polisher
 A beautiful face appears.

"Is it finished?" the owner asks. It is hard to say why this verse is so good. Perhaps it is the accidental conjunction of the question and the questioner's face.

草の庵はいとりもちにきりぎりす
 Kusa no io haitorimochi ni kirigirisu

A grassy hut:
 On a fly-paper,
 A cricket.

How the senryu writer laughs in his heart at the false poetry of this world! Trying to catch the annoying flies, the poet has caught this poetical insect that struggles in vain to escape.

何かしら笑つて歸るあら世帯
Nanikashira waratte kaeru ara-jotai

Laughing at something or other,
They come back
From the newly-weds.

This “something or other” is no doubt their foolishness or innocence, or more likely their accidentally revealed sexual habits.

後添は鼠がでてでもびつくりし
Nochizoe wa nezumi ga detemo bikkuri shi

The second wife
Jumps
Even if a rat appears.

She feels that the soul of the first wife is still somewhere in the house.

去たあす物をさがすにかゝつて居
Satta asu mono wo sagasu ni kakkate i

The day after the divorce
He keeps on having
To look for things.

There is, as Emerson says, a compensation in everything.

座頭の坊しごく大事に芋をくい
Zatō no bō shigoku daiji ni imo wo kui

The blind man
Eats taro
Very carefully.

As this kind of potato is so slippery, he must be very dexterous with his chopsticks. This scene is not “funny”, but it makes us look with a peculiar interest and intensity.

懸人むかしをいふとほりとまれ

Kakaryūdo mukashi wo iu to harikomare

When the parasite
Speaks of his past,
He is soon snubbed.

Each man must be kept in his position in society, and the cruelty and callousness involved is the price paid for "social order."

草の庵朝寝おこせばさるぐつわ

Kusa no io asane okoseba sarugutsuwa

The grass-roofed hermitage;
Calling him late in the morning,—
He was gagged!

Senryu loves the "equal mind" of Nature, which will gag and rob the poetical poor as cheerfully as the vulgar rich.

一村をすいにして立つ旅芝居

Hito-mura wo sui ni shite tatsu tabi-shibai

The travelling troupe
Left the whole village
Smarter than they found it.

This shows how culture civilises, how art makes artificial; wives become dissatisfied with their husbands, girls dissatisfied with their own faces.

まよい子の親はしやがれて禮を言ひ

Mayoi-go no oya wa shagarete rei wo ii

The parent of the lost child
Expresses her thanks
In a hoarse voice.

This hoarseness comes from, and at the same time manifests, parental love.

けいせいのくっくっ笑ふはした錢

Keisei no kutsu kutsu warau hashita-zeni

The courtesan
Titters
At the small money.

To pay £2,13,6½ for love seems somehow odd, and the recipient is rightly amused.

二ッほど引しめて喰ふはたけ番
Futatsu hodo hikishimete kū hatake-ban
Pulling the clapper a few times,
The field-watch
Has his lunch.

This is a sort of mild, rustic, Virgilian satire, a picture of country life with its unnoticed humours.

鐘の施主四五町先で音をためし
Kane no seshu shi-go-chō saki de ne wo tameshi
The donor of the bell
Listens to the sound of it
From four or five blocks away.

The point is that the man wants to hear how it sounds, this bell that *he* gave to the temple, to other people.

約束の戸は二ッとはたゝかれず
Yakusoku no to wa futatsu towa tatakarezu
He cannot knock
Twice
At the door she promised.

One knock at the door might be the wind; it might be anything. Knocking again would show what it was, a man knocking at a woman's room in the middle of the night.

そろばんを二度手に取と直が出来る
Soroban wo nido te ni toru to ne ga dekiru

When he takes up
The abacus the second time,
The price is fixed.

The shopkeeper has lowered the price for the second and last time.

女中から夜の明かゝる花の朝
Jochū kara yo no akekakaru hana no asa

The day breaks
From the maid-servant:
The morning cherry-blossom-viewing.

Contrast this with Buson's haiku:

白梅に明る夜ばかりとなりけり
Shiraume ni akuru yo bakari to nari ni keru

Every night from now
Will dawn
From the white plum-tree.

口笛は何の気もない道具なり
Kuchibue wa nan no ki mo nai dōgu nari

Whistling
Is a thing
Without any feeling.

Whistling can be used with many meanings,—calling, warning, surprise, indifference etc., but it is at the same time a peculiarly inexpressive form of manifestation.

けいせいはいぢからなき貰ひやう
Keisei wa yari jikara naki moraiyō

The courtesan
Receives it
With a nonchalant air.

Men like women to be obedient, but despise and hate them if they are. The courtesan receives the money with an indifferent

manner, and this increases the man's respect, and her power over him.

はやり目の一側ならぶごふく店

Hayari me no hitokawa narabu gofuku-mise

A row

Of epidemic ophthalmia

In the draper's.

Epidemic ophthalmia is and was very infectious. All the shop-boys of the draper's sitting in a row had red eyes. The humorous interest of this lies, I suppose, in the inappropriateness of the red eyes to the beautiful materials, brought out by the symmetrical line of assistants.

じゅずを切時は姑がつけごへし

Juzu wo kiru toki wa shūto ga tsuke-goe shi

After she has "cut the rosary,"

The mother-in-law

Speaks in an affected way.

The mother-in-law did not like her daughter-in-law, and at last, the poor bride was divorced. Then the mother-in-law changed her attitude and spoke to her in an insinuating voice, though of course she would never make up with her again. This is yet one more example of "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

いしやへみやくはしたに見せるりびゃう病

Isha e myaku hashita ni miseru ribyō-yami

The patient with loose bowels

Lets the doctor see him

Bit by bit.

While the doctor was examining him, the patient had to keep hopping out, and the doctor had to see him little by little, fragmentarily so to speak.

言ひふせる氣でろうそくのしんを切

Iifuseru ki de rōsoku no shin wo kiri

Intending

To argue him down,

He snuffs the candle.

Silent action speaks louder than any words which follow. We may compare him to the servant girl, Alice, in *At the Bay*. The whole family (of women) feels relieved after Stanley has gone to work:

And she plunged the teapot into the bowl and held it under the water even after it had stopped bubbling, as if it too were a man and drowning was too good for them.

しばられたやうに髪結ひまで居

Shibarareta yō ni kamiyui hima de iru

The hair-dresser

Has leisure,

As if shackled.

The barber is not really free, though he is doing nothing, because he must be ready for the next customer. Life is not real life if we must die. Leisure is not real leisure if we are only waiting for work.

雷もすゝめがなけばしまいなり

Kaminari mo suzume ga nakeba shimai nari

Thunder also

Comes to an end

When the sparrows begin to chirp.

The sparrows may be compared to Lyly's nightingale,

The morn not waking till she sings.

The difference is that the senryu writer sees not merely the inversion of cause and effect but the ridiculousness of such a relation.

いかだ乗りばかばかしくも野を戻り

Ikadanori bakabakashiku mo no wo modori

A raftsman comes back home,
Absurdly enough,
Over the fields.

The raftsman spends many of his days gliding effortlessly over the surface of the water. When he goes back home on land he feels the clumsiness and stupidity of the life of the landsman.

柱にも少し葉のある旅芝居

Hashira nimo sukoshi ha no aru tabishibai

The travelling theatre;
There are some leaves remaining
On the posts.

The theatre is put up only temporarily, and they use rough tree-trunks, or even standing trees, and some leaves are seen still growing there. This is an intimacy of life and art and nature which has been now almost entirely lost. Compare Buson's haiku:

旅芝居穂麥がもとの鏡立て

Tabishibai homugi ga moto no kagamitate

The travelling theatre;
They have set up their mirrors
Under the ears of barley.

いたゞいてのむもくやしき山歸來

Itadaite nomu mo kuyashiki sankirai

To bow and drink
Sankirai,—
How vexing!

In olden times people held medicine in high esteem and raised it a little and bowed to express their respect and gratitude, but to do this for a medicine to cure venereal disease communicated by one's unfaithful husband,—is difficult indeed.

小侍蜘蛛と下水で目をくらし
Kozamurai kumo to gesui de hi wo kurashi

The samurai's servant boy
Spends his days
With spiders and drains.

When he is not out with his master, the samurai's servant boy has no other work than clearing away spider's webs and cleaning out the drains.

行く先の犬と懇意な小侍
Yukusaki no inu to koni na kozamurai

The samurai's servant boy
Is intimate with the dog
Of the house he was sent to.

When his master is inside the house, he waits outside and plays with the dog, and at last they become old friends.

あふれたは遣り手のかたをもんで遣り
Abureta wa yarite no kata wo monde yari

The one who missed her job
Massages the shoulders
Of the brothel attendant.

A courtesan had no customer, however long she waited, so she began to massage the shoulders of the hideous old woman in charge of the courtezans. (Such women are usually weak in body and spitefully violent in character.) The massaging is done and received in apparent good will, but . . .

あたりからやかましくいふ年に成
Atari kara yakamashiku iu toshi ni nari

She became the age
People around her
Speak of it.

This is a "girl" of nineteen or twenty, whose marriageability is about to disappear.

玄關番びんぼうゆすりして咄し

Genkanban binbōyusuri shite hanashi

The door-keeper

Talks,

Having a nervous shaking.

This is a kind of "poor in spirit" which is hardly "blessed." Being rich neither spiritually nor financially, he stands first on one leg, then on the other, and curries favour with his employers by his subservience and involuntary sycophancy.

すり子木の鏡へうつる新世帯

Surikogi no kagami e utsuru shinjotai

The wooden pestle

Is reflected in the mirror,—

The new home.

The house is small and things are few and the reflection of the (new and white) pestle in the mirror brings out the intimacy of things and people. The boudoir and the kitchen are (as they should be) very close to each other.

ごまめ賣猫に一疋けいはくし

Gomameuri neko ni ippiki keihakushi

The dried-sardine-seller

Presented one

To the cat.

Gomame, or small dried sardines are used in the New Year. At the end of the year, the man came to the house to sell them, and to please the housewife, rather than the cat, he gave one to the cat.

おふくろはたゞこっくりを願つて居

Ofukuro wa tada kokkuri wo negatte i

The old mother
Only wishes
To pop off.

The old woman has nothing more to look forward to in this world. Her parents, her husband, her lost children and dead friends wait for her in Buddha's Land of Bliss. And yet,

E'en in our embers live their wonted fires,
and what she says is partly just talking. Truth is silent.

猫のめし入添へて遣る花ざかり
Neko no meshi irisoete yaru hanazakari

The cherry-blossom season;
They put more food
In the dish for the cat.

All are going out to enjoy themselves (and eating is perhaps a larger part of the pleasure than the flower viewing) so they feel a little sympathy with the cat and give him an extra portion.

I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.

屁の論に泣くのもさすが女也
He no ron ni naku nomo sasuga onna nari

The one who cries
About who farted,
Must be a woman.

There is an argument, people accusing one another, half in joke, but a woman has no sense of humour. Even George Eliot and Jane Austen might take such a question too seriously.

草市にうろたへてなくきりぎりす
Kusaichi ni urotae te naku kirigirisu

That's a scatter-brain cricket,—
 To come and sing
 In this grasses-market.

These grasses were sold and used for the O-bon, All Souls' Festival. To come to the city in these grasses shows the cricket was very absent-minded, not to say half-witted. Senryu sees that human beings are not the only fools in the universe.

女房にせがまれて賣る石燈籠
 Nyōbō ni segamarete uru ishidōrō
 Pressed by his wife,
 He sold
 The stone lantern.

To a woman nothing has any poetical value; all is only reputation or profit or power. And as poetry is always on the losing side, the stone lantern is sold.

じゅず屋ではとしらへ上げて一ト拝す
 Juzuya de wa koshirae agete hito-ogami
 The rosary-maker;
 A praying
 After making one.

This is an excellent senryu. We can hardly decide whether he makes this prayer sincerely, or to impress an imaginary customer, or to test the rosary he has just made. As always with human beings we have the double motive:

Draw if thou can the mystic line,
 Which is human, which is divine.

右右と麥から顔を出していひ
 Migi migi to mugi kara kao wo dashite ii

“To the right, to the right!”

He says,
 Sticking his face out of the barley.

Travellers, or more probably pilgrims, are going along a narrow country road in early autumn, and come to a parting of the ways. The farmer overhears them, and without asking them or waiting to be asked, puts his head out of the barley he is weeding and tells them the way.

能くめて寝やと女房へつとめて出
Yoku shimete neya to nyōbo e tsutomete de

“Go to bed after locking up the house well.”

He goes off

After trying to please his wife.

He feels guilty at going out for the night (but not guilty enough to stop at home) and tells his wife kindly to lock up the house properly and sleep well. More tender mercies of the wicked.

手の筋を見ると一筋けちをつけ
Te no suji wo miru to hitosuji kechi wo tsuke

When he reads his palm,

He finds

A bad line.

When a palmist tells a man's fortunes, he praises this and praises that, but never forgets to find a bad line somewhere to keep him in suspense and to make him come again, to see if the ill-luck can be avoided.

乞食能貳三町づゝかして行
Kojikinō ni san chō zutsu kashite yuku

The Beggar's Nō play

Go along lending money

Two or three blocks ahead.

There was in the Edo Period an inferior form of Nō, often performed by the townspeople. Sometimes these went round the town collecting money by their performance for temples and shrines. The expression “goes lending money” is interesting. The performance

is a "lending" which is repaid when the man comes round with the hat.

親の日にあたった下女は二つかみ

Oya no hi ni atatta gejo wa futatsukami

The maid-servant,

On the death-day of her parent,
Gives two handfuls of rice.

As usual there is here the double nature of humanity. The servant does not forget the death-day of her parent, though she is far away from her native place and unable to visit the grave, and she gives an extra handful of rice to the begging priest. But the senryu does not wish us to forget that it is not her own rice which she gives piously, and generously.

きしばかりこがせたがるも女の氣

Kishi bakari kogasetagaru mo onna no ki

To make him row

Only along by the shore,—
This is the nature of a woman.

Onna no ki means the feeling of a woman, her life-feeling, thus her nature. Compare a verse of a poem by Allan Cunningham, *A Wet Sheet and Flowing Sea*, 1825:

"O for a soft and gentle wind!"

I hear a fair one cry.

But give to me the snoring breeze,
And white waves heaving high.

合羽屋と紺屋と寄って境ろん

Kappaya to konya to yotte sakairon

The boundary argument,
Between the water-proof-maker
And the dyer.

By some unlucky accident, these two, who both need plenty of

space, are neighbours, and there are often quarrels about the exact position of the line between them.

ほととぎす聞かぬと言へば恥のやう

Hototogisu kikanu to ieba haji no yō

The first cuckoo:

Not to have heard it

Seems something to be ashamed of.

Such is the power of custom and tradition, that in the Edo Period people felt quite guilty if they had not noticed the cuckoo singing.

CHAPTER XXI

Yanagidaru Book III

一ト寝入ねせて夕べのいけんをし

Hito-neiri nesete yûbe no iken wo shi

After letting him have a sleep,
She admonishes him
For the previous evening.

The interesting point here is the difference between a mother and a wife. A wife would grumble at him immediately, and allow him no time to sleep in spite of his exhaustion after coming back from a night at the Yoshiwara. As to which is true love, or whether such an abstraction exists or not,—I leave such matters to the reader.

水を汲む音のきこえるわかれ酒

Mizu wo kumu oto no kikoeru wakare-zake

The parting cup;
Sounds of drawing water
Are heard.

In Old Japan journeys were difficult and dangerous, and the traveller usually started at daybreak after exchanging cups of wine with his family. The sound of water splashing, the squeak of the well-wheel are heard through the morning haze, cold and dark. Thoughts and feelings are many, but all expressed in those sounds coming through the morning twilight. This is *senryu* at its most poetical.

よくどしい所でめる小間物や

Yokudoshii tokoro de shimeru komamono-ya

The fancy-goods-seller
Earns most
Where they are greedy.

This pedlar can deal with greedy and stingy women much better than with ordinary ones. He takes something of poor quality and sells it at a high price, "especially for you." They buy what they don't want because they think it is cheap.

乳母が炙そばに泣き人がついて居る

Uba ga kyū soba ni nakite ga tsuite iru

The moxacautery of the wet-nurse:

She has by her side

One who weeps for her.

The child cries for her, seeing his dear wet-nurse putting up with the heat while she cauterizes herself with moxa. (Japanese and Chinese people burn moxa on certain nerve centres to cure or prevent appendicitis, fits, rheumatism, stomach troubles etc.)

す見物其くせ念にねんをいれ

Su-kenbutsu sono kuse nen ni nen wo ire

Only having a look,—

None the less,

So carefully and earnestly.

These men have come just to look at the Yoshiwara; they are not going in, but they are all the more gazing with all their eyes, fairly lapping up the sight.

出女のかいこんで行やなぎどり

Deonna no kaikonde yuku yanagi-gori

The female tout

Snatches away

The wicker basket.

The traveller's wicker basket has been carried off by the inn-servant, and he must follow it. Women are more shy than men, but also more shameless and brazen.

銭の無い非番はまどへ顔を出し

Zeni no nai hiban wa mado e kao wo dashi

龍上座咒又一層
昔觀龍悉破暗光
鑒近代新無暗信
從今時世無暗信
為群魔憎
佛嫌群魔隊
千佛場中為千



PLATE XVIII

SELF-PORTRAIT OF HAKUIN

千	佛	爲	挫	麤	者	醜
佛	嫌	群	今	近	般	上
場	群	魔	時	代	醜	添
中	魔	憎	默	斷	惡	醜
爲	隊		照	無	破	又
千	裡		邪	睹	睹	一
			黨	僧	禿	層

The fact that Hakuin is the greatest of all Japanese Zen monks is very far from having no connection with the fact that he had a strong sense of humour and a very critical spirit. The present self-portrait (with a sort of halo round it!) shows us the face of a man who could and did laugh. He looks difficult to deceive with religious humbug or sanctimonious sentimentality. The Chinese poem above says:

The object of dislike of the thousand Buddhas in their thousand realms,

The one hated by the devils of all the throngs of devils,—

I will break in pieces the evil group of priests who nowadays only look on in silence,

And extirpate the blind monks of the present time, who have cut themselves off from Mu.

I, the bald, ugly destroyer of blind guides,

Adding yet more ugliness to the ugliness!

Really to laugh at oneself, and laugh at oneself laughing at oneself,
—this is enlightenment.

The penniless off-duty samurai
 Sticks his face
 Out of the window.

This man is the lowest class of samurai, and it is his off-duty day. He would like to go out but has no money to spend, so all he can do is to put his head out of the window.

辻番はへそをかきかき湯屋へ来る
 Tsujiban wa heso wo kaki-kaki yuya e kuru

The town-guard
 Comes to the bath-house
 Scratching his navel.

The policemen of Edo were not very different from Dogberry, Verges etc.

三みせんをかりる使をといつめる
 Samisen wo kariru tsukai wo toi-tsumeru

She presses the questions home
 To the one who has come
 To borrow her samisen.

The point of this senryu is the appropriateness, the harmony between the woman who is asking why it is wanted, who wants it, who is the visitor, and so on, and the samisen, which seems itself to have some meaning of cattiness.

車引つるべで呑んでしかられる
 Kuruma-hiki tsurube de nonde shikarareru

The wagon-puller
 Is scolded
 At drinking from the well-bucket.

He asks for some water and is told to get some from the well, but drinks like an animal from the well-bucket. The house-wite can't help grumbling at him. She doesn't mind toads and dead birds falling into the well, but can't bear the man's whiskery mouth in

the bucket.

その下女の晝は木ではなわつこくり

Sono gejo no hiru wa ki de hana okkokuri

The maid-servant
Bites his nose off,
In the day-time.

This is partly to hide their relationship, consummated at night, but partly, we may suppose, as an (unconscious) expression of her concomitant dislike of him. All men and women dislike each other to quite a considerable degree.

出て居るとめったに人がけつまづき

Dete iru to metta ni hito ga ketsumazuki

When she is out,
Too often
Men stumble.

I will say no more than that I have myself often stumbled (and, thank God, still do) for such a reason.

とうめうを嫁は二人でけしに行

Tōmyō wo yome wa futari de keshi ni iki

The daughter-in-law goes
To put out the tapers
With somebody else.

The mother-in-law has died (we may suppose). The tapers are lit every evening in the Buddhist altar, and the young wife who hated, and was hated by the old woman, dare not go alone into the room to blow out the candles; her spirit still ranges to and fro.

はたし狀泣な泣なと墨をすり

Hatashi-jō nakuna nakuna to sumi wo suri

A letter of challenge:
He prepares the Indian ink,
Saying, "Don't cry, don't cry!"

This is a whole drama in seventeen syllables. The samurai is rubbing the Indian ink on the writing-slab to write his letter of challenge, his young wife weeping beside him. He is looking as calmly bold as he can, and encouraging his wife with words of wisdom from the sages. He has to fight for his honour, not quite whole-heartedly. His wife is more human and honest, begging him not to go, at least by her tears, but his is the more pathetic figure. He has got himself into a circle of folly, and cannot get out of it. The Indian ink thickens.

ぬす人にほら貝をふく在郷寺
Nusu-bito ni hora-gai wo fuku zaigo-dera

Blowing a conch-shell
To tell of a thief
At the country temple.

This is a rustic picture, a "talkie", indistinguishable from haiku.

此しゅくの太夫おしゑるあんま取
Kono shuku no tayu oshieru amma-tori

The shampooer tells about
The courtezans
Of this post-town.

The two interesting and inexhaustible subjects for conversation are food and sex, in reverse order. A traveller is being massaged, and the blind man is talking of the beautiful prostitutes of the town.

常念佛さもいやさうな後生也
Jō-nembutu samo iyasō na goshō nari

Every day chanting the Buddha's Name,—
Such unwilling-sounding prayers
For the next world!

Nobody can really put his heart into requests and wishes for the life after death. They must and do sound perfunctory and forced, even if it is our living, even if we are "professional good men."

あまだれを手へ受けさせて泣やませ

Amadare wo te e ukesasete naki-yamase

He gets the child to stop crying

By making him receive

The rain-drop on his hand.

This is a very sweet picture, but I am afraid the child may start howling again immediately after.

取次の出る内ひだのしわをのし

Tori-tsugi no deru uchi hida no shiwa wo noshi

Until someone

Answers his knock,

He smooths out the crumpled plait.

This faintly resembles Hardy's poem of the clergyman who, after preaching, went into the vestry and practised before the mirror the same dramatic gesture he had used in the church,—not knowing that the door had swung open and that the congregation could see what he was doing.

こうまんな顔で来るのが妾の親

Kōman na kao de kuru noga shō no oya

These coming with proud looks

Are the parents

Of the concubine.

They are proud of their daughter's becoming the mistress of some rich man, themselves so vulgar and uneducated. And we are proud of not doing such things, and of not being proud,—so what is the difference after all?

添とげてのぞけばこわい清水寺

Soitogete nozokeba kowai seisuiji

After succeeding in marrying him

She is frightened even to look down

From Seisuiji Temple.

Kiyomizu Temple in Kyōto is famous for its high stage for bugaku. People used to commit suicide from it. This woman was willing to die, there was nothing she was afraid of; but now that she is married to the man of her heart, how precious life has become! She cannot bear even to look over the edge of the high balustrade into the valley below.

I cannot help taking this as a parable of human life and the fear of death. How can a man who is joyfully sensitive to nature and poetry and music and art be anything but terrified of death? To fall from the ecstasy of living into nothingness! When people say so glibly, "I am not afraid to die!" I feel that they have no right to be alive.

料理人ひょいとほうってかみ合せ

Ryōrinin hyoi to hōtte kamiawase

The cook lightly

Throws a piece away,

And makes them bite each other.

A cook is working with fish. At the kitchen door, a few dogs have gathered. When he throws the bone away, the dogs all begin to fight over it. We may compare Issa's verse:

米蒔も罪ぞよ鶏が蹴合ふぞよ

Kome maku mo tsumi zo yo tori ga ke-au zo yo

Scattering rice,—

This is also a sin,

The fowls kicking one another!

Issa made a pilgrimage to Tōkaiji Temple, and feeling sorry for the chickens that followed him so longingly he bought some rice and scattered it among them, but they immediately began to fight.

あいそうにごぜはあやして泣出され

Aisō ni goze wa ayashite nakidasare

As a compliment,

The blind woman tries to humour the baby,
But it begins to cry.

A goze is a blind woman who plays the samisen. The child does not know that all men are equal, that they all have the Buddha nature. It does not know that a woman may be an angel in spite of being blind. A baby does not know many things. But it knows something; it knows it does not wish to be caressed by a blind samisen player.

ひる見世はよく笑ふ子をかりにやり

Hirumise wa yoku warau ko wo kari ni yari

The prostitutes at daytime
Send someone to borrow
A cheerful child.

They have nothing to do in the day-time and are bored, so they send a girl to fetch some very charming and playful child. All playing and laughing together makes a pretty picture, but it comes from boredom, and if the child begins to cry, it is sent home at once.

野雪隠地藏しばらく刀番

Nozetchin jizō shibaraku katanaban

The field-lavatory,
Jizō for a while
The guardian of his sword.

The point of this senryu is the accidental triple contradiction between the statue of Jizō, defecation, and the military arts.

最う嫁は貳把で五文を買ならひ

Mō yome wa niwa de gomon wo kai narai

Already the bride
Has learned to buy
Two bunches for five mon.

"That it should come to this!" All that innocence and beauty disappearing, and in exchange, the ability to buy two bunches of greens (three *mon* a bunch) for five *mon*.

今暮れる日にけいせいはいくらわらず

Ima kureru hi ni keisei wa kakawarazu

The courtesan
Has no interest
In the setting sun.

For ordinary people, the falling shadows have a faintly painful meaning of the ending of another day. But not to the courtesan. So we see that the meaning of day and night is not absolute. The courtesan is the bat, the owl among animals,—or shall we be cynically poetical and call her the star that shines only at night.

惣仕舞煩ふ禿またがれる

Sōjimai wazurau kamuro matagareru

All employed,
The sick *kamuro*
Is stepped over.

When there is nothing to do, the courtesans are quite sympathetic, so it seems, to the ill girl, but as soon as business is brisk (perhaps some rich chap has come) they rush about chattering and gay, stepping over her without ceremony.

下る乳母てい主にこにこ櫃をしょい

Sagaru uba teishu nikoniko hitsu wo shoi

The wet-nurse has finished her service;
Her husband smilingly
Carries the chest.

The baby has grown till it needs no more milk. The wet-nurse is leaving. She has received a lot of money and presents, and husband and wife are going to live together again after a long time.

This senryu is kinder, less critical than most, but there is, as Lawrence's keen eye would have seen, some sexuality and some financial pleasure lurking in the husband's smile.

小便でつくだの藤を見てかへり

Shōben de tsukuda no fuji wo mite kaeri

Because of urination,

He returned after viewing

The wistaria of Tsukuda Island.

Tsukuda Island is a small island in Edo Bay. On the way back he missed the ferry-boat for the above-mentioned reason. As he had some time till the next boat, he went to see the famous wistaria flowers which he had had no intention of seeing. Some people go to Heaven by accident.

物申に窓から顔がニッ三ッ

Monomō ni mado kara kao ga futatsu mitsu

To the visiting voice,

Some faces appeared

At the windows.

In Japan in olden times, people shouted at the door when they visited a house. “*Tanomō!* (Hallo!)” they cried. A man shouted at the entrance of a rather large house, and faces appeared at several windows, bathroom, bedroom, lavatory, drawing-room, in a very odd and synchronous manner.

伸直り疵のあるのが飲んでさし

Nakanaori kizu no aru no ga nonde sashi

Making it up,

The one with a wound

Drinks and passes the cup.

There is something subtle here. Two men have been fighting; one has been hurt, and it is he who drinks first and offers the other

a drink. The senryu writer feels that the order is proper; if the victor offered the cup it would be an added humiliation for the loser.

ふきげんを人に知られる鳴子引

Fukigen wo hito ni shirareru narukohiki

The clapper-puller;
His bad temper
Is known.

The clapper is to scare birds away from the rice. As Emerson says, "Virtue and vice emit a breath every moment," and to a sensitive ear the sound of the clapper reveals the puller's state of mind exactly and unmistakably.

三度まで産婦へ聞いてじれさせる

Sando made sanpu e kiite jiresaseru

Asking where it is three times,
He makes his wife in childbed
Feel irritated.

As is well known, men have a suspicious inability to find anything in a cupboard or wardrobe or drawer. The reason is of course that if they show any capacity to find things, their wives won't look for them. It is said that monkeys don't talk for a similar reason.

女房を持って朝寝にきづがつき

Nyūbō wo motte asane ni kizu ga tsuki

As he has a wife now,
His sleeping late
Is spoiled.

This is an abbreviation of Emerson's essay on *Compensation*.

世のよくのしきみをだにもえりかへし

Yo no yoku no shikimi wo danimo erikaeshi

The greed of this world!
Even the *shikimi*
They choose and select.

A spray of *shikimi*, that is, Chinese anise, or *Illicium religiosum*, is offered at graves and Buddhist altars on the 1st and 15th of every month. It is very cheap, only one or two cents, and all more or less the same, but still they try to pick out the best one. Another on the same subject:

ねぎらずに遣ればいたゞくしきみ賣り
Negirazuni yareba itadaku shikimiuri

When she gives the money
Without forcing him to come down,
The *shikimi*-seller receives it gratefully.

傾城の枕一ツは恥の内
Keisei no makura hitotsu wa haji no uchi

For a courtesan,
One pillow
Is the most shameful of all things.

An ordinary woman "would rather die" than have two pillows. Shame, the foundation of all morality, is felt for precisely the opposite things.

禮もせぬくせに藪醫のなんのかの
Rei mo senu kuse ni yabui no nan no ka no

They don't pay him,
And call him a quack
Into the bargain.

In the Edo Period doctors were paid twice a year, in summer and at the end of December.

壹人客給仕と話し話し喰
Hitori kyaku kyūji to hanashi hanashi kui

The single guest
Has his meal talking
Talking with the waitress.



PLATE XIX

FUDO (VAIROCANA)

This picture of Vairocana, (Fudō) is two and a half by one and a half feet; it seems to have been done about the middle of the 17th century. He stands on a rock, a sword, 降魔の劔, Destroyer of Demons, in his right hand, a cord, 索, in his left to bind the evil. (This is held also by a thousand-armed Kannon, to bind the good). It has a thunderbolt, 金剛杵, at each end, which break up all *klesa*, illusions. The two messengers standing below are Kimkara, 分羯羅, and Cetaka, 制吒迦.

This Otsu-e, like almost all, has some humour, unforced, spontaneous, natural, and inseparable from the religious motif. Fudō with his cord and javelin, and indirectly Buddhism itself, are ironically described in the following senryu:

不動さま縛って置いて突く工面

Fudō sama shibatte oite tsuku kumen

Fudō makes a living
By binding people
And transfixing them.

The most famous statue of Fudō in Edo was at Meguro, and to pray before this was the object of Meguro Mōde, illustrated on the fly-leaf.

Very dull for both.

朝路から戻り大根のこもを取り

Asaji kara modori daiko no komo wo tori

Coming back from the morning service,

He takes the straw-matting

Off the radish.

Asaji, 朝路, must be 時 or 勤. Especially in the Shingon Sect, but also in others, there was a custom of going to the temple early on winter mornings and taking part in the service. On his return, the old man takes off the radishes the straw mats which are put on during the night to keep them from freezing. He will use the radish in his *miso* soup. This *senryu* is pure haiku, even if there be some secret contrast between service and soup.

念佛講死ねば根からそのやう

Nebutsu-kō shinaneba ne kara son no yō

The Buddhist Chanting Service Club:

Not to die seems to be

A kind of loss.

When someone in the Club dies, the others gather at the house and offer prayers. It seems a kind of loss to continue living and have to keep praying for other people's salvation, not one's own.

裏茶屋はかの人斗來るところ

Urajaya wa ka-no-hito bakari kuru tokoro

The tea-house in the back street

Is the place

Where only "he" or "she" comes.

The other party comes and says, "Has (s)he come yet?" The name is never mentioned, so that there seems some change of personality when the tea-house is entered.

女房持山を見い見い鹿を追ひ

Nyōbo-mochi yama wo mii-mii shika wo oi

The man with a wife
Runs after the deer,
Looking carefully at the mountain.

In Old Japan "mountain" meant a wife (they often called wives "the goddess of the mountain"). See page 261, note 1. There is also an old proverb, "The hunter who runs after a deer does not see a mountain." Here is a man who runs after another woman, but also paying good heed to his wife. This kind of humorous use of proverbs was common in Europe in the Middle Ages.

てんびんをたたく手代の目がすわり
Tembin wo tataku tedai no me ga suwari

The eyes of the shop-man
Tapping the balance,
Are set.

He taps the balance to see if he is not cheating himself, and his eyes have a fixed, concentrated look like that of a drunken man.

さりながらぶつにはましとあまい母
Sarinagara butsu niwa mashi to amai haha

"But you know,
It's better than gambling,"
Says the fond mother.

The son goes to the Yoshiwara every night, but the mother dotes on him, and finds this dissolute life a (negative) virtue, since it is not gambling, which (she thinks) is worse.

出入からしくじれがしのぞく納所
Deiri kara shikujiregashi no zoku-nassho

The tradesmen
Would like the secular accountant
Cashiered.

Priests are easily swindled financially (perhaps because they are

already swindled religiously) but in this case the accountant of a big temple is an ordinary man, and the merchants wish he would get the sack.

しゃうじん日肴が來ると時を聞
Shōjimbī sakana ga kuru to toki wo kiki

A fast day;
When the fish comes
He asks the time.

On any religious day when abstinence from animal food was *de rigueur*, it continued only till sunset, 暮れ六つ. Religion, so-called, is from top to bottom merely formal; at best self-deceiving. Yet all this too is "natural," as natural as the setting of the sun. The two are coupled in the following verse:

鰯の聲日もしゃうじんも落る頃
Aji no koe hi mo shōjin mo ochiru koro

The cry of the horse-mackerel,
When the sun
And the abstinence disappear.

そん金の世間へ知れるせと物屋
Sonkin no seken e shireru setomonoya

His blunder
Is known to the world:
The china-shop.

In other shops, if a shop-assistant breaks or drops or tears something, the loss is not known to everybody, but when a crash is heard, "There goes a hundred yen!" they say.

草市ではかなきものをねぎりつめ
Kusa-ichi de hakanaki mono wo negiri-tsume

The grass-market:
Such frail things,
And such a hard bargain driven!

The grass-market sold grasses at night for the All-Souls' Buddhist Mass for the Dead. The man is poor and weak-looking, the grasses are soft and bending and cost but little, but the buyer is beating down the price.

どつしりと置てからいふ 団の禮

Dosshiri to oite kara iu usu no rei

After dumping it down,
He thanks her
For the mortar.

The borrowed mortar is so heavy that he can't say "thank you" for it until he has put it down.

石燈籠ある夜うれたる夢を見る

Ishi-dōro aru yo uretaru yume wo miru

One night he dreamed
The stone-lantern
Was sold.

It is odd, but everyone likes to have a stone-lantern, yet nobody wants to buy one. It is too cold, too remote, too deathly for our human nature.

自身番捨子が泣て世帯めき

Jishimban sutego ga naite shotai-meki

The police-box
Becomes home-like
With the cry of a foundling.

The *jishimban* was a kind of police-box in Edo time—the citizens of Edo guarded their own city, and took turns to do the work of *jishimban*.

八文が呑内馬はたれて居る

Hachi-mon ga nomu uchi uma wa tarete iru

While he drinks
Eight-penny worth,
The horse makes water.

While the man takes in liquid inside, the horse puts out liquid outside. This also is the systole and diastole of Great Nature.

相傘を淋しく通す京の町
Aigasa wo sabishiku tōsu kyō no machi

They let a man and a woman
Go by lonesomely under the same umbrella:
A street of Kyōto.

The people of Edo were busybodies, envious, jealous, chatterboxes. This was their rough, interfering way, but Kyōto people would allow a man and a woman to pass quietly along the street through the spring rain without wanting to know their business and bosoms.

女房のいけん 壹分がまきをつみ
Nyōbō no iken ichi-bu ga maki wo tsumi

The wife's admonishment:
"All this firewood
For just one *bu*!"

One *bu* was the price of a courtesan for one night. It is noteworthy that the attitude of the wife is no more moral than the husband's. He is hedonistic, she economic.

歸ん ちょき 赤とんぼうと行き違ひ
Kaeru choki aka-tombō to yukichigai

The boat coming back
Goes past
The red dragon-flies.

The *choki*, 猪牙 (wild boar's tooth), was a slender, swift boat that went up and down the Sumida River. The red dragon-flies of autumn fly northward, the red sun on their tails; the boats pass rapidly southwards. It is a peaceful picture,—but there is something more. The boats are going to and from the Yoshiwara, another red place. Does this humanise the picture, or does it spoil it? But

does not life always “spoil” art?

夕顔は大工のたてぬ家に咲

Yūgao wa daiku no tatenu ie ni saki

Moon-flowers

Round a house

Not built by a carpenter.

The roof is thatched, and the whole house looks as if the farmer had built it himself. The white flowers on the fence and eaves also look as if they had “just grown.”

傘を半分かして廻りみち

Karakasa wo hambun kashite mawari-michi

Lending

Half an umbrella,—

A long way round.

It began to rain, and he let someone share his umbrella on the way home. Unfortunately the other person's house was in a rather different direction, so he had to go with him (not her) to his house and then to his own home. This illustrates the odd rule (made by Christ into a moral principle) that when we do someone a kindness, we usually have to do something more.

そうもして見ろと男の名を付る

Sō mo shite miro to otoko no na wo tsukeru

“Let's try!”

And they gave it

A boy's name.

This senryu is an insoluble riddle unless we know the old saying that to give a baby a name of the other sex will ensure its living long. In Old Japan babies died like flies. These people have had several children, who died young. This time it is a girl, so they give it a boy's name.

とむらいの供ははか所でセミを取
Tomurai no tomo wa haka-sho de semi wo tori

The attendant to the funeral
Catches cicadas
In the graveyard.

To kill time while he waits for his master who is attending the funeral ceremony at the temple, the servant goes to the graveyard where there are many tall trees in which cicadas are crying in the hot midday. In the midst of death we are in life, as the Service for the Burial of the Dead does not say, but the attendant's life is killing the insects.

寝所をへし折て置く一人者
Nedokoro wo heshi-otte oku hitori-mono

The bachelor
Just doubles up
His bed.

The bachelor does not even trouble to push his bedding into the cupboard. It is true that there are tidy men and untidy women, but on the whole, as is seen in a bachelor's room, and scholars' desks, men are less concerned with dust, dirt, and disorder. This is not due to any transcendentalism on the part of men, or to their idea of the relative importance of things, but to the female necessity of keeping up appearances.

生酔は御慶にふしを付けていひ
Nama-yoi wa gyokei ni fushi wo tsukete ii

The drunkard says
The New Year Greetings
In a sing-song voice.

Perhaps in ancient times all conversation was carried on in such a tone of voice. At that time, as even now, the meaning of words

must have been conveyed in this animal-like way. The drunkard then is speaking the language of his far-off ancestors.

朝がへりすわると膳をつきつける

Asa-gaeri suwaru to zen wo tsuki-tsukeru

Coming back in the morning:

When he sits down,

The table is thrust before him.

The point of this senryu is the silence of the wife. Of course it does not last long. Mr. Pepys had the same experience with his wife, the night of Jan. 12, 1669: "I after a while prayed her to come to bed; so after an hour or two, she silent, and I now and then praying her to come to bed, she fell into a fury that I was a rogue, and false to her." (On this occasion Mr. Pepys was quite innocent.)

十四日時分にぎばはさじをすて

Jūyokka jibun ni giba wa saji wo sute

About the 14th,

Jivaka threw

His spoon away.

"To throw one's spoon away" means to give up. Jivaka was the greatest doctor of all India, and said to have seized the needle-case (for acupuncture) and medicine bag when born. The senryu writer supposes that Shaka must have sent for him when he became ill, and as Shaka died on the 15th of February, Dr. Jivaka must have abandoned all hope of his recovery the day before.

ワキ僧はたばこぼんでもほしく見へ

Waki-sō wa tabako-bon demo hoshiku mie

The deuteragonist

Looks as if he would like

A tobacco tray.

In a Nō play, the supporting actor is usually a priest. He comes

on the stage, makes some explanatory remarks, and then sits, and must look at the protagonist who chants and dances for a long time. He can hardly help looking either bored or foolish, and the senryu writer feels "pity" for him, and would like to put a tobacco set beside him. This senryu expresses the unnaturalness of art as compared with life.

禿来て鼻からけむを出せといふ
Kamuro kite hana kara kemu wo dase to iu

The *kamuro* comes
And asks him
To blow the smoke out from his nose.

The point here is again the contrast between the young prostitute with her more than mature knowledge of all the sexual vices and perversions, and the childishness she still has from her actual age.

ちょっとした事さと禿かけて行
Chitto shita koto sa to kamuro kakete iki

"It's nothing important!"
And the *kamuro*
Goes running.

The senryu writer, for once in a while, leaves the matter to the imagination, the imagination of something disagreeable, no doubt, too disagreeable to record in these pages also.

旅芝居けんくわをのらへ追出し
Tabi-shibai kenka wo nora e oi-idashi

The travelling theatre:
They drive the quarrel away
To the field.

If it were in Edo, the two men would be driven out into the street, but in the village, "outside" is a barley field.

すげ笠に有^ん名でとん死呼かへし
Suge-gasa ni aru na de tonshi yobi-kaeshi

They call back
 The man dropped dead
 By the name in his plaited hat.

A traveller has died by the roadside, and other people have come up and are trying to resuscitate him (literally, "call him back from the dead") calling him by name, the name written inside his umbrella-like hat. There is something odd, even dreadful, in these strangers calling to the dead man by his name.

此家できりゃうばなしは法度也
 Kono ie de kiryō-banashi wa hatto nari
 In this house,
 Talking about people's looks
 Is prohibited.

For one half of humanity this is the tragedy of life, being plain and unattractive, or losing the good looks they have only for a season.

馬の尻たのんで嫁は通りぬけ
 Uma no shiri tanonde yome wa tōri-nuke
 Asking about
 The hindquarters of the horse,
 The young wife passes by.

The dangerous part of a horse is no doubt its hooves, but it is the enormous buttocks that loom largest in a timid imagination. There may be something sexual here.

す見物買はばあいつとゆびをさし
 Su-kembutsu kawaba aitsu to yubi wo sashi
 Only having a look,
 But, "If I could,"
 And pointing one out.

The English is more enigmatic than the original, which says clearly, "If I were to buy (a courtesan)." Such a thought might

cross the mind of saints and sages when "having a look."

入りもせぬ物の値をきく雨やどり

Iri mo senu mono no ue wo kiku ama-yadori

Sheltering from the rain,

And asking about the price of things

He doesn't want.

But this pretence is more human than the nonchalant attitude of a dog or a sage.

大一座多藝なやつは油むし

O-ichiza tagei na yatsu wa abura-mushi

A great party;

The man with many accomplishments

Is a "cockroach."

A cockroach or black beetle means a man who drinks and eats at another's expense. He can sing, dance, play the samisen, do conjuring tricks, tell funny stories. With this he pays his way.

見せもせず無筆は文をもて餘し

Misemosezu mulitsu wa fumi wo moteamashi

Not showing it to anyone,

The illiterate does not know

What to do with the letter.

This is of course a servant girl, who has received a love-letter.

人べらしよらずさわらぬりんき也

Hitoberashi yorazu sawaranu rinki nari

Jealous,

She lessens the servants,

Avoiding trouble.

Her husband is *paying too much* attention to a certain servant, so she *economises*, and has one less.

蔵入が歸ると母は馬鹿のよう
 Yaburi ga kaeru to haha wa baka no yō
 When the girl has gone back,
 After the Servants' Holiday,
 The mother looks stupid.

Not only post coitum but after all emotional outbursts, however worthy, we look and feel like fools.

小ぞうめを仕事にしやとわらじはく
 Kozōme wo shigoto ni shiya to waraji haku
 "Make the boy
 Your work!"
 He puts on his straw sandals.

The father is going on a journey. What he thinks of is his son, not his wife, (and the mother is perhaps glad to have it so, for she also puts her child before her husband). He says to her, "Think of the boy first; all other things come after that." This is (or was) typically Japanese. A Western father would put his wife first.

さそうやつ内義が立つとそばへ寄り
 Sasō yatsu naigi ga tatsu to soba e yori
 The chap who came to entice him
 Draws nearer
 When his wife goes out of the room.

He is going to whisper to him when and where and with what excuse they shall go to the Yoshiwara together. Stolen apples are sweetest. But the poetical point is the deep meaning of his edging closer to his friend over the tatami. There is something animal-like in his movements.

こん禮のあした息子は見世でてれ
 Konrei no ashita musuko wa mise de tere
 The next day of his marriage,
 The son is shy
 At the shop.

St. Francis de Sales, in his *Introduction to the Devout Life*, tells us that sexual intercourse is like eating; the same rules apply. And people are shy after eating, as St. Francis says, especially after eating onions, and so sexual shyness is also thus justified. What is wrong is to be shy here and there. Let us have all shyness, or no shyness; a mixture is disagreeable. But can we chop wood shyly? Perhaps so.

ひとり者ほころび壹っ手を合せ
Hitorimono hokorobi hitotsu te wo awase

The bachelor

Thanks with clasped hands

For even one piece of mending.

Just as society is (said to be) a social contract, so marriage is a labour contract, a division of labour,—not that men can't sew or cook, but that such mindless (though difficult) and trivial (but essential) activities are disagreeable to them. So the bachelor feels extreme gratitude when some woman sews on a button for him.

ねがはくは嫁の死=水取る氣也
Negawaku wa yome no shintomizu toru ki nari

Her great wish

Is to give her daughter-in-law

Her last earthly drink.

The mother-in-law wants to go to Paradise of course, but *after* her hated daughter-in-law.

かわきりは女に見せる顔じやなし
Kawakiri wa onna ni miseru kao ja nashi

The first one,—

Not a face

To show to a woman.

The first application of moxa is the hottest and most painful, and if any woman saw his grimaces she would never fall in love with him, or she would fall out if she had fallen in.

けんやくで一ツまなこの下女を置

Kenyaku de hitotsu manako no gejo wo oki

For the sake of economy,

They keep

A one-eyed maid-servant.

A one-eyed woman is not so ugly, but looks pitiful, and only stony-hearted (or masochistic) people who know they can get her cheap will employ one.

げびた性火をけさないとねつかれず

Gebita shō hi wo kesanai to netsukarezu

A vulgar nature;

He can't go to sleep

Unless the light is out.

This does not imply sensibility to light, but to money.

わらんじをはくと二タ足ふんでみる

Waranji wo haku to futa-ashi funde miru

When he puts on his straw sandals

He takes a few steps

To try them.

This is so ordinary, so common, that it makes as wonder why the senryu writer thought it necessary to write it down, and then we see that such a thing is common but special and characteristic, peculiar to humanity, and symbolic of it. No other animal would do such a thing. Senryu is a "snapper up of unconsidered trifles."

CHAPTER XXII

Other Old Senryu

物申うに 風を柱へくゝしつけ
Monomō ni tako wo hashira e kukushitsuke

At the "Anybody at home?"

He ties the kite

To the post.

Many senryu are riddles or puzzles, in the original as much as in the translation. This verse means that a father is playing outside the house with his little son. The kite is flying well, and when he hears a visitor's voice he ties the string (that is pulling his hand like a living thing) to a post there, and goes to receive the New Year's greetings.

梅一つおちてなきやむ雨蛙
Ume hitotsu ochite nakiyamu amagaeru

A plum falls:

The green-frogs

Stop croaking.

It is interesting to compare this senryu with the following three haiku, and see what makes the difference:

古池や蛙飛びこむ水の音
Furuike ya kawazu tobikomu mizu no oto

芭蕉

The old pond:

A frog jumps in,—

The sound of the water.

Bashō

一つ飛ぶ音に皆飛ぶ蛙かな
Hitotsu tobu oto ni mina tobu kawazu kana

和及

At the sound of one jumping in,
All the frogs
Jumped in.

Wakyū

橋渡る人にしづまる蛙かな
Hashi wataru hito ni shizumaru kawizu kana

諒菟

Someone passed over the bridge,
And all the frogs
Were quiet.

Ryōto

The difference is this: the senryū implies the foolishness of the frogs, the haiku do not.

叱られたところにうっちゃんの花の枝
Shikarareta toko ni utcharu hana no eda

The cherry-blossom branch,
Thrown away
Where they were scolded.

This is a piece of detective work on the part of a passer-by after the event.

あつく禮いはるゝ戀は出来ぬなり
Atsuku rei iwaruru koi wa dekinu nari

The love
She thanks him for so politely,
Will not be accepted.

This verse penetrates to the very centre of a woman's soul. Every woman wishes to be—not raped, but—loved by a man who could rape her if he were not so fond of her. The woman in the senryū shows, by the politeness of her reception of his professions of love, that she has a poor opinion of his sexual prowess, and she thus declines it.

すみずみで大工をそしる畳さし
Sumizumi de datku wo soshiru tatami-sashi

The tatami-maker
Speaks ill of the carpenter
At every corner.

The “square” straw mats won’t fit into the “square” corners of the room. This senryu is a parable of all professions, and indeed of all our relations with one another.

どっからか叱りての出る田舎道
Dokkara ka shikarite no deru inakamichi
From somewhere or other
Someone appears to scold;
The country road.

The country-side looks deserted, but if we steal something or break branches or trespass, someone is sure to appear suddenly. Compare the last verse on page 403.

追はぎの案山子まではぐ秋時雨
Oihagi no kakashi made hagu akishigure
The footpad strips
Even the scarecrow of its clothes,—
The late autumn shower!

Scarecrows are on that pleasing border-line between haiku and senryu.

どの宗旨にも仲のよい蓮の花
Dono shūshi ni mo naka no yoi hasu no hana
The lotus flower
Is on good terms
With all the sects.

All the sects of Buddhism quarrel with each other, but all use the lotus flower as symbolic of their doctrines.

いゝふりだなどと屋根船憎い事
Ii furi da nado to yanebune nikui koto

"How beautiful the rain is!"

They say in the roofed pleasure-boat,—
Odious wretches!

Both are right.

猪の寝返りに散る萩の露
Inoshishi no negaeri ni chiru hagi no tsuyu

The dew-drops patter down
From the lespedesa grasses,
As the wild boar turns over.

This seems to be haiku, but when we know it is a senryu we realise that it is also emphasizing the obesity of the great awkward creature.

女房はそばから醫者へ言つける
Nyōbō wa soba kara isha e iitsukeru

The wife by him
Tells the doctor
All about it.

She tells the doctor all the foolish things he did, and how he did not follow the doctor's advice. The husband lies there irritable and miserable, but he is in a defenceless position for once, and his wife is taking full advantage of it. The doctor appears neutral, but has his thoughts.

笠の辭儀たがひに縁をなでて行き
Kasa no jiggi tagai ni fuchi wo nadete yuki

Bowing with their sedge-hats on:
They just feel the rim,
And go off.

The *kasa*, umbrella-like hats travellers in Japan wore in olden times, were difficult to put on and take off quickly. Two men are saying good-bye, but just stroke the edges of their *kasa*. This senryu is interesting, not merely as exhibiting the inveterate laziness

of human nature, but as suggesting the origin of the military salute.

正宗を切れさうなとは譽めも譽め
Masamune wo kiresō na to wa home mo home

Praise is praise:
He says the Masamune
Looks sharp.

To say a Masamune sword is sharp is like saying water is wet, or that Shakespeare wrote excellent plays.

紺屋からもたせてよこす氣の長さ
Kōya kara motasete yokosu ki no nagasa

He was a patient man;
The dyer
Delivered it!

Dyers, especially in Japan, are famous for delays in their work, and people become impatient. But here was a man who simply waited, until the dyer was forced to deliver it himself.

大般若時々でかい聲を出し
Daihannya tokidoki dekai koe wo dashi

The Great Wisdom Sutra:
Sometimes they utter
An enormous voice.

At certain times in the reading of a sutra the priests suddenly increase the volume of sound, as if they understand what they are intoning, and have reached some particularly emotional point.

お妾はおもしろがって叱らせる
O mekake wa omoshirogatte shikaraseru

The concubine
Makes him scold her
Just for fun.

A concubine is an expert of (masculine) human nature, and she

knows he will enjoy grumbling at her, and enjoy forgiving her, and enjoy giving her more money.

あてもなく下女ぶらぶらと戀病

Atemo naku gejo burabura to koi yamai

Without any hope,
The maid-servant
Is love-sick.

This is a tragedy, but the hard-hearted senryu writer does not see it so. It is also not exactly funny, or pleasing. The state of mind is precisely that which Wordsworth describes in the *Tintern Abbey Ode*, a "serene and blessed mood in which we see into the life of things."

はねの有る言譯程はあひる飛ぶ

Hane no aru iiwake hodo wa ahiru tobu

The duck flies
As far as he can
With his excuse for wings.

The (domestic) duck has wings just to show he's not a mole or a platypus, and when he flies, he flies as well as he can with these symbols of his birdhood.

盃と小判けっしていただくず

Sakazuki to koban kesshite itadakazu

She never receives
The cup or money
Gratefully.

A courtesan never showed any interest in money or gifts of any kind. A cup of wine also was received with indifference. Women should note this, and copy it, if they want to "hold their man."

初會にはよくほえたなと狎を撫で

Shokai ni wa yoku hoeta na to chin wo nade

“You barked at me like mad,
The first time!”
He strokes the lap-dog.

There is something charming in what the patron says to his concubine's pet dog, but at the back there lurks something not so charming. “First time” has a faint echo of “last time.”

をしさうに雪隠を出る痢病やみ

Oshisō ni setchin wo deru riblyō yami

The man with diarrhea
Comes out of the lavatory
As if regretfully.

This may be taken in two ways, from an observer's point of view, and from the man's. As he comes out of the lavatory, walking rather slowly, with legs close together, his face constrained, he looks somehow as if he didn't want to come out. The man himself knows that he has to go back to the lavatory, only too soon, and feels it a waste of time to come out. This senryu is good, and very good, for it applies to Plato, Buddha, and Christ just as much as to Tom, Dick, and Harry.

駿河者手前のもののやうにいひ

Surugamono temae no mono no yō ni ii

The people of Suruga
Speak of it
As though their own.

This is Mount Fuji, which the people of Suruga regard as their own private property, though they do not prevent strangers from looking at it.

みさををば亭主のたてる氣の毒さ

Misao oba teishu no tateru kinodokusa

How pitiful!
The husband
Is so faithful.

This was an old Japanese idea, and a perfectly correct one. A faithful husband or wife is a fool. No woman or man is worth being faithful to.

能い潰れやうさと瞽女は譽められる

Yoi tsubure yō sa to goze wa homerareru

“Your eyes
Are nicely injured!”
The blind woman is praised.

All praise is of this character, that is, we praise omitting everything that we can't praise.

鵜のつらは凡慮の外な所へ出し

U no tsura wa bonryo no hoka na toko e dashi

The cormorant
Sticks his face out
In a quite unexpected place.

The cormorant dives under the water, and to the best of our ability we guess where he will come up, but we are always wrong. There seems something symbolic in this. It may be an example of “Truth is stranger than fiction.”

いつもお若いとは後家へあて擦り

Itsumo o-wakai to wa goke e atekosuri

“You're always young!”
The indirect censure
Of a widow.

This kind of remark has something sinister in it when addressed to any person whatever.

名のる内馬はしばらく息をつき
 Nanoru uchi uma wa shibaraku iki wo tsuki

While he announces himself,
 The horse
 Takes a breather.

The warrior tells his name and boasts of his prowess to his enemy.
 Meanwhile the horse has a rest and perhaps crops a few mouthfuls
 of grass, thus debunking his master's romanticism.

小言いふうちになくなる春の雪
 Kogoto iu uchi ni nakunaru haru no yuki

The spring snow:
 While we grumble,
 It disappears.

This would make a good death-poem.

はれて居るだけが女房の弱み也
 Horete iru dake ga nyōbo no yowami nari

The weakness of the wife
 Is that she is in love
 With her husband.

However wicked we are, God will, in his infinite weakness, forgive
 us, because He loves us.

愛相に言ったを下女は本にする
 Aisō ni itta wo gejo wa hon ni suru

It was only a complimentary remark,
 But the maid-servant
 Took it seriously.

This is happening to everybody all day every day. The universe
 is a joke, but we take it with a petty seriousness that is *the* joke of
 the universe.

おとなしい娘をとこを庭々つぶし
 Otonashii musume otoko wo dodo tsubushi

The gentle girl
Crushes
Many a man.

They fall in love, but are not loved in return. Water is stronger than fire, weakness than strength, kindness than cruelty:

The gratitude of men
Hath oftener left me mourning.

おらが大屋は小人と儒者は言ひ
Oraga ōya wa shōjin to jusha wa ii

“My landlord
Is a small man,”
Says the Confucian.

The *Analects* of Confucius say:

子曰 唯女子與小人 爲難養也。

Woman and small men are hard to manage.

But the greatness of a man is revealed precisely in his dealings with such paltry fellows as you and I.

俄雨まざまざ伯父のまへを駆け
Niwakaame mazamaza oji no mae wo kake

A sudden shower,—
But he runs past
His uncle's house.

What a profound meaning there is in the many things that we do *not* do.

おれを大名にしたらと素見いひ
Ore wo daimyō ni shitara to suken ii

“If I were a lord . . .”
Says the man who came to the Yoshiwara
Only for a look.

He has no money and is enjoying things only Platonically. This man is ourselves, much more than Hamlet is.

人なればとうに出て行く佐野の馬

Hito nareba tō ni deteyuku sano no uma

The horse of Sano:

If it had been a man

It would have gone off.

In the Nō play *Hachinoki* we are told how Sano no Tsuneyo lived in honourable poverty, and burned his remaining three dwarf trees to make a fire for a benighted stranger (who afterwards turned out to be Tokiyori, the Governor of the Province). The senryu writer says that if the horse had been a man, instead of an animal tied in a stable, it would have sneered at Sano no Tsuneyo's romantic notions, and gone off to greener pastures.

濡らされた雲を峠でふみのめし

Nurasareta kumo wo toge de fuminomeshi

On the mountain pass,

They tread down the clouds

That wet them.

Compare Shiki's haiku: "Skylarks are soaring, / Treading the clouds, / Breathing the haze, 雲を踏み霞を吸ふや揚雲雀.

いろいろと用たてられるせきばらい

Iroiro to yōtaterareru sekibarai

The cough

Is used

In many ways.

It is astounding how much can be expressed by a cough. Add to this a laugh, a few grimaces and gestures, and most of the great Oxford Dictionary is unnecessary.

女房はねっから俗な事を言ひ

Nyōbō wa nekkara zoku na koto wo ii

The wife says
Something
Quite earthly.

Women are worldly, men more or less other-worldly. If a woman talks about democracy or eternal peace or the immortality of the soul or the existence of God, we see instantly and with the utmost clarity that all these things are the purest nonsense. But a woman is not clever enough to see this. Only a man, a man who knows he is a fool, is clever.

二度と行く所でないとは三度行き
Nido to iku tokoro de nai to sando yuki

“Oh, it’s not a place
To go twice to!”
And he goes three times.

This “place” is the Yoshiwara. “Three times” means many times. Sex, like the navel, does not leave us while life lasts.

いひにくゝありんすねへと氣味悪さ
Iinikuku arinsu nē to kimiwarusa

“It’s so difficult to say,
But . . . but . . .”
There is something disagreeable to come.

The language of this senryu shows that it is said by a courtesan, and we may be sure that it is something to do with money.

まゝ事の世帯くづしがあまえて來
Mamagoto no shotai-kuzushi ga amaete ki

The giver-up
Of playing house
Comes fawning.

There is a laughably sudden change from the imperious child playing at house-keeping to the wheedling little girl.

小鼓は耳の蚊を追ふやうに打ち
Kotsuzumi wa mimi no ka wo ou yō ni uchi

He beats the little hand-drum
As though driving away
The mosquitoes at his ear.

The drum is held on the shoulder, and struck by raising the hand slowly, and then suddenly increasing the speed and giving it a sharp smack.

愁嘆を向棧敷は遅くなき
Shūtan wo mukō sajiki wa osoku naki

A sad scene:
The gallery
Weeps a little later.

The people of the gallery are a little farther away from the stage. Also, they know the play less well than the wealthier part of the audience.

宗論はどちらがまけても釋迦の恥
Shūron wa dochira ga makete mo shaka no haji

Strife between the sects;
Whichever loses,
It's still the shame of Sakyamuni.

This is true, not simply because all the Buddhist sects are supposed to derive their teachings from Buddha's own words, but because what Buddha said was so confused and contradictory and nonsensical that it gave a good excuse for the sects to argue for ever and ever.

どこからか叱り手の出る大伽藍
Doko kara ka shikarite no deru daigaran

From somewhere or other
Someone comes to scold:
The great temple.

When a visitor touches a statue or fingers some tapestry or peeps

into what he shouldn't, somebody is sure to appear as if from nowhere and grumble at him.

死んだまゝ六部を置いて境論

Shinda mama rokubu wo oite sakairon

They argue about the boundary,
Leaving the pilgrim
Just as he died.

The Buddhist pilgrim died on the border line of two villages, who are arguing about which shall go to the trouble and expense of burying him. Meanwhile the convocation of worms is as he is.

一と七日持佛くひものだらけなり

Hitonanoka jibutsu kuimono darake nari

For seven days
The Buddhist altar
Is loaded with food.

This offering of food, and eating of food and drinking at a funeral has an anthropological explanation (possibly an anthropophagous one also) but the humorous explanation of anything is always the right one.

検校は手引きをつれて蛇におち

Kengyō wa tebiki wo tsurete hebi ni oji

As the blind man
Is with an attendant,
He is afraid of the snake.

This is deeply symbolical. The attendant, the guide, the Saviour, —these are the ones responsible for all our troubles.

よくよくのことか癆瘵笑ふなり

Yokuyoku no koto ka rōgai warau nari

It must be something extraordinary,—
The consumptive
Is laughing!

What can he be laughing at? But we are all doomed to die;
what are *we* laughing at?

渡り初めおっかなさうにふみよごし

Watarizome okkanasō ni fumiযোগেশ

The first crossing of the bridge;

They dirty it

Gingerly.

To do this is foolish. To trample over it just as if it were not a
new bridge would be insensitive and barbarous. What shall we do
then?

放し鰻も太いのを撰ってゐる

Hanashi unagi mo futoi no wo yotte iru

Even in freeing eels,

They choose

The fat ones.

Eels are put back in the water as an act of Buddhist mercy, but
even here the well-fleshed ones are chosen. It is more soul-satisfying
to show mercy to a plump eel than to a skinny one.

かゝり人隣りへ腹を立てにゆき

Kakaryūdo tonari e hara wo tate ni yuki

The hanger-on

Goes next door

To get angry.

This is true of all human beings, and of all emotions. It includes
artists and musicians and poets also. Impression requires expression,
which again is nothing without reception.

喰もうし喰はぬもつらし居候

Kū mo ushi kuwanu mo tsurashi isōrō

For the dependent,

It is miserable to eat,

And painful not to eat.

When he eats he must always eat less than he wants to, and without showing undue pleasure. Not to eat is even more painful. The dependent is a symbol of man in this world.

おてんばにかまひなんなとてんば言ひ

Otemba ni kamainanna to temba ii

“Never have to do
With a flapper!”
Says a flapper.

A teacher always teaches thus. He warns us against himself, his own ignorance, as he tries to teach himself with the help of the students. Christ with his “Love your enemies” means, “as I do not, but would like to.”

おれも中位だと下女思つてゐる

Ore mo chūgurai da to gejo omotteru

“I am about middling,”
Thinks the maid-servant
To herself.

The ugliest person in the world always supposes there is or could be someone uglier.

ふられるたちだと四つ手跡で言ひ

Furareru tachi da to yotsude ato de ii

“He’s the sort of chap
Who’ll be rejected,”
The palanquin-bearers say afterwards.

They have brought him to the Yoshiwara, and now give their opinion of his character, their judgement being influenced no doubt by the smallness of his tip.

白く成るものとは見えぬ洗ひ髪

Shiroku naru mono to wa mienu araigami

Nothing intimates

In the appearance of the just-washed hair
That it will turn white.

This may possibly be a parody of Bashō's famous haiku:

やがて死ぬけしきは見えず蟬の聲
Yagate shinu keshiki wa miezu semi no koe

Nothing intimates,
In the voice of the cicada,
That it will soon die.

平たく言ひ出せかしと後家思ひ
Hirattaku iidase kashi to goke emoi

"Why can't he say it
In plain words?"
Thinks the widow.

What the widow thinks is correct enough, but oddly enough, this decoration of the sexual act is almost a necessity for the act itself.

片目だが器量はよいと仲人言ひ
Katame da ga kiryō wa yoi to nakōdo ii

"She is good-looking,
Though one-eyed,"
Says the go-between.

This is what we sentimentalists say even of God himself.

妾のはねだり下女のはゆすり掛け
Mekake no wa nedari gejo no wa yusurikake

The concubine coaxes,
And the maid-servant
Blackmails him.

And the wife takes the money as a matter of course.

勞咳の母は近所のどらをほめ
Rōgai no haha wa kinjo no dora wo home

The consumptive's mother
Praises the prodigal son
Of next door.

Poor health is worse, for the mother's loving and God-like heart,
than poor morals.

遠い寺亡者を謗り謗り来る
Tōi tera mōja wo soshiri soshiri kuru

The temple far away,
They come
Speaking ill of the dead.

The death of another person is of infinitely less moment than my
tired legs. Also, we look at things not with our eyes, but with our
(tired or not tired) limbs.

案内者讀めぬ額へは連れぬなり
Annaisha yomenu gaku e wa tsurenu nari

The guide does not take them
To the tablet
He can't read.

Only a virtuous fool would do so.

くわんぜ舌爪をとるのも一仕事
Kwanze mono tsune wo toru no mo hitoshigoto

Avalokitesvara;
What a labour
Even to cut his nails!

This Bodhisattva has a thousand arms to save others, but thus
gives himself a lot of extra trouble.

能い所へ請出されやと哀なり
Yoi toko e ukedasare ya to aware nari

"Be ransomed
To a good home!"
This is a pitiful thing.

The young girl is saying goodbye to her mother after being sold to the Yoshiwara. The mother's love makes her pray that the girl may at length be bought out of it by some wealthy man. This is indeed pitiful, but is it not a sort of adumbration of Christianity?

泊り客少しに義理の朝寝する
Tomarikyaku sukoshi wa giri no asane suru

The visitor who stayed the night
Gets up a little later,
As a courtesy.

There are several reasons for getting up late. He feels a bit strange in a new house; if he gets up early he will make himself a nuisance; staying late in bed suggests that he has slept well and comfortably.

我陣へ入れば簾に枝ばかり
Waga jin e ireba ebira ni eda bakari

He came back
To the camp,
Just a branch in his quiver.

This aesthetic warrior fought with a spray of plum-blossoms in his quiver, a very gallant and beautiful sight, but by the time the battle was over all that must have been left was the bare branch. This equally bare fact is more poetical, more meaningful, thinks the senryu-writer (and I), than the flowering spray, which after all is an affectation of Kajiwara Kagesue, 梶原景季, d. 1200.

血をわけた身とは思はぬ蚊の憎さ
Chi wo waketa mi to wa omowanu ka no nikusa

Though we are of the same blood,
How hateful
The mosquito is!

There is a saying that those of the same blood love each other, but the mosquito, though it has the same blood as ourselves, indeed

it has our own very blood, we feel to be a "pointed fiend."

ぼうふらは蚊にばけ蒲團蚊帳にばけ

Bōfura wa ka ni bake futon kaya ni bake

The larva turns into a mosquito,

The bedding

Into a mosquito net.

Bedding is taken to the pawn-shop in summer to be exchanged for the mosquito net. This late senryu, of the Bunsei Era, 1818-1829, is rather *zappai*, a kind of unpoetical senryu, mere wit.

下女と屁の対決をする居候

Gejo to he no taiketsu wo suru isōrō

A fart,—

And the hanger-on

Confronts the maid-servant.

It is odd that farting should be so funny, and that people should debate so seriously concerning who was the perpetrator of it.

釋尊も錢なき衆生度し難し

Shakuson mo zenī naki shujō doshi-gatashi

Even Buddha

Cannot save

Those without money.

This comes from the saying: 縁なき衆生は度し難し,

A soul without karmic relation (to the Buddha) can hardly be saved.

This, like senryu, is truer than we (allow ourselves to) suppose. Without bread it is impossible to ask God for our daily bread.

下女讀んで見て川柳は憎いねえ

Gejo yonde mite senryū wa nikui nē

The maid-servant

Reads some, and says,

"How hateful senryu are!"

Senryu has no good to say of maid-servants. They are always pig-nosed, stupid, vain, envious, and greedy. But senryu has nothing good to say of anybody, *and that is why nobody likes senryu.*

雪隠にこまり候鎧武者
Setchin ni komari sōrō yoroi musha

"I am at a loss
About the lavatory,"
Says the armoured warrior.

I have sometimes wondered, in my idle moments, how the North Pole explorers manage.

すまふ取り子には教えぬ實語教
Sumōtori ko ni wa oshienu jitsugokyō

The wrestler does not teach
The *Analects of Jitsugo*
To his child.

The *Jitsugokyō* is a collection of proverbs and golden sayings which came from China, to which were added Buddhist thoughts. It was published during the Kamakura Period, and was used educationally among the tradesmen of the Edo Period. In the *Jitsugokyō* it says:

山高故不貴。以有樹爲貴。
人肥故不貴。以有智爲貴。

A mountain is not valued because of its height, but because it has trees on it;

A man is not valued because of his fatness, but because of his wisdom.

外科の弟子誰ぞ切られるがしで居る
Geka no deshi dare zo kirarerugashi de iru

The disciple of the surgeon
Wishes somebody
To get hurt.

So does the surgeon himself, but more calmly.

猫とばかり物を言ふふてた妻
Neko to bakkari mono wo iu futeta tsuina

The sulky wife
Speaks only
With the cat.

This is the technique of a woman; a man simply cannot or perhaps *will* not use it.

傾城は明日をあんじる者でなし
Keisei wa asu wo anjiru mono de nashi

A courtesan
Is not troubled
About tomorrow.

To this extent, and it is a very large extent, the courtesan was a Christian.

はつがねの瞽女推量で恥しさ
Hatsu gane no goze suiryō de hazukashisa

The blind woman
Dyes her teeth for the first time,
And is shy from imagination.

All love themselves; all (self-) love is blind.

もううそもむす子枯野に及ぶ也
Mō uso mo musuko karenō ni oyobu nari

Now the son's lie
Must reach as far
As the withered moor.

In spring the son went to the Yoshiwara with the excuse of seeing the cherry-blossoms; in summer, moon-viewing; in autumn, the tinted leaves. Now it is winter, and he must go withered-moor-viewing. This is also an indirect condemnation of haiku aestheticism.

匙加減しろうと目には惜しいやう

Sajikagen shirōto me ni wa oshiiyō

To non-professional eyes,

Making up the prescription

Looks like skimping.

The ingredients are so carefully weighed as to suggest to the layman's eyes that they don't wish to give a grain more than absolutely necessary. This is a poor senryu because it says everything. Of course everything that can be said should be said, but there must be some unsayable things in reserve.

たった一歩で廓中ほれあるき

Tatta ichibu de kuruwa-jū horearuki

With only a shilling

He has fallen in love

With the whole Yoshiwara.

This, though not at a very high level, shows us the inordinate ambition of man, something that makes him alone human.

間違ひんしたとみばたは又座り

Machigain shita to miba wa mata suwari

"It was a mistake!"

The pock-marked courtesan

Sits down again.

In the Yoshiwara, the courtesans all waited in a row, the most attractive being "bought" first. The ugliest woman, with a pitted face, thought somebody wanted her, and rose eagerly, but it was not so, and she had to sit down again. The senryu writer does not pity her, any more than God does, but he is not indifferent to her feelings, otherwise he would not note down the facts of the case.

物申があつてひとまづ叱りやめ

Monomō ga atte hitomazu shikariyame

A visitor came,
 So the scolding stopped,
 And was put off for a while.

This seems a very interesting point, the way in which our emotions may be postponed and we can be angry according to the clock. In any case there is something wrong with the whole thing; the picture of people chatting together with one of the parties just burning inside is a most unpleasant one.

いま百年おそいと遠野首ばかり
 Ima hyakunen osoi to daruma kubi bakari

In another hundred years,
 Only Daruma's head
 Would have been left.

Daruma sat for nine long years gazing in meditation at the wall, and his legs are supposed to have fallen off. The senryu writer says, properly enough, that a hundred years of wall-gazing would have left him only his head.

二十九の暮れまで孔子ゐざりなり
 Nijuku no kure made kōshi izari nari

Confucius was a cripple,
 Until the end
 Of his twenty ninth year.

Confucius said, "At fifteen, I set my heart; at the age of thirty. I stood up", i.e. became independent, and so on. The senryu writer takes his words literally.

呉の國を眉をちぢめて傾ける
 Go no kuni wo mayu wo chijimete katamukeru

She ruins
 The country of Wu,
 By contracting her eyebrows.

Seishi, 西施, a most beautiful woman, looked even more beautiful when she frowned, or when drenched in the rain. King Fusa, her patron, was under her spell, and she caused his defeat by the King of Etsu.

洗濯屋近所の人の垢で食ひ
Sentaku ya kinjo no hito no aka de kui
The laundryman eats
By the dirt
Of his neighbours.

The soldier by their cowardice, the teacher by their ignorance, the priest by their superstition. (This is a rather modern verse.)

井戸堀は上り屋根屋は下りてくひ
Ido hori wa agari yaneya wa orite kui
The well-digger comes up
And the roofer comes down
To have a meal.

Most people just sit in the middle.

もてんとすべからずふられじとすべし
Moten to subekarazu furareji to subeshi
Do not try to be made much of,
But just be careful
Not to be rejected.

This is the oriental wisdom of life.

寝て讀んだ文真中で起きあがり
Nete yonda fumi mannaka de okiagari
Reading a letter lying down,
And suddenly, in the middle,
Getting up.

All the ambition and hope and despair and anger and passion in the world is expressed in this simple action. It is not in the least

degree necessary to know what was in the letter:

My hopes must no more change their name.

涙より外には智慧の出ぬ男
Namida yori hoka ni wa chie no denu otoko

A man

With no more wisdom
Than to shed tears.

The wisdom of senryu is to know that tears are folly, whether we lose some money, or a child, or a universe. We weep not *because* we don't know what to do, but *in order* to do nothing wise.

お悔みを座頭は鼻で泣いている
O kuyami wo zatō wa hana de naite iru

For condolence,
The blind man weeps
With his nose.

This has the uncruel cruelty of senryu.

通り抜け無用で通りぬけが知れ
Tōrinuke muyō de tōri nuke ga shire

As it says, "No throughfare!"
We know
We can pass.

This is the meaning also of the Decalogue, which tells us all the things we can do, and will do, and *should* do.

俗納所よくよく聞けば舅なり
Zokunassho yokuyoku kikeba shūto nari

The layman in charge of accounts,
I at last found out,
Is his father-in-law.

The person in charge of the financial matters of a temple should

not of course be a relative of the head priest, especially the father of his wife.

素人になったが最後其の吝さ

Shirōto ni natta ga saigo sono shiwasa

Once she became

A non-professional,

How mean she is!

A complete indifference to money, found in courtezans, priests, and children, is suspicious. It depends upon their special circumstances, and may easily change to the opposite.

下髪で二分おちますと質屋いひ

Sagegami de nibu ochimasu to shichiya ii

“Because of the long hair,

This will be two *bu* cheaper,”

Says the pawnbroker.

This senryu, like many old senryu, is almost a riddle. The ladies-in-waiting of daimyō or the imperial court wore their hair long, hanging down the back, and their kimono became slightly soiled. Evidently someone took to the pawnbroker the robes once worn by his mother or aunt who served in the castle.

生薬屋女衞の傍で五兩取り

Kigusuri ya zegen no waki de goryō tori

The druggist

Takes the five ryō

From the pander.

The father become ill; his daughter was sold to the Yoshiwara to buy the medicine. The net result: the father dies; the daughter is ruined; the pandar gets his percentage; the druggist make a profit; the poet writes his verse.

追っ駆けもせぬのに逃げる厭な下女

Okkake mo senu no ni nigeru iya na gejo

Nobody runs after her,
 But she runs away,—
 An odious maid-servant!

There is nothing more disagreeable than being accused of something which we have often done but which we didn't do on that particular occasion. So when the maid-servant says, "Don't do that!" and we were not going to anyway, we feel irritated beyond measure.

口から何か出るやうに嫁笑ひ
 Kuchi kara nani ka deru yō ni yome warai
 As though something
 Is coming out of her mouth,
 The bride laughs.

In her endeavours to laugh in a very lady-like way, she puts her hand to her mouth as she laughs convulsively, but only succeeds in giving the impression that she is vomiting.

梅干をこはごは漬ける安樂寺
 Umeboshi wo kowagowa tsukeru anrakuji
 They make pickled plums
 Timidly,
 At Anrakuji Temple.

This is the kind of senryu that requires a good deal of explanation, but is worth it, for it has the true humorous imagination of senryu, that which makes senryu unique in the world. Sugawara Michizane composed the following waka on his favourite plum-tree when he was exiled to Kyushu:

東風吹かば匂いおこせよ梅の花
 あるじなしとて春な忘れそ
 When the wind from the East
 Begins to blow, bloom and be fragrant!

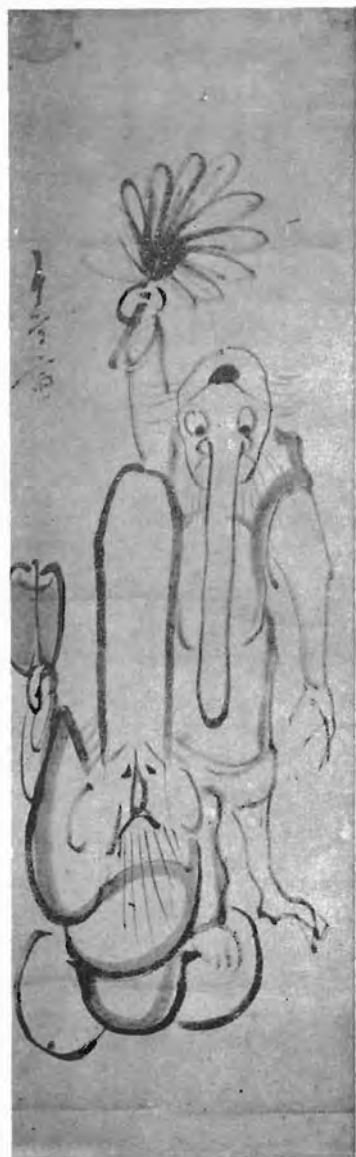


PLATE XX

A TENGU AND A GEHO

There are two kinds of teugu, the Great Tengu, 大天狗, and the Leaf Tengu, 葉天狗, or Crow Tengu, 烏天狗. People who are proud of their own ability are called tengu. The Great Tengu has a human figure and a red face, round and sharp eyes and a long nose, his most important characteristic. He has wings and a tail, and sometimes looks like a bird, and sometimes like a Yamabushi, a mountain monk, with a hood and a feather fan. The face of the Leaf Tengu, especially the mouth, looks like a bird.

A Gehō is a non-Buddhist. In this picture he has a head like Fukurokuju, 福祿壽, one of the Seven Gods of Good Luck, who usually has a bald, high skull.

The present picture was painted by Matsuya Jichōsai, 松屋耳鳥齋, who was good at comical pictures and toba-e. He died in 1793.

Both figures are holding fans, and the nose of the one harmonises well with the head of the other. We feel these two creatures to be more natural than we or any of the creatures in the zoo are, because they are more humorous.

O my plum-blossoms,
 Forget not the spring,
 Though your master be with you no more!

This senryu corresponds to Keats' excessive imagination in the fourth verse of the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*:

What little town by river or sea-shore,
 Or mountain built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?

The plum-tree followed Michizane to Anrakuji in Kyushu, so the priests were afraid of this uncanny tree.

どこへでも行き度いと言ふけちなつら

Doko e de mo yukitai to iu kechi na tsura

Not much of a face—
 One that is willing
 To go anywhere.

This is the short life-history of millions of women, past, present, and future. With a face and figure like that they must marry just anybody.

どうしたか娘いやみな醫者と言ひ

Dō shita ka musume iyami na isha to ii

What did he do?
 "The odious doctor!"
 Says the girl.

The *maeku*, 前句, the phrase placed before the verse, is:

さわりこそすれ, さわりこそすれ

He touched, he touched.

This may seem to be also an odious verse, and no doubt it is so, but the point is that human nature is an odious thing, and this odiousness, though it cannot be loved, must not be hated.

時々顔をちよびと見るほれたやつ

Tokidoki kao wo chobito miru horeta yatsu

He glances at her

Now and then,

In love with her.

Loving and looking are almost identical terms. Even when we look at those whom we (suppose that we) dislike, there is a masochistic pleasure in it, which shows there is some love mixed with all our hating.

ほれたとは女のやぶれかぶれなり

Horeta to wa onna no yabure kabure nari

To say, "I love you,"

Is for a woman

Self-abandonment.

This verse goes deep indeed into the nature of a woman, and still more reveals the difference between a man and a woman. Byron and Confucius, strange bedfellows, remind us that for woman, man is all there is, but for man there is still Heaven, that "knows" him.

遠くからくどくを見ればばかなもの

Tōku kara kudoku wo mireba baka na mono

Someone making love,—

Seen from a distance,

How infinitely silly!

Distance is said to lend enchantment to the view. This is so with nature, but with human beings they look what they really are, not the lords of creation but the slaves of circumstance.

いんぎんにされたでくどきこじれてる

Ingin ni sareta de kudoki kojireteru

Received so politely,

His love-making

Falls to pieces.

Love and politeness are in some ways opposites.

こゝろみにつめつてみれば無言なり
Kokoromi ni tsumette mireba mugon nari

He pinches her,
To see if . .
And she is silent.

This verse is also a vulgar one, and though human nature is vulgar, it may be urged that Shakespeare is not. In this sense senryu is something different from "literature." It has more truth and less art.

手をとると片手で櫛を深くさし
Te wo toru to katate de ku-hi wo fukaku sashi

When he holds her hand,
She pushes the comb deeper into her hair
With the other hand.

This action, so impossible for a man, shows the nature of a woman. We may say that she wishes to be beautiful and attractive even more than to be loved.

仲人へ不斷着で来てぞっとさせ
Nakōdo e fudangi de kite zotto sase

She comes to the go-between's house
In her everyday wear,
And alarms them.

The fact that she is not all dressed up shows that she must have rushed out of the house after a matrimonial quarrel.

水茶屋で見たよりどうか悪く見え
Mizuchaya de mita yori dō ka waruku mie

Somehow or other
She doesn't look so fine
As when I saw her in the tea-house.

There are several reasons for this: one is given in Emerson's *Each and All*:

The lover watched his graceful maid,
As 'mid the virgin train she strayed,
Nor knew her beauty's best attire
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.
At last she came to his hermitage
Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage;—
The gay enchantment was undone,
A gentle wife, but fairy none.

嫁の顔見い見いまきを一本引き
Yome no kao miimii maki wo ippo hiki
Looking at her daughter-in-law
She takes out
One of the pieces of firewood.

She does not say, "You are stupid, incompetent, and wasteful. You cannot even make a fire properly." She does not say, "I hate you." Silence is poison.

いぶすよりたきつけるのが憎いなり
Ibusu yori takitsukeru no ga nikui nari
The one who blows the coals
Is more hateful
Than the one who smokes.

The former is the sister-in-law, who enviously reports everything to the latter, the mother-in-law.

女房にいまいましてくもほれられる
Nyōbō ni imaimashiku mo horerareru
Loved
By my wife,—
Disgusting!

This is the attitude, in part pretended, of the average Japanese

husband.

あまりこびついて女房にやすくされ

Amari kobitsuite nyōbo ni yasuku sare

If you hang round
Your wife too much,
She will think little of you.

I am afraid this is a hundred percent true, of all times and places.

おいらも出ませうと女房いやみなり

Oira mo demashō to nyōbo iyami nari

I'll go out too!"
Says the wife,
Sarcastically.

Unfortunately she has nowhere to go, and it is difficult to imagine the creation of any place to which she would like to go,—such is the difference between men and women.

知り切っていてやすと女房知らぬなり

Shirikitte iyasu to nyōbo shiranu nari

"I know all about it!"
But actually
She doesn't know anything.

As Christ suggested, every man, in his heart at least, is guilty of every possible sin and crime, so we cannot make any mistake in pretending to know everything bad another person has done. Further, of course, it is the best possible technique for making a man confess to something.

奥様の御する中條までやらず

Okusama no gosui chūjō made yarazu

The mistress's guesswork
Stops her going
To the abortion doctor.

A maid-servant in a samurai house has become pregnant, and intends to go to a *chūjō*, who performs illegal operations. The watchful eye of the mistress sees her condition, and makes her bear.

人同じからず花見の仲間割れ
 Hito onaji karazu hanami no nakama-ware
 "Men are not the same,"
 And there was a split
 In the cherry-blossom-viewing party.

Some want to go to the Yoshiwara on the way back, some don't. Sung Chihwen, 宋之間 d. 710, wrote "Every year the flowers are the same; every year the men are different."

人は武士なぜ傾城にいやがられ
 Hito wa bushi naze keisei ni iyagarare
 The man is a warrior;
 How can he be disliked
 By a courtesan?

There was a saying:

花は櫻木、人は武士
 Of flowers, the cherry-blossoms,
 Of men, the warrior.

The senryu writer, obviously of the merchant class, says ironically that he cannot understand how any woman can refuse the flower of men.

猪牙に寝て夢は二階をかけ廻る
 Choki ni nete yume wa nikai wo kakemeguru
 Sleeping in the boat to the Yoshiwara,
 His dream runs
 About upstairs.

This is a parody of Bashō's death-verse:

旅に病んで夢は枯野をかけ廻る
 Tabi ni yande yume wa karenô wo kakemeguru

Ill on journey:
 My dream runs
 About the withered moor!

花でさへ廓のつとめは - 盛り
 Hana de sae kuruwa no tsutome wa hitozakari

Even the cherry-blossoms are so!
 Service in the Yoshiwara
 Is only during the blooming-time.

The comparison between nature and human beings is just; does it justify the Yoshiwara?

一思案ありと藪医者こはい事
 Hitoshian ari to yabuisha kowai koto

"I think I know what's wrong,"
 Says the quack doctor;
 How dangerous!

Just to give some coloured water is all right, but if he really tries to cure someone, there is no hope; the patient is a dead man.

辻番の布子は西に入り給ふ
 Tsujiban no nunoko wa nishi ni iritamou

The clothes
 Of the watchman
 Set in the west.

In Edo times the watchmen were old men who used to sit in the sunshine on winter days to keep warm. The sun is his clothes; they sink below the horizon.

能因は一つの陸を小半年
 Nōin wa hitotsu no uso wo kohantoshi

Nōin spent
 About half a year
 Over just one lie.

It is said that Priest Nōin, 能因, of Kosobe, 古曾部, composed the following waka:

都をは霞と共にたちしかど
秋風ぞ吹く白川の關

I started on a journey
From the capital
In the spring haze,
But now the autumn wind is blowing
At the Barrier of Shirakawa.

However, this verse was simply a feat of the imagination, so in order to make it appear a true waka of experience he shut himself up in his house for several months and then showed the poem to other people. The senryu writer, taking no notice of the poem, says that his lie was a pretty long one, several months long.

まだ干葉をかけたまゝある村の梅
Mada hiba wo kaketa mama aru mura no ume

With the dried vegetables
Hanging on it yet,
The plum-tree of the village.

Village people hang the leaves of turnips and such things on the branches during the winter to eat when wanted. Now the spring has come, and the plum-tree is blooming, but the yellow leaves of the vegetables still hang there. Nature has four seasons, but also only one season.

不二山をかくすばかりが春の瑕
Fujisan wo kakusu bakari ga haru no kizu

The only fault
Of spring,—
It hides Mount Fuji.

Japanese people never criticise nature,—except occasionally in senryu.

春の宵女房が瑕をつけはじめ
 Haru no yoi nyōbo ga kizu wo tsukehajime

A spring evening!
 But the wife
 Begins to spoil it.

This is the most devastating criticism ever made of women. Though they are so natural, so much a part of nature, they always spoil it. The only exception is Dorothy Wordsworth, but she was both more and less than a woman.

そら寝人へんな所を蚤がくひ
 Soraneiri hen na tokoro wo nomi ga kui

Pretending to be asleep,—
 But the flea bites
 An awkward place.

Instead of explaining where the place is, I also will pretend to be asleep.

身を投げた上を屋形で三下り
 Mi wo nageta ue wo yakata de sansagari

There they sit in the boat,
 Floating over a suicide's watery grave,
 Playing the samisen romance.

So the angels in heaven play on their harps while we groan on the battlefields or in hospital beds.

十番に七八番は僧が出て
 Jūban ni shichi-hachiban wa sō ga dete

In seven or eight plays
 Out of ten,
 A priest appears.

It is a fact. Nō plays seem very fond of priests, and they appear more often and even more prominently than they did in real life.

且つ以て急ぐと見えぬ能舞臺

Katsu motte isegu to mienu nō-butai

On the Nō stage:

He says he's in a hurry,—

But he seems far from it.

The actor says he is rushing along, but in actual fact he moves about as rapidly as a snail.

忘れずば名も響くまじ鐘の内

Wasurezuba na mo hibikumaji kane no uchi

If it had not been "forgotten,"

His name would have been,

The one within the temple bell.

Hōshō Yakurō, 寶生彌九郎, once played the part of Shirabyōshi, 白拍子, (the dancing girl) in *Dōjōji*. He entered the bell, to change into a devil. From someone's jealousy, the mask of the devil was not put in readiness there. But he had to appear as a devil, so he bit his finger, made up as a devil with his own blood, and jumped out with such furious looks as struck the audience with terror.

大悲の矢五百本程掛値あり

Daihi no ya gohyappon hodo kakene ari

The Great Mercy

Is overcharged

To the extent of five hundred arrows.

This is about the Nō play *Tamura*, 田村. Tamuramaru, 田村丸, subjugated the devils by the help of the Avalokitesvara of a thousand arms. The utai says, "Look, how strange! Over the flags of our arms flies Avalokitesvara of a thousand arms emitting light, holding a thousand bows of great mercy in a thousand hands, and when the arrows of wisdom are shot, a thousand arrows fall upon the devils like rain and hail . . ." But as it needs two hands to shoot an arrow, one for the bow and one for the arrow, if Avalokitesvara had

a thousand hands, only five hundred arrows could have been shot at once.

百兩は消え易いがあばたは消えぬ

Hyakuryō wa kieyasui ga abata wa kienu

The hundred ryō
Easily disappear;
Not so the pockmarks.

The money of the dowry melts like frost on the tiles, but the pockmarks of the bride are there for good.

隣から借りよと貧家のなれなれし

Tonari kara kari yo to hinka no narenareshi

“Oh, let’s borrow from next door!”

The poor families
Are familiar.

This comes from the Nō play *Hagoromo*,

迦陵頻伽のなれなれしく

Karyōbinga no narenare shiku

The kalavinky (the musical birds in paradise) are familiar and friendly.

This is a kind of pun:

Karyōbinka no narenare shi,

and:

Kari yo to hinka no narenare shi.

とりも鳴け鐘もなれなれふられた夜

Tori mo nake kane mo nare nare furareta yo

“O birds, sing as you will,
And you, O bell, ring and toll!”
The night he was refused.

This comes from the Nō play *Kayoi Komachi*, 通小町:

曉は數々多き思ひ哉。我爲ならば鳥もよしなけ鐘も只なれ夜も明け
 よただ一人寝ならばつらからじ。

Dawn makes us feel many things, but as for me, it is all one
 even if the birds begin to sing, or the bell toll, or the day break.
 It is not grievous to me, for I sleep alone.

Here, the senryu parodies the words of Fukakusa no Shōshō into
 those of a poor customer whose courtesan did not come to him all
 night.

倉も隣のだと仲人しめられる
 Kura mo tonari no da to nakōdo shimerareru
 “And also the warehouse
 Was next door’s!”
 The go-between is blamed.

The go-between did not perhaps actually say that the warehouse
 belonged to the girl’s parents, but he let them think so when they
 made a mistake.

嫁の禮男の見るは顔ばかり
 Yome no rei otoko no miru wa kao bakari
 The greeting visit of the bride:
 Men look only
 At her face.

When a bride comes, she must pay a formal visit to the neigh-
 bours after several days. Men are only interested in her face, but
 women examine her clothes, manners, appearance, and all the smallest
 details.

嫁の供下女はいつぱし見られる氣
 Yome no tomo gejo wa ippashi mirareru ki
 Attending the bride,
 The maid-servant
 Feels herself also to be looked at.

It is hardly worth noting, and yet so universal and so odd, our



不書古法眼元信筆

阿都司防身正長寫

元文卷二丁巳冬日從高指獨

THE HAIR-CUTTER

阿本
都書古
元局法
文防眼
第守眼
二正元
丁長信
巴寫筆
冬
日

The Kamikiri, the Hair-Cutter, is the monster that comes on the last page of the *Yōkaizukanshō*, 妖怪圖巻抄, "Scroll-Picture of Goblins." It is a copy by Sa Sūshi Sawaki Sūshi, 1707-1772, a painter of Edo, a disciple of Hanabusa Itchō, from Kohōgan Motonobu, who lived in the Ashikaga Period, 1336-1573. At the end it says, "This book was written by Kohōgan Motonobu and copied by Lord Abe Masanaga in the winter of the second year of Genbun, 1736. Copied (again) by Sa Sūshi." The style of the present book looks different from that of the Ashikaga Period, so the copy must be rather changed. Like the gods of all the religions, these creatures must owe their (imaginatively created) existence to various perversions, delinquencies, and stupidities of human beings. The creature in the illustration looks somehow vindictive and jealous, and are not spitefulness and envy comical things? There was also an Amikiri, 網剪, who, when no one was about, cut the mosquito nets and fishing nets hung out to dry.

Other more or less humorous monsters include: *Maikubi*, 舞首, heads of dead people who died fighting and still fight each other, as heads only, in the sea; *Tenjoname*, a monster who licks the ceilings of old houses and shrines and leaves marks on them; *Fukeshibaba*, ふつけし婆, an old hag who blows out lanterns when there is no wind; *Warai-Onna*, 笑女, a woman with a hideous face who towers over fences and laughs and laughs; *Kamimai*, 紙舞, a demon which in October makes papers fly up in the air one by one; *Tenome*, 手の目, the spirit of a dead blind man that appears, with eyes in his hands, to see if it is his enemy walking by; *Kamburi-nyūdo*, 加牟波理入道, a priest who hovers about the lavatory in the form of a bird.

佐
高
指
寫

天井菅, a
Fukeshibaba,
笑女,
demon
dead blind
nyūdo,

inability to realise that nobody is taking the slightest notice of us when we are accompanying a famous or notorious person.

蚊に食はれおきつ白波ちく生め

Ka ni kuware okitsu shiranami chikushōme

Eaten by mosquitoes—

“The waves in the offing—”

Oh, blast them!

To understand this senryu we must know the story on which the second line is based. In the *Ise Monogatari* we are told that Ariwara no Narihira, the 9th century Don Juan of Japan, used to visit a mistress of his every night, but his wife did not look jealous at all. Suspecting that his wife might have a secret lover, he pretended to go off, but hid himself in the garden to see what would happen. However, his wife was thinking only of him, and composed and sang the following waka:

風吹けば沖つ白波立田山

夜半にや君が一人こゆらん

The wind blowing,

The waves will be high

In the offing of Mount Tatsuta,

Where my darling

Will cross alone at midnight.

He was moved by her love and faithfulness, and felt ashamed of himself. The senryu writer, as so often, adds material omitted by the waka. The third line refers to the mosquitoes that pestered him while hiding in the garden.

能登どののはのみを逃した顔つき

Noto dono wa nomi wo nigashita kaotttsuki

Lord Noto looks

As though he had let

A flea escape.

At the final battle between the Genji and the Heike, on the shore of Dannoura, Noto no Kami Noritsune jumped into Yoshitsune's boat, but the latter ran away, jumping from one boat to another, eight in all. The senryu version of history is exactly in the spirit of Gilbert Abbott A Beckett's *The Comic History of England*, illustrated by John Leech.

けん好はあのつらでかとなぐり書き

Kenkō wa ano tsura de ka to nagurigaki

"With a face like that?"

And Kenkō

Scribbles it off.

In the *Chushingura* we are told that a retainer, Kō no Moronao, 高師直, fell in love with the wife of Enyahangan Takasada, and asked Kenkō, the author of the *Tsurezuregusa*, to write a love-letter for him. But the lady threw it away without reading it. Moronao was angry and said, "What a useless thing indeed is handwriting! From now let Priest Kenkō keep his distance!" The story is found in the *Taiheiki*. Here the senryu writer supposes that as Moronao was an old and ugly man Kenkō could not write a love-letter with sincerity.

生酔の突き當る度花は散り

Namayoi no tsukiataru tabi hana wa chiri

When the half-tipsy man

Bumps against someone,

Cherry-blossoms scatter.

His clothes are covered with the petals of the flowers. This verse goes some little way towards reconciling us to drunkenness.

歌を詠む女房に油斷すべからず

Uta wo yomu nyōbo ni yudan subekarazu

You should not

Relax your attention

To a wife who composes poetry.

This summarises the Chinese story on page 107, and may indeed have actually come from it.

生酔は家に歸るを恩にきせ
Namayoi wa ie ni kaeru wo on ni kise

The half-tipsy man
Makes coming back home
A favour.

Not only coming back home but everything else the drunken man does is done out of his kindness. This must have some deep cosmic meaning. The way in which each drunken man becomes a god conferring favours on others points to a reality in which each of us is the creator of the whole universe.

CHAPTER XXIII

Modern Senryu

Yanagidaru came to its untimely end in 1837 with the 167th volume, but after a short time the permanent value of senryu was strongly perceived and asserted by Inoue Kenkabō, 剣花坊, Sakai Kuraki, 阪井久良伎, and Nishida Tōhyaku, 西田當百. In particular Kenkabō showed in his own senryu the mordant wit and sad cynicism of old senryu. For example:

こわごわに鏡の中の老を見る
Kowagowa ni kagami no naka no oi wo miru

I look into the mirror
At my old age,
With trepidation.

Since their time, and still more since the war, senryu has become more poetical, more like haiku, often indistinguishable from it, but senryu must attack, it must resist, however mildly, the folly of nature no less than that of men. The following are some examples of modern senryu, but they will be seen to be inferior in power, though more tender-hearted, compared to old senryu.

元旦の道の廣さを犬遊び
Gantan no michi no hirosa wo inu asobi

磯松

The dogs play
In the wide road
Of New Year's Day.

Isomatsu

This is a very poetical senryu. No cars or trucks pass; the road is safe; dogs are playing on it; we see for the first time the potential *width* of the road of life.

元旦の夜をひろびろと風が吹き

三笠

Gantan no yo wo hirobiro to kaze ga fuki

New Year's Eve;

Wide and free

Blows the wind.

Mikasa

This is another poetical verse, indistinguishable from haiku in its animism. Human beings are in their homes, the wind is outside in the world of wind.

戀に似た氣の春なれや蝶を追ふ

鈴ン坊

Koi ni nita ki no haru nare ya chō wo ou

It is spring;

I run after a butterfly,

As if in love.

Amembō

Running after a woman, running after a butterfly, both are equally foolish and fruitless, but equally natural and proper.

息をするらしい蝶々の立てた翅

山雨樓

Iki wo suru rashii chōcho no tateta hane

It seems as if breathing,—

The wings of the butterfly

As it stands there!

Sanurō

The little creature looks as if panting and trembling with life; perhaps it is.

吊つた粽鼠手段を變へて来る

無鐵砲

Tsutta chimaki nezumi shudan wo kaete kuru

The *chimaki* cakes

Are hung from the ceiling;

But the rats change their tactics.

Muteppō

Chimaki are rice-dumplings wrapped in bamboo leaves, to be eaten on the day of the Boys' Festival. The rats, like nature itself, are infinitely persistent.

弟を泣かしてばかり夏休み 長人
 Otōto wo nakashitebakari natsu-yasumi

Only making
 His younger brother cry:
 The summer vacation. Nagato

We enjoy this verse as sadistically and masochistically as the two brothers.

日永さは火鉢に埋めた火が亡び 濁水
 Hinagasa wa hibachi ni umeta hi ga horobi

A long day:
 The fire in the brazier
 Ceased to be. Dokusui

This is a very poetical senryu, as poetical as any haiku, perhaps more so.

搔くに手の届かぬところを蚤は擇り 可番
 Kaku ni te no todokanu toko wo nomi wa yori

The flea
 Chooses just the place
 We can't reach to scratch. Kaban

The mind here is nicely poised between the truth and the superstition of this statement.

踊子のおんなじに踏む水溜 水府
 Odoriko no onnaji ni fumu mizutamari

The dancers of the Bon Festival dance
 Tread one by one
 In the same puddle. Suifu

There is something human, or rather, something animal about the way in which they go round and round in a circle, each treading inevitably, inescapably in the puddle. There is no time to stop and fill it up.

栗 今 日 も 前 歯 の 強 い 人 に 會 い
Kuri kyō mo maeba no tsuyoi hito ni ai

露斗

The chestnuts today also

Met someone

With strong front teeth.

Roto

The virtue of this verse is the animism of it. This is the true democracy, of poetry.

夜 の 長 い 事 は 母 か ら 口 を 切 り
Yo no nagai koto wa haha kara kuchi wo kiri

水府

Mother begins

To speak about

The length of the night.

Suifu

This is the pathos of senryu,—but is there not also something contemptible about this whining of the old woman?

番 頭 の 欠 伸 へ 秋 の 風 が 來 る
Bantō no akubi e aki no kaze ga kuru

二品坊

The autumn wind comes

To the yawning

Of the chief shopman.

Nihimbō

Truth, the poetry of things, comes to us at every moment.:

Think you, of all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

But the shopman has not “a heart that watches and receives”.

十 月 の 梢 を 残 す 風 の 果
Jūgatsu no kozue wo nokosu kaze no hate

晶二

The end of the wind

Leaves the tree-tops

Of October.

Shōji

This is haiku, but it has the subdued, intangibly faint tragic feeling of senryu.

行く秋の音をからんで朝の杭 鈍腸
Yuku aki no oto wo karande asa no kui

The driving in a stake of morning.
With the sound
Of leaving autumn.

Donchō

The author of this senryu may have been reading Buson:

朝霧や杭打音丁々たり
Asagiri ya kuize utsu oto chō-chō-tari

In the morning mist
The sound of driving in a stake,—
Smack! Smack!

The odd thing is that the senryu is more haiku-like than Buson's (summer) haiku.

手に取れば花の小さしそれも秋 天邪鬼
Te ni toreba hana no chiisashi sore mo aki

When I take it up,
Its flower is small;
That also is autumn.

Amanojaku

The senryu quality lies in the "also".

佛像へ冷えてく秋の薄暗さ 多
Butsuzō e hieteku aki no usu-gurasa

To the Buddhist statues,
The dusk of autumn
That is getting chillier.

Shimeta

The increasing cold and darkness are now entering into their proper abode. This verse is haiku, not senryu.

冬の蠅追えば追はれた方へ逃げ 女神丸
Fuyu no hae oeba owareta hō e nige

The fly of winter
Runs away
To where it was driven away. Joshingan

The summer fly had plenty of energy and made itself a nuisance by returning mulishly to the place it was driven away from, but the winter fly is a poor spiritless thing that goes wherever it is driven.

冬の蠅障子へ弱く突き當り 閃火
Fuyu no hae shōji e yowaku tsukiataru

The fly of winter
Hits against the paper-sliding-door
Weakly. Senka

How wonderfully sensitive the human mind is, that it can "hear" a quarter of the year in the degree of force with which a fly strikes against a piece of tightly stretched thin paper!

眼ばかりぱっちり冬の子は抱かれ 館ン坊
Me bakari patchiri fuyu no ko wa dakare

A child of winter
Held in the arms,
The eyes only wide open. Amembō

The child feels the meaning, the danger of winter. It does not speak, but the eyes are opened widely, as though on guard against the cruelty of nature.

吾が妻に會って巡査は下を向き 小槌
Waga tsuma ni atte junsu wa shita wo muki

The policeman drops his eyes
When he meets
His wife. Kozuchi

This seems somehow interesting and mysterious. There is something inexplicably human in the way that the policeman looks down or looks away when his wife comes by. Is he ashamed of himself

for being a policeman? Is he ashamed of being a husband? Is he ashamed of being seen by somebody? Is he, strangest thought of all, ashamed of being ashamed?

落し物巡査委しう聞いただけ
Otoshimono junsu kuwashū kiita dake

樂人

Something lost:

The policeman asked about it in detail,
And that was all.

Gakujin

This is a parable. We ask about life and death, the soul, immortality, God, the meaning of the universe; we ask minutely; and that is all.

小使は性に合ってるやうに居る
Kozukai wa shō ni atteru yō ni iru

正次

The school-servant seems
As if he was born
To be so.

Shōji

And it is true. Each man is born to be what he is and looks. No one can escape from himself. All change is impossible, at best illusory.

仰向けにしてから床屋研いでゐる
Aomuke ni shitekara tokoya toide iru

五風

Making the customer lie there
Ready to be shaved,

The barber begins to sharpen the razor.

Gofū

Even Caesar or Napoleon or Hitler would hardly have the initiative to sit up, and wait for him to finish sharpening the razor.

氣がむいたらしく床屋は念を入れ
Ki ga muita rashiku tokoya wa nen wo ire

微笑

It seems that the barber
Feels like it,
He does it so carefully.

Bishō

Sometimes the barber is in a good mood, and we benefit by it in our feelings, and in our appearance too. Thus is man dependent upon the meanest of his fellows.

蛤の夢三角の旗を樹て 三太郎
 Hamaguri no yume sankaku no hata wo tate
 The dream of a shell-fish:
 Triangular flags
 Stand here and there. Santarō

I don't know enough of animal psychology to tell whether oysters and mussels and so on have Freudian dreams, but if they do, the dreams must be of sea-shore scenes, in which the small flags mark safe and dangerous and ice-cream places.

紙屑屋賣るには惜しい襦衣を着る 天津郎
 Kamikuzu ya uru niwa oshii shatsu wo kiru
 The rag-picker
 Wears a shirt
 Too good to sell. Amatsuotoko

Only a little too good. This is a wonderful example of the feudalism which exists universally even among material things. How then indeed are socialism and liberty and fraternity and equality possible?

假橋を電車澁々渡るなり 浅峰
 Karibashi wo densha shibushibu wataru nari
 The tram-car crosses
 The temporary bridge
 Unwillingly. Sempō

This is the poetry of senryu, an animism which is scorned and for that very reason more effective than the serious pretence of the ordinary poet.

自動車は幽屏といふ気味で閉め 雲雀
 Jidōsha wa yūhei to iu kimi de shime

The door of the motor-car
Is shut as though
Incarcerating someone. Hibari

The sound and movement of a prison door and the door of an automobile are almost exactly the same. We feel that the occupants are shut up as if in a tin can.

土鼠獨りで骨を折って死に 打流喜
Moguramochi hitori de hone wo otte shini

The mole
Dies by itself,
After all its utmost efforts. Taruki

God is supposed to know when a sparrow falls to the ground. Does he know when a mole dies under it? Does he shed an infinitely small tear when the mole breathes his last breath? Did Christ die also for moles? The mole tries to live for ever, and fails; is this also God's failure?

洋食の何でも彼でも丸い皿 十五夜
Yōshoku no nandemo kademo marui sara

A European meal;
Every blessed plate and dish
Is round. Jūgoya

Why are there no square or triangular or oblong dishes? I think the senryu writer has scored a point here.

怠け者大きい所があるにされ 剣花坊
Namakemono ōkii toko ga aru ni sare

Just idle people
Are made into
Great men. Kenkabō

People say that Bashō and Wordsworth and Kanzan and Ryōkan, who never did a day's work in their lives, are great men who saw

into the nature of things, and did not work for fame or money.
They were only a lot of lazy bounders, says the senryu writer, whom
other lazy bounders envy.

洋行は判ったものを見て歸り 十五夜
Yōkō wa wakatta mono wo mite kaeri

He returns from abroad,
Having seen
All he understands. Jūgoya

This is simple, but penetratingly so.

今添はせては小説にならぬなり 七九
Ima sowasete wa shōsetsu ni naranu nari

If he made them
Marry now,
It wouldn't be a story. Shichiku

Perhaps what novelists and dramatists always do is the explanation
of all the protractedly dreadful things that happen in the universe.
God wants a story.

教會を救はれてゐる顔は出ず 雉子郎
Kyōkai wo sukuwarete iru kao wa dezu

No saved face
Came out
Of the church. Kijirō

Thoreau says the same thing, but is speaking about what happens
a few hours earlier:

I see that atheists assemble at the ringing of a bell.

九谷焼ほどには嫁をいたわらず 愛影子
Kutaniyaki hodo ni wa yome wo itawarazu

They do not treat their daughter-in-law
As gently
As they do the *kutani*. Aikyōshi

Kutaniyaki is a kind of pottery made in the Kanazawa district. It is rather elaborate and ornamental.

相見ては笑ふが戀のはじめなり 啞蟬坊
Ai mite wa warau ga koi no hajime nari

Looking at each other,
And laughing,
Is the beginning of love. Azembō

Laughing here is the sudden electrical excitement of two souls in (supposed and temporary) communication with each other.

他所行の聲で牧師が祈禱なり 三日坊
Yosoyuki no koe de bokushi ga kitō nari

The pastor prays,
With his best
Sunday-go-to-meeting voice. Mikkabō

Surely even God is more likely to answer prayers prayed in a charming and musical voice,—other things being equal of course.

アメンと言って横をじろじろ見 モモコ
Aamen to itte yoko wo jirojiro mi

Saying "Aaamen!"
He stares round
At the people next to him. Momoko

It is obvious, but difficult to explain why, that the "amen" excuses—almost justifies—looking at the woman in the next pew.

社會主義人の寶が欲しいやつ 宮坊
Shakaishugi hito no takara ga hoshii yatsu

A socialist
Is a chap who wants
The wealth of others. Miyabō

A capitalist is a man who has it already. The only difference

between these two immoral and greedy people is that one is not so clever as the other.

雨宿り是れ幸いと牧師説き 啞卒棒
Amayadori kore saiwai to bokushi toki

Sheltering from the rain;
Taking advantage of it,
A clergyman preaches. Akambō

This is adding insult to injury.

女先生おならするとも思はれず 佐久良
Josensei onara suru tomo omowarezu

The lady teacher
Does not look as though
She would ever fart. Sakura

Statues of Buddha and Christ also do not.

田舎では買手の方が歎願し 顚臺師
Inaka dewa kaite no hō ga tauganshi

In the country,
Those who buy,
Supplicate. Tendaishi

In the country, especially thirty years ago. the person with a shop had the goods, which were far more important than the corresponding money.

くたばる程どやした蚊がそっと逃げ 山猿
Kutabaru hodo doyashita ka ga sotto nige

The mosquito,
Smashed flat,
Flew off lightly. Yamazaru

It is such things that make us modest and bland.

俺に似よおれににるなと子をおひ 路郎

Ore ni niyo ore ni niru na to ko wo omoi

"Be like me!

Be not like me!"

Thoughts for the child.

Michirō

When we read this modern senryu we realise that human beings are becoming more human, or rather that they are becoming more conscious of their humanity.

誤診した醫者眞っ直ぐに夜を歩き 珍竹林

Goshin shira isha massugu ni yo wo aruki

The doctor who has made a wrong diagnosis,

Walking straight along the road

Through the night.

Chinchikurin

This is very subtle. The straightness of his walking contrasts with the crookedness of his judgement, and one is the cause of the other. The night too is symbolic.

馬鹿な子はやれずかしこい子はやれず 夢路

Baka na ko wa yarezu kashikoi ko wa yarezu

I cannot give away

The stupid child,

Nor the clever one.

Yumeji

This is more tragic than it looks. Think it over.

日向から日向へ遊戯移り行き 五花村

Hinata kara hinata e yūgi utsuri yuki

Their play

Moves

From one sunny place to another. Gokason

Children playing in winter are like men living in the universe.

草を喰ふ馬の口にもあるリズム 五花村

Kusa wo kuu uma no kuchi ni mo aru rizumu

Also in the mouth of the horse
Eating grass
There is a rhythm.

Gokason

It is love that moves also the other jaws.

蟲けらはやはり自分の世と思ひ
Mushikera wa yahari jibun no yo to omoi

濤明

Insects too
Think that this world
Is theirs alone.

Tōmei

Christians and Buddhists have yet to understand this simple verse.

四十とも五十とも見え羊飼
Sijū tomo gojū tomo mie hitsujikai

睡花

The shepherd
Looks forty,
And also looks fifty.

Suika

Especially in the case of people who live in the open air, their age seems to vary with the occasion.

長命の相ある男門を掃き
Chōmei no sō aru otoko mon wo haki

紋太

A man with the physiognomy
Of a long life
Sweeps at the gate.

Monta

I don't know what exactly the man looks like, but he is a man who sweeps the front of the gate as though he has no strains and stresses to cause illnesses of any kind.

書置きに義兄の恥が書いて無し
Kakioki ni gikei no haji ga kaite nashi

紋太

In her last note
Nothing is said
About the shameful brother-in-law.

Monta

This is a short story in three lines, and also the unaccusing, unsadistic, unvengeful character of the Japanese woman.

むかしむかし 万年筆を嬉しがり 嶺月
Mukashi mukashi mannenhitsu wo ureshigari

Long, long ago,
How delighted I was
To have a fountain pen! Reigetsu

The universe, after all, is only a fountain-pen for the naive person.

バイブルの嘘へ牧師は嘘を足し 若蛙
Baiburu no uso e bokushi wa uso wo tashi

To the lies of the Bible
The pastor
Adds some more. Jakua

Expressed more universally, to the illusions of nature are added the delusions of men.

同級は嫉み他級は驚異の目 若蛙
Dōkyū wa netami takyū wa kyōi no me

Those of his own class,
Full of envy;
Those of others, astonishment. Jakua

This is true of every person, every class, every country, every age.

交叉點自分に邪魔な人ばかり 若蛙
Kōsaten jibun ni jama na hito bakari

At the street-crossing,
All the other people
Get in my way. Jakua

All of them, each one. Everything is or can be or should be useful, as Zen teaches us, but at the same time, at exactly the same time, it is an obstacle.

がま蛙蹴飛ばされるが腑に落ちず 山門
 Gamagaeru ketobasareru ga fu ni ochizu
 The toad cannot understand
 Why he must be given
 A kick! Sammon

Nor can any man, but the universe is a kick-and-be-kicked universe.

起きられる丈けは起きてる子供の眼 ○丸
 Okirareru dake wa okiteru kodomo no me
 The child who stays up
 As long as he possibly can,—
 His eyes! Reigan

For children, to go to bed is to go to the dark, to death, to Hell.
 Their eyes linger in Paradise.

夕刊を賣る子の聲に錆がつき 山雨樓
 Yūkan wo uru ko no koe ni sabi ga tsuki
 The boy selling evening papers:
 His voice
 Has got some experience in it. Sanurō

Thoreau tells us that all art is at length swallowed up in nature.
 This is true, but so, as usual, is the reverse.

年賀狀小さな借りを思ひ出し 雀郎
 Nengajō chiisana kari wo omoi dashi
 The New Year Greeting card;
 It reminds me
 I owe him a small sum of money. Jakurō

However small, it is enough to spoil the relation. And there cannot be a completely moneyless relation between two people, and therefore

天の川浮浪者眠むるより知らず みのる
 Amanogawa furōsha nemuru yori shirazu

The glorious Galaxy!
The vagabond
Knows only to sleep.

Minoru

That is true, but what would the Milky Way be without the
ragged dirty tramp beneath it?

元日をひとり汚れて膝の猫
Ganjitsu wo hitori yogorete hiza no neko

雀郎

New Year's Day;
The only dirty thing,
The cat on my lap.

Jakurō

It is New Year's Day, as the poet knows, the first day of the
year, when all things are reborn. It is just another day, as the cat
knows, with nothing special about it.

落葉焚屋根から風がころげ落ち
Ochibataki yane kara kaze ga korogochi

〇丸

A fire of fallen leaves;
The wind comes rolling down
From the roof.

Reigan

The only thing which suggests that this is senryu, not haiku, is
the most expressive words "roll down".

専門がいて物識りは恥をかき
Semmon ga ite monoshiri wa haji wo kaki

甲吉

A specialist was there,
And the knowing man
Disgraced himself.

Kōkichi

I remember this well, being of course the knowing man.

責任のように鶏生み続け
Sekinin no yō ni niwatori umi tsuzuke

朝丸

As if it were her duty,
The hen keeps laying
Eggs, and more eggs.

Asamaru

This is an exceedingly interesting senryu, for it raises the religious problem whether hens lay eggs for themselves or for us. The senryu writer is here on the Christian, occidental side; no hen could work so hard for herself; there must be some altruism here surely!

聖書にもピカドンゆるす讀みがあり 仰天
Seisho ni mo pikadon yurusu yomi ga ari
The Bible

Can be read in such a way
As to permit the atomic bomb. Gyōten

The Japanese word is *pikadon*, *pika* being the flash and *don* the sound which comes together with it. The Japanese people have realised what many Europeans knew long ago, that the Bible is an old violin on which any tune may be played.

急停車車掌もわけがのみこめず 三碧
Kyūteisha shashō mo wake ga nomikomezu

A sudden stop:
The conductor also
Cannot make out what for. Sampeki

Is this a parable of our life on this world?

立ち話見劣りのする方が妻 正一
Tachibanashi miotori no suru hō ga tsuma

Standing chatting together,
The inferior-looking one
Is my wife. Shōichi

It is always so.

のら猫に残してやって孤獨な日 喜美江
Noraneko ni nokoshite yatte kodoku na hi

I left something over
For a stray cat:
A lonesome day. Kimie

Just as "gratitude leaves us mourning," so our good deeds in this naughty world make us feel miserable. We realise the microscopic uselessness of anything we can do.

少年と駆けるたのしくてならぬ犬 健
Shōnen to kakeru tanoshikute naranu inu

A dog,
Running with a boy,—
The extreme of joy! Ken

There is nothing more happy in the universe than a dog running with a boy,—the dog, not the boy. It makes the observer feel like weeping.

ふっとばされまいと盲ひ達手をつなぎ 香歩
Futtobasare mai to meshiitachi te wo tsunagi

Blind people,
Hand in hand,
So as not to be blown away. Kōho

Another parable.

盲ひ達悲劇のなかを微笑して 香歩
Meshiitachi higeki no naka wo bishō shite

Blind people
Smile
Through their tragedy. Kōho

But we cannot, and must not.

盲ひ達かくす涙は拭ひ合ひ 香歩
Meshiitachi kakusu namida wa nugui-ai

Blind people
Wipe away one another's
Secret tears. Kōho

Only the blind know what blindness is. Only the blind may

pity each other. We just stop thinking and feeling when we see them.

死を怖れながらよその死驚かず 烏有郎
Shi wo osore nagara yoso no shi edorokazu

Afraid of death,
But not surprised
At that of others. Uyūrō

“Not surprised” means “not unpleasantly surprised.”

字が下手な方がよろしいプラカード 聴夢
Ji ga heta na hō ga yoroshii purakādo

A badly written
Placard
Is better. Sōmu

Why? It is once more the touch of nature (not art) that makes all things kin.

阿呆にも解るクイズを出す阿呆 三窓
Ahō ni mo waku kuizu wo dasu ahō

A fool
Who sends a quiz
That any fool could solve. Sansō

There is something terribly depressing in this, as with pen-friends, and practical jokes, and beauty parlours, and beauty contests, and adding machines, and democracy.

ぬいた齒のあとなつかしく舌が行く 爪人
Nuita ha no ato natsukashiku shita ga yuku

The tongue yearns
For the pulled-out tooth,
Going there so often. Tsumeto

This is not a fact of cosmic importance,—or is it?

まだ歩かすのかと駱駝起き上り 句沙彌
 Mada arukasu no ka to rakuda okiagari

“You want me
 To walk more?”
 And the camel gets up. Kushami

This verse expresses the camel's camelity, a certain dignified unwillingness.

桐一葉財布のことも考える 小鹿
 Kiri hitoha saifu no koto mo kangaeru

The leaf of a paulownia falls:
 I am reminded
 Of my purse. Kojika

This the poetry of Thoreau, the power to connect disparate things, or rather, to see the fall of a leaf and the lightness of a purse as two aspects of one cosmic power.

叱られている背をそっと誰か抜け 笑洞
 Shikararete iru se wo sotto dareka nuke

Behind the one being scolded,
 Someone passes
 Delicately. Shōdō

The psychology of this is easy to understand but difficult to explain. It is not so much that we fear to be scolded ourselves as that the normal world and the scolding world are two different places that suddenly come tangentially together.

辻褄を合わす話に念が入り 多華思
 Tsujitsuma wo awasu hanashi ni nen ga iri

The speech which gives
 A show of truth
 We speak with great care. Takashi

Truth is spoken carelessly, from the unconscious rather than the conscious. Even with self-deception there is some hesitation. Of

course we except politicians and clergymen, who are professional liars.

何もかも悟ったやうに坊主死に 幸若
Nani mo ka mo sattota yō ni bōzu shini

The priest died
Just as if he had understood
Everything in the world. Kōjaku

But did he not understand that there is nothing to understand?

落書を讀むや春日長閑なり 昌坊
Rakugaki wo yomu ya shunjitsu nodoka nari

A long spring day;
He is reading
The scribblings on the wall. Masabō

Is this a parable of every scholar, every diligent reader's life?

大臣も馬鹿さと笑ふたき火の輪 昌坊
Daijin mo baka sa to warau takibi no wa

"Statesmen also are fools,"
Laugh the people
Round the bonfire. Masabō

If they really understood the meaning of "also" they would hardly laugh.

ハテ誰の忘れものかと煽いでみ 梵鐘
Hate dare no wasuremono ka to aoide mi

Saying,
"Well, who forgot this?"
He fans himself. Bonshō

Just as stolen apples are sweetest, so picked-up fans are coolest.

不繚綴の方へ初めは親しくし 方丈
Bukiryō no hō e hajime wa shitashiku shi

First of all
 A man becomes intimate
 With an ugly woman. Hōjō

This seems to me profound. First love is always romantic and imaginative, indeed blind. With age a man becomes more discriminating, not to say calculating. Further, not so pretty women are more on the look-out for unsophisticated young men, who are more accessible, more vulnerable.

子猫ぞろぞろみな宿命の顔かたち 生々庵
 Koneko zoro zoro mina shukumei no kao katachi

Little cats
 Trailing along,
 Each with its face of fate. Seiseian

This "face of fate" is the peculiarity of cats.

名物を味氣なく食ふ一人旅 正壽
 Meibutsu wo ajikenaku kû hitori tabi

On a journey by himself,
 Eating the special products
 Irksomely. Shōju

In my own experience also, the special foods of this or that district are never so good as they are famed to be; and the loneliness of the traveller accentuates his critical powers.

叱られて親父の讀めぬ本を讀み 春路
 Shikararete oyaji no yomenu hon wo yomi

Being scolded,
 He reads a book
 His father can't. Shunji

This is a kind of revenge on his father.

葬儀の短かさ犬もついて行き 粗影
 Sōgi no mijikasa inu mo tsuite iki

A dog
 Bringing up the rear
 Of a short funeral procession. Soei

There is something at once pathetic and comic here, and infinitely profound if we think that the whole cosmos and its tragedy, death and all its earlier and later horrors are necessary to bring out the meaning of this little creature padding along the road. So with the next verse.

お祈をする黒髪の長さかな 春集
 Oinori wo suru kurokami no nagasa kana

She is praying:
 Her black hair,—
 The length of it! Shunsō

Buddha's six years asceticism, Daruma's nine years wall gazing, St. Simon Styletes' thirty years on the top of his 72-foot pillar,—all so that we may see how long and how black her hair is.

近道はよそうに父の老を知り 孤浪
 Chikamichi wa yosō ni chichi no oi wo shiri

“Don't let's go the nearer way!”
 In this I felt
 My father's ageing. Korō

Not only his father's age but all old age is heard in those words.

貧乏はいといませんと言ふたけど 良子
 Bimbō wa iroimasen to iuta kedo

Yes,
 I said I didn't mind poverty,
 But Yoshiko

Virtue is said to be its own reward, and so it is, no doubt, but human beings want some happiness, most or all of which comes through money.

床の上で散るとは花も知らなんだ 宏方
 Toko no ue de chiru to wa hana mo shirananda
 Flowers never know
 That they scatter and fall
 Onto the alcove. Kōhō

There seems to something symbolic here.

意見して歸れば妻に意見され 夜潮
 Iken shite kaereba tsuma ni iken sare
 Grumbling at someone
 He comes back home,
 To be grumbled at by his wife. Yachō

We grumble at the universe: God grumbles at us.

エレベーター押し込められてお辭儀され 花村
 Erebētā oshikomerarete ojigi sare
 We are pressed
 Into the elevator,
 And bowed to. Kason

This is compliment added to injury.

窓あけて家主眺めも買わせる氣 おかき
 Mado akete yānushi nagame mo kawaseru ki
 Opening the window,
 The owner of the house
 Intends to make him buy the view too. Okaki

Oddly enough, he must actually buy both the house and the view, or neither.

燭臺をたしかに据えて手を放し 緑天
 Shokudai wo tashika ni s.ete te wo hanashi
 Putting down the candle-stick
 Firmly,
 And letting go of it. Ryokuten

The candle is in its own small way a dangerous thing; we lift it up and put it down with a special consciousness and attention.

ぼんやりと夢と雨とが残る朝 緑天
Bonyari to yume to ame to ga nokoru asa

Vaguely remain
In the morning,
Dream and rain. Ryokuten

This has no season. It goes back beyond haiku to waka.

惚れ合った事もあるのに生欠伸 郁男
Hore atta kotomo aru no ni namaakubi

They were once
In love with each other;
Now they are yawning. Ikuo

This is true of Lancelot and Guinevere, Antony and Cleopatra, Tom and Molly.

もう一度電車を止めて婆降り 浪子
Mō ichido densha wo tomete babā ori

The street car stopped
Once more:
An old woman got off. Namiko

The value of this senryu is that it tells us what we already knew, but didn't quite know, that old people move slowly.

本當に汚ない乞食ただ歩き 三太郎
Hontō ni kitanai kojiki tada aruki

A beggar
Really dirty
Just walks. Santarō

There are two kinds of beggars; some beg, some do not but are filthy and half naked in summer. These just walk along looking at nothing. We turn our eyes from them. Senryu turns them back again.

教科書に幫間といふ字は見えず 餘念坊
 Kyōkasho ni hōkan to iu ji wa miezu

There is no word
 "Buffoon"

In the Education Department reader. Yonembō

The *hōkan* is the man who makes visitors laugh at the Yoshiwara. Such words are never found in school books. That is to say, these books are lying and hypocritical, that is to say, the whole school system is lying and hypocritical.

借金は盗られるやうな氣で返し 三角子
 Shakkin wa torareru yō na ki de kaeshi

When we give back
 What we borrowed,
 We feel as if we have been robbed. Sankakushi

Philosophically speaking the justification for this universal feeling must be that, as Traherne says, we are sole heirs to everything in the universe, and every thing which we have not got or are forced to return, is stolen from us.

二三段落ちて鼻唄それっきり 醒多樓
 Nisan dan ochite hanauta sorekkiri

He fell down
 Two or three stairs,
 And stopped humming. Seitarō

To continue humming would be mere bravado. To stop humming is pusillanimity. Which shall we do?

貧相はおのれを示す賣卜者 雉子郎
 Hinsō wa onore wo shimesu uranaishi

The physiognomy of poverty
 Is the very face
 Of the fortune-teller. Kijirō

This applies to all professions. The face of a soldier in all his

paraphernalia of war is the very picture of a coward. That of a teacher or a doctor is ignorance, and that of a clergyman is impudence.

消防署宣傳をして閑になり 秀哉
Shobō sho senden wo shite hima ni nari

The fire-brigade
Propagandized,
And business became slack. Hideya

What would firemen do without fires, doctors without illness, teachers without stupidity?

今日といふものを日記に只二行 ○丸
Kyō to iu mono wo nikki ni tada ni gyō

“Today” is made
Into just two lines
In a diary. Reigan

There is something deeply pathetic in this verse. The cosmic tragedy for man also is expressed in just three lines.

金魚釣り不運な奴は又釣られ ○丸
Kingyo tsuri fuun na yatsu wa mata tsurare

Goldfish-angling:
Again the unfortunate ones
Are caught! Reigan

It is the evening of a day of festival. Under the dark trees of the shrine a lantern is hung, and under this people are crowded round a square tub of goldfishes, trying to catch one with a small weak fishing-net made of paper. Even here there is no democracy; the weaker fish are caught and carried off. This senryu has everything in it, the colour and animation of our human life, and its undercurrent of misery.

手袋に手袋を詰め今日も無事 ○丸
Tebukuro ni tebukuro wo tsume kyō mo buji

Putting a glove
 Into a glove,
 Today also passed safely. Reigan

This putting of one glove into another is symbolic of (sexual) safety, perhaps of returning into the mother's womb. Nothing dreadfully bad or excitingly good has happened, and for this a faint gratitude is felt.

三井寺の餘韻湖水へうなり込み 剣花坊
 Miidera no yoin kosui e unari komi
 The trailing sound
 Of the bell of Mii Temple
 Hums into the lake. Kenkabō

The difficulty here is to distinguish this senryu from haiku. In senryu the writer is always conscious that what he is (poetically) saying is (scientifically) untrue.

我を折って折って勤続二十年 館ン坊
 Ga wo otte otte kinzoku nijū nen
 Giving in, giving in,
 Serving in an office
 For twenty years! Amembō

It is said that some are born slaves, but this is not so. For each indignity there is suffering and revenge on oneself or others. "How happy he that serveth not another's will!"

敏感なもの足袋の裏御飯粒 館ン坊
 Binkan na mono tabi no ura gohantsubu
 How sensitive
 The bottom of the socks:
 A grain of boiled rice! Amembō

When a piece of rice sticks on the heel, the whole life-feeling is changed. Something disagreeable is felt which *must* be removed.

自用車夫空らで戻って口籠り 百樹
 Jiyō shafu kara de mo.otte kuchi-gomori

The chauffeur

Comes back with an empty car,
 And hesitates to tell. Tōhyaku

This is Cleopatra and the messenger.

渡し船花屋は蝶を連れて乗り 角戀坊
 Watashi bune hanaya wa chō wo tsurete nori

The ferry-boat:

The flower-man

Rode with a butterfly. Kakurembō

This is indeed a beautiful picture, which is completed by the butterfly over the water, the touch of paradox which makes all kin.

枯枝でないと證據に柿一つ 角戀坊
 Kare eda de nai to shōko ni kaki hitotsu

One persimmon,

To show

It is not a withered branch. Kakurembō

The poetry and humour here are latent in the word “to”, which means “in order to”. But by whose order?

芒原おさな名を呼ぶ父母の聲 百樹
 Susuki hara osana-na wo yobu fubo no koe

The field of pampas grass:

My parents call me

By my childhood name. Hyakuju

This senryu, the death-verse of Hyakuju, seems to me an extraordinarily good one. I can't remember a better.

CHAPTER XXIV

Ghost Stories

Ghosts seem to be a pure creation of the mind, and as such reveal what human beings really want. They desire life (after death). They desire something dangerous, something ugly, something fantastic. They also desire to be punished for their sins. In the ugly and fantastic and masochistic, humour is implicit, and it is natural and proper that the Japanese should have been good at humour and at the supernatural. There is nothing more difficult to tell than a ghost story, and the portrayal of a ghost will test the power of any artist who is valiant enough to attempt it. The ultimate aim of man is always to transcend himself, to conceive of new senses, to create what has never been imagined before. This is perhaps the most profound origin of ghosts, not the mere vulgar desire for our own or others' continued existence in time, but a new life, an escape from reason and morality, from cause and effect, from the bondage of matter, into a world of new values.

The Japanese did not of course think of things in this uninteresting, philosophic way, but their natural instincts moved in this direction. Chinese ghost stories, and Indian ideas of the transmigration of souls, helped the native animism to create in words and pictures ghosts and goblins that are without equal in the world.

Towards the end of the Edo Period the grotesque and horrible, the merely sensational became popular, but before this time Japanese writers and artists had kept the mean between comedy and tragedy. The devils have some pathos; the ghosts are not so vindictive; the monsters have something human about them. This faint tenderness of mind without sentimentality, this humanness is essential for the

火間蟲入道

人生勤まうて印のハ圖

といへば時をきくまう

同とめをきく一せとめをきく

あーでもない買ひまわーお金

あうて蛇の池をばす

人のお作と

まうてくると

今時

へてまう

まう

つみ



PLATE XXII

HIMAMUSHINYŪDŌ

へ	今	な	死	間	と	人	火
と	訛	り	し	を	い	生	間
五	よ	て	て	ぬ	へ	勤	蟲
音	ぶ	マ	も	す	り	に	入
相	は	ム	そ	み	生	あ	道
通	シ	と	の	て	て	り	
し			夜	一	時	つ	
			作	生	に	と	
			を	を	益	む	
			ね	お	な	る	
			ぶ	は	く	時	
			り	る	は	は	
			し	も	匱	か	
			夜	の	ら	ず	
			入	は			
			道				
			と				

This picture of the himamushinyūdō, the Leisure-insect Priest or Fireroom Insect Priest, comes from the *Ehon Hyakki Yakō*, 繪本百鬼夜行, by Toriyama Sekien, 鳥山石燕, d. 1788, the teacher of Utamaro. It is a picture book in black and white. Above the picture is written:

There is work to do in this our life, and when we work it is said that poverty will not draw nigh. Those who spend all their time uselessly become a night himamushinyūdō after their death, and lick the oil of the lamp and disturb the night work of men. Nowadays people mistakenly call it *hemamushi*, interchanging *he* with *hi* in the syllabary.

This *hemamushi* into which the *himamushi* changed was what was called *moji-e*, "letter-pictures," so that *hemamushinyūdō*, ヘマムシ



入道, was written. The original pictures shows the himamushinyūdō coming out from under the verandah, removing the night-light-hood, and licking the oil. Like most other monsters he has three fingers.

treatment of non-human existences.

The variety of ghosts and spirits is remarkable, but the forms are limited to five: that of human beings; animals; trees and grasses etc; utensils such as pots or tools; and natural phenomena. There is metamorphosis, willing, unwilling, and induced by others. There are events caused by love, as in having children by supernatural insemination; or by hate, as in possession, and causing illness and death.

The denizens of the spiritual world are thus of two kinds, the earth, air, water, and fire spirits; and the revengeful dead. The great desire (disease) of human beings is to be loved, and the most malignant of demons are the spirits of the unhappy dead; women dying in childbirth; unmarried people; the unburied, unrevenged, or forgotten dead; above all, betrayed or jilted women. The most dreadful ghost stories are those concerning revengeful females who haunt their lovers or husbands and their second wives. The former kind correspond to the fairies of *Midsummer Night's Dream*; the latter to the ghosts of *Hamlet* and *Julius Caesar*.

The actual forms of the spirits and monsters are as varied as fancy and imagination can make them, but, to my eye at least, they are one and all comical. The skeletons are parodies of our "too too solid flesh". The *Katawaguruma*, 片輪車, is a female ghost that moves on one wheel of flame. The *umibōzu*, 海坊主, is a huge monster that rises out the waves like a negro monk. *Kitsune no Hitotsume Nyūdō*, 狐の一目入道, has one eye like Polyphemus, ears hanging over his shoulders, and holds a writing brush. Japanese ghosts are well known to have no feet, in later times, but one of the most awful is a ghost with two feet only, and a body that rises into a flame. Again, one of the most creepy of ghosts is just hands that come out of curtains or hanging clothes or drapery. Delightful to me is a *futaguchi onna*, 二口女, a two-mouthed woman, whose long hair is feeding the other mouth with buns. She is the daughter of such women as



do not feed their stepchildren properly.

Dreadful to meet, even in the daylight, would be a lady, *baguro bettari*, 幽黒べったり, who has black teeth, but no eyes or nose.

Of goblins, pucks, pixies, urchins, ouphes and fairies, green and white, there are dozens in Japan with names that denote their nature. For example there is the *konaki jiji*, "an old man with a voice like a weeping child". If anyone pities him and holds him up he becomes suddenly heavy, and clings to him as the old man did to Sindbad. An *okuriinu*, a "seeing-off dog", follows a traveller to eat him if he tumbles down. If given a rice-ball and one sandal, it will eat the one and put on the other and go off. Or if a man, when he falls over, says, "Now I'll have a rest!" it won't attack him. An *oiteke-bori*, a "leave them in the moat", is a kind of imp that keeps on saying to an angler, "Leave them," until he leaves all the fish he has caught there.

Of the two types, the monsters and the ghosts, the great Kabuki actor, the third Kikugorō, died 1842, said:

When we play *obake* we should have a friendly and easy mind,

but in the case of *yūrei* it should be acted as if painfully Before the *yūrei* dies we must play the death-scene with agony of mind and body.

These two kinds of supernatural creatures, that is, creations, show two aspects of the Japanese character.

The history of ghosts or at least of ghost stories in Japan is as follows. In the so-called Age of the Gods, that is, in semi-pre-historic times, ghosts and goblins were as common, as natural, as human beings and animals, perhaps even more so. Birds and beasts could speak like human beings, and so a pheasant was used as a messenger of the gods. In the *Nihon Shoki*, 720 A.D., we are also told that when Heaven and Earth began, trees and grasses spoke, and with no uncertain tongue. The first reference to ghosts comes in the *Kojiki*, 712 A.D. When the world was darkened as a result of Amaterasu Omikami's sulking in her cave, many ghosts appeared in the darkness. Further, in the Age of the Gods, men, that is gods, could visit the country of the dead. Izanagi no Mikoto went into this region (not the next world yet, but a part of this) to call back his wife who had died, as Orpheus had (already) done. At this time devils appear first in Japanese literature (both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki*) preventing Izanagi's wife from going back to her husband's abode.

Much of both the above records of the past are obviously sexual; the urine of Izanami changes into the goddess Mizuhanome; and Susanō no Mikoto, when he goes to kill the great snake, changes Princess Kushinada into a comb and puts it in his hair. What is more difficult to grasp, however, is the simple fact that to the early Japanese, as to all primitive people, to poets, and to children, there was no such thing as the supernatural, because all was supernatural. Nothing was marvellous or comical, because everything was so. The ghosts had no special significance because all people (gods) had their own magical power.

The next period is the early "historical" age, from the accession of the Emperor Jimmu to the (official) arrival of Buddhism in Japan in 520 A.D. This is what we may call the Age of Metamorphoses, but these are unlike the literary *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, which is a chronological account in some fifty stories, with references in some two hundred others, of changes of men to beasts and plants, and vice-versa. Ovid has humour and burlesque and wit added, but the ancient Japanese believed as wholeheartedly as Wordsworth wished to in the life of all things, in the *henge*, spiritual beings, in snakes which were gods, in saucopans with legs, though the idea of transmigration was still far away. In the *Nihon Shoki* we are told how a white dog jumped out of the burning embers of a house, was killed, and changed into a man, Komaro, before he died. The same book, which does not lack in any way the power to suspend disbelief, tells us how a *mujina*, a kind of badger, in the 35th year of Suiko, 628 A.D., turned into a man and sang a song in its badger's voice.

The next age is that from the arrival of Buddhism in Japan to the Muromachi Period. Under the influence of the Buddhist cosmology, Heaven and Hell become different in time and place from this world. Demons and goblins with long noses like the Indians who perhaps were known to have imported them filled every nook and cranny, where before had been only the spirits of air, earth, fire, and water. We are told that in the 7th year of the Empress Saimei, 655-661, at her funeral, a devil was seen looking down from the top of Mount Asakura. Gradually the idea of karma and the transmigration of souls became popular, and the belief arose that the bad people turned into goblins, which were more and more felt to be malefic. The following story is told in the *Nihon Reiki*, 日本靈異記, and shows that people were beginning to fear retribution in an after-world.

The wife of an official in Sanuki Province did not lead a religious life, and when she died in the 7th year of Hōki, 777,

she became alive again and opened the lid of the coffin herself. When they looked in, they found that the upper part of the body was that of a cow, with horns coming out of the forehead.

In the same book we are told the following interesting story:

In the 9th year of Hōki, a man named Bokuto went to Fukatsu to buy something, and was overtaken by night on the way, so he slept in a bamboo grove. All night long he could not sleep. He heard groaning, and a voice saying, "How my eyes hurt! How my eyes hurt!" The next morning he found a skeleton in the grove, and through the eyes of the skull bamboos were growing. He pulled out the bamboos, and was very successful in his purchase. He afterwards met the dead man, who thanked him.

The Buddhist idea of transmigration helped the Japanese imagination to conceive of ghosts and spirits in all kinds of animal forms. In England this idea seems to have arrived early. Ophelia sings snatches of old ballads when insane:

They say the owl was a baker's daughter! Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be.

Animals, especially foxes, were always changing into human beings, usually women. One such account, of course recorded as a fact, is given in the *Gempei Seisuiiki*, 源平盛衰記:

At the time of the Emperor Kimmei a man of Mino, who was in search of a spouse, met a very beautiful woman on a moor. They fell in love with each other at once, became man and wife, and had several children. One odd thing about the woman however was the dogs barked at her so often and so furiously, even going so far as to attack her. At last she was forced to leave the house, and, followed by the dogs, suddenly changed into her real shape, that of a vixen. The husband was overwhelmed. "Have you forgotten me?" he cried. "Have we

not our children, yours and mine? Come and sleep with me!" The words *kitsune!* 来つ寝, "Come, sleep!" became the name of the fox, *kitsune*, 狐.

This is a charming and pathetic tale, and it would be interesting to know if David Garnett had heard of it when he wrote his equally charming and pathetic story, *Lady into Fox*.

In the Heian and Kamakura Periods, the spirits of human beings were divided into three classes: dead spirits, the souls of dead people, formless; live spirits, the souls of living people, that can be active in other places than that of the body; and ghosts, the spirits of the dead with a visible appearance. But it is in animals that humour is chiefly found, whether it be those originally animals, or as in the following story, human beings who appear as animals after their death.

A priest of Izumo Temple in Kyōto died, and his spirit turned into a cat-fish, a huge one of three feet in length, that resided between the tiles of the temple roof. One day the temple roof was broken by a great wind, and the child of the priest got hold of the cat-fish, killed it, boiled it, and ate it. A bone stuck in his throat, and he died.

This cautionary story, warning us not to eat our parents, is somewhat incredible in the details. It comes from *Uji Shūi Monogatari*, 宇治拾遺物語. The following is found in the *Konjaku Monogatari*:

At the time of the Emperor Yōzei, 877-884, [who was deposed at the age of 18 for eccentricity, and lived to the age of 82,] a man sleeping west of the Palace discovered an old man three feet high, and he felt his face growing colder and colder, so he bound him with a rope. The old man asked for a basin of water, and, thinking it to be a harmless though odd request, he brought it, when the old man's neck suddenly elongated and dived into the basin. The old man disappeared into the water, which overflowed the basin. It was a water-imp, a kappa.

This story seems to me very good. The humour is quite dissolved into the narrative.

From the Muromachi Period up to the Meiji Era, the comical goblins and not altogether hateful ogres and devils tend to sink into the background, and are replaced by the more romantic, sexual, and in a way more poetical ghosts, such as we find in Nō plays. This time of political peace was one of relative gloom, or at least tranquillity, in which ghosts appear easily. However, some interesting monsters also make their appearance, for example one that visited the house of Ashikaga Naoyoshi, whose body, as will be seen in the illustration, was an *oi*, a pannier; the head of a *yamabushi*, a mountain priest; a broken sword in its mouth. It appeared in his bedroom. The account of it is given in *Honchō Zokujutsuiki*, 本朝續述異記, the picture being in *Ehon Mushabikō*, 繪本武者備考, "Illustrated Notes of Warriors."



One of the earliest stories of long-necked human beings, appropriately enough usually women, comes in *Hyaku Monogatari Hyōban*, 百物語評判;

A priest named Zetsugan once lodged for a night in a house in the village of Shikoro. The wind was so strong he could not sleep, so he spent the night chanting the sutras. About midnight the head of the woman of the house passed by him on its way out of a broken window. A fine white line followed it. About dawn, the line began to quiver, and the head came back to the pillow. When he examined the neck of the woman by daylight, he found a mark all round her neck.

This story is interesting as reminding us of materialization at spiritualistic seances, and the spiritual body then visible. See page 41.

Another fox story, which has something credible in all its incredibility, (itself a comic contrast,) comes from *Taihei Hyaku Monogatari*, 太平百物語:

A boy was sent on an errand somewhere, and as he passed in front of the Inaba Yakushi shrine-temple he felt something on his shoulder, and came back, but at the back door he suddenly burst into a loud laugh. The master, Sōbei, asked him what the matter was. He replied that he was a fox and had lived for a long time in the Inaba Yakushi. Someone had surprised him sleeping in a bamboo grove hard by, and as the boy happened to be passing by at that moment he thought it was he, so he possessed him. Then he found it was a mistake, and gave a great laugh, as he thought it rather funny.

This kind of gentle "ghost" story seems to me very attractive. The people of that time lived in a much more interesting world than ours.

Not as common or so interesting as stories of foxes, fox possession, and fox metamorphoses, are those of rats. In the *Yasō Kidan*, 夜窓奇談, "Strange Stories of a Night Window," the following occurs. It may be compared with the (better) Chinese story on page 45.

A certain samurai was drinking by himself when fourteen or fifteen properly clothed men three inches tall came along. Two of them tried to steal his food, and he killed them with an arrow

that lay near by. Later, eight chiefs came to apologise. They were all the goblins of rats.

Besides cats, badgers, snakes, toads, spiders, and centipedes, we have examples of "ghosts" which are natural phenomena, and sometimes require human help; from *Shūi Otogi Bauko*, 拾遺伽婢子:

While Hideyoshi was at Himeji, there was a great storm one summer day, and a thunderbolt fell on a nettle-tree near the castle; the great tree split in two. The clouds and mists continued deep, the tree trembled, and the weather did not change for some time. Hideyoshi wondered why, and a voice came from the sky, "I am the thunderbolt, but I got wedged into the nettle-tree and can't go back to heaven: please help me!" Hideyoshi ordered his retainers to tear the tree apart, and the thunder went back to Heaven safely. It is said that Hideyoshi could get the highest position in the land as a result of the gratitude of the thunder-spirit.

Kappa, water imps, are still favourite creatures in Japan, and are used in comical pictures and caricatures. During the Edo Period they were taken a little more seriously, which means that the humour is less obtrusive and all the more captivating. The following comes from *Yasō Kidan*. A kappa, by the way, is as big as a five-year old boy, with a head like a tiger, a beaked face, a tortoise-shell on its back, the top of the head concave, with some water in it. This water gives it a little strength on land. The kappa causes the death of children who die by drowning.

At the River Yanakawa there were many kappa. One day, as the wife of a samurai was going to a temple, she stopped at a tea-house nearby, and there was a beautiful boy there who greeted her, and she thought he was the favourite acolyte of the temple priest, but he began to wink at her, and try to hold her hand. She was exceedingly indignant, and went off to the temple. While she was offering incense before the altar, the boy

suddenly appeared again and once more tried to tempt her and to hold her hand, but she gave his hand a good pinch, and he cried out and went away. She told the priest about it, but he said he knew of no such boy. She was astonished, but departed home. There, she went to the lavatory, where someone stretched forth a long arm and touched her secret parts, and she cut off the arm with her dagger. The hand had three fingers, long nails, the skin smooth and blue-black. Some while after the boy came to the house and asked her to give the arm back. "Who are you?" she asked. "I am a kappa," he said.

Speaking of monsters, by the way, one of the most striking and original is the *nopperabō*, a slippery, jelly-like creature, shown here.

The most comical of all ghost stories is that given in *Yōkai Kidan*, 妖怪奇談:



A certain monk stole a cock from a house near his temple and ate it. The owner got to know of it and was extremely angry and reproached the monk for his deed. The monk said, "We have shaved our heads completely, wear black robes, live the life that Sakyamuni laid down, and make compassion the foundation of all our activities. How could I possibly do such a terrible thing?" At that moment there issued from his mouth a loud "Cockadoodledo!" The cock he had eaten metamorphosed itself into him, and he looked just like a cock. He was forced to admit his guilt.

All these stories of ghosts and monsters are not so much funny as intensely interesting, for they correspond deeply to our inner creative

will from which indeed they came. The last example to be given is of a sort of architectural ghost, or may we call it a "pontic" ghost, since it concerns two bridges. There are many varieties of this story, which ultimately comes from China; it is found in *Shantungkulu*, 山東古錄, by the celebrated scholar Ku Yenwu, 顧炎武, 1612–1681. One version concerns Kunitama Village in Koshu. A stone bridge called "The Big Bridge" was on bad terms with another bridge called "The Monkey Bridge." If anybody spoke of someone on the other, something dreadful would happen.

Once, a man coming to Koshu happened to speak of the Big Bridge when he was crossing the Monkey Bridge. A woman appeared and asked him to deliver a letter to someone on the Big Bridge. He remembered afterwards that she did not tell him to whom to give it, and opened the letter. Inside was written, "Kill the bearer!" Surprised, he rewrote it, making it, "Do not kill the bearer!" He took it to the Big Bridge, where another woman appeared and with a threatening look asked for the letter, but when she read it, her look changed, and she parted from him in peace.

The most famous of all ghost novels was *Fukushū Kidan Asaka no Numa*, 復讐奇談安積沼, "The Ghost's Revenge at Asaka no Numa," published in 1803 by Santō Kyōden. It is interesting to note that five years later, in 1808, the Government forbade the publication of such ghost stories as portrayed 1. atrocities between men and women 2. crimes of bad women 3. fire demons 4. heads flying about 5. animal and bird goblins 6. serpents winding round people's bodies, and 7. dead bodies decomposed in water. This edict is not only an evidence of the government's (and all governments') lack of humour, but also shows their desire to keep sex to the mere function of providing cannon fodder.

Oddly enough haiku on goblins are more successful than senryu, for example the following by Kikaku:

魍靈はよその田をうつ夕日哉

Mōryō wa yose no ta wo utsu yūhi kana

In the long rays of the setting sun,
Earth-demons digging
In the neighbouring field.

The interesting senryu which follows is based on Confucius' words in *The Analects*, that the superior man does not speak of wonders or marvels or unnatural things, 不語怪力亂神:

化物の話しを儒者はしつ叱り

Bakemono no hanashi wo jusha wa shisshikari

The Confucian scholar
Scolds them
When they tell ghost stories.

CHAPTER XXV

Short Stories I

(up to 1750)

The Japanese mind tends to see the world in flashes of insight. It gazes intently at the apparently trivial, the point which is only a point but is also the centre of the circle. To read *kobanashi*, short humorous stories, we need to have the same state of mind as that for *kyōshi*, *kyōka*, *senryū*, and *haiku*, all short forms of literature. We must not be greedy for mirth; above all we must not be in a hurry. It is the same frame of mind that enjoys the lengthy works of Montaigne, Fuller, and Burton, a meek and lamb-like mind, a Lamb-like mind. These short stories of the Edo Period,—by whom and for whom were they written? To a certain extent by the people and for the people, and this is surprising when we remember that the most important thing for a short story, particularly a humorous story, is poetry, though it be as different as the poetry of Katherine Mansfield and of O. Henry.

The history of humorous stories is as follows. There are comical episodes in Seishōnagon's *Makura no Sōshi*, 10th century, and in the 14th century *Tsurezuregusa*, and so on. The following story is found in the *Tamon-in Nikki*, 多聞院日記, written by a priest of Kōfukuji Temple, 興福寺, describing events of 1481-1600.

Bottom's Bottom

Two thieves broke into a warehouse of treasures. One of them was handing down things to another. Picking up a tea-pot he said to the other. "Hold the bottom." The other held his own bottom. The man said, "If you are holding it tight, I will

let go." The other replied, "It's all right, I am holding it as tight as I can!" The one above let go the tea-pot, and it fell to the floor and smashed. The people of the house awoke, and the thieves escaped only by the skin of their teeth, grumbling at each other.

The first actual collection of humorous stories as such is the *Seisuishō*, of the Genna Era, 元和, 1615-1624, the editor being priest Sakudan who wrote the Introduction in the 7th year of that era. *Seisuishō* means "Wake-sleep Laughter." There were three publications, the first containing more than a thousand stories; not all of them are humorous.

In the Genroku Era, 1688-1703, story-tellers appeared, who told their stories with gestures in a dramatic voice; these are the origin of the modern rakugo, professional story-telling. The word seems to have been used first in 1787, in the title of a collection of short stories, *Shinsaku Rakugo Tokuji Den*, 新作落語徳治傳.

From Genna, 1615-1624, to Tenwa, 1681-1683, a period of 70 years, only 16 collections of humorous stories were published, but from Teikyō, 1684-1687, to Genroku, 1688-1703, twenty years, 24 appeared. From Hōei, 1704-1710, to Meiwa, 1764-1771, 70 years, only 43 were published, mostly repeating the same stories. But the first year of Anei, 1772, saw the publication of *Kanokomochi*, a small book which caused a great sensation. Up to this time, the humorous stories had been written down as spoken, but *Kanokomochi* made the stories brief, with conversations, the explanatory parts being omitted. This may well have been the effect of the reading of *Hsiaofu*, which had been published in Kyōto just before *Kanokomochi* appeared. Uun, the editor, used a new, Edo style of writing, free from the old-fashioned Kyōto style. Katsukawa Shunsho, the ukiyoe painter, illustrated *Kanokomochi*, which had only about sixty stories, but all good ones. In contrast to the *Seisuishō*, which reflected a countrified taste, the *Kanokomochi* catered for the townsman, the man about

town, and so stories of the Yoshiwara increased in importance, and a certain decadent flavour was already perceptible. *Kanokomochi* means "A Fawn's Rice-Cake," a cake, so named because it was spotted like the skin of a deer. The stories are supposed to be as delightful as the cakes.

In the same year, but a little later apparently, *Kikijōzu*, edited by Komatsuya Hyakki, was published, also very good, and as with *Kanokomochi*, the stories are meant to be read, not told, and this made them correspondingly shorter. It was these short stories that were now called *kobanashi*. Up to this time they had been known as *karukuchi*, "light-mouthed (stories)." *Kikijōzu* means "clever at listening," or perhaps rather, "clever to listen to."

The golden age of humorous stories was the Anei Era, from the 1st to the 9th year of which no less than 90 collections are named. Up to Meiwa, 1764-1771, the collections are still called "*karukuchi*," but after Anei, 1772-1780, they are called *kobanashi*. During the Temmei Era, 1781-1788, only 42 collections appeared. The reason for this gradual decay was the simple fact that the old stock of humorous stories that had been accumulating during the past thousand years was used up, and new good ones were hard to come by. The authors are almost all unknown. During Kansei, 1789-1800, about 70 collections were published, often called "*otoshibanashi*," and later, "*rakugo*."

As said before, the country people had their own stories, and many of these appeared, oddly enough, written in Chinese, by Confucian and Chinese literature scholars, for example Oka Hakku, the author of *Kaikōshingo*. Ten such volumes were published one after another. These old-style stories do not appear in Edo *kobanashi*.

The following come from *Kinō na Kyō no Monogatari*, きのふはけふの物語, two volumes published during the Kanei Era, 1624-1643. Of these stories 42 are found in *Gigen Yōkishū* and about the same number in *Seisuishō*. This is because they were all oral up to

this time.

Forced not to be Divorced

A man got tired of his wife after many years of married life, and said to her, "I feel sick when I just see you. Please go away." The wife replied, "Well, it can't be helped. If you feel like that I will go back to my mother's home," and she took out the clothes she had been married in, put them on, oiled her hair, and dyed her teeth. Looking at her, the man suddenly began to want her not to go, but he could not unsay what he had said, so he went to see her off. They had to cross a river, and when they reached the other side he had an idea, and said to her, "You must pay the ferry-fee." The wife said, "How is that possible, between man and wife like you and me?" "That's only when we are married. When we're divorced we have no relation. You can't go without paying the fee, and you can't pay the fee, so let's go back!" So he rowed her back in his boat and lived with her five hundred and eighty years.

Any excuse will do for what we want to do.

The Master Should Appear

Among those who governed the world, some audacious men gathered together and came to the Palace and knocked on the gate with the butt-ends of their staves, crying, "Pay the rent!" A court-lady appeared, quite bewildered and said, "This is the Palace, where no lower-class men may come. Please depart in haste!" Then they said, "If there's a good reason why the rent for this house should not be paid, let the master come out and tell us all about it!"

This is not so much humorous as amazing, that in Japan of the 1630's such an attitude and such a story was possible.

Koi

The son-in-law came up from the country for the first time,

so they gave him a great many dishes. After it all they set some noodles before him. He had never seen such things before, in his native village, and finding them excellent asked the lady who served him, "The name?" She took it as asking her own name, and answered, "It is Koi." He remembered it carefully, and some days after he had got home he wrote a letter of gratitude, in which he said, "You treated me so kindly when I visited you for the first time. Especially I shall never forget the taste of Koi! It may be too impudent a thing to ask, but won't you share Koi with me?" When he read this the father-in-law was furious. "What! It's impossible! He stole my pet from me, and wants to make a bigger fool of me!" and he took his daughter back.

The point of this story is that "Koi" also means carp, the fish, and the son-in-law is inadvertently speaking to the father-in-law as Hamlet did to Polonius, and calling him a fishmonger, which in fact the father-in-law more or less was, since Miss Koi was both his servant and his concubine.

The following come from the *Seisuishō*, about 1628. The stories of the *Seisuishō* will be found a little old-fashioned in their humour, but all the more interesting perhaps.

A Dream

The husband groaned in his sleep and his wife shook him awake, and the husband said, "Oh, did I groan?" "Yes, you were having a nightmare, weren't you?" "No, no, it was nothing terrifying. A superb woman took me by the hand and asked me to come into a beautiful bed, and I was resisting her, and groaning." The wife said, "If I hadn't woken you up, most likely . . ."

More so than most stories, and like the universe, this one is difficult to finish satisfactorily.

Love in the Water

A carp fell in love with the daughter of a crucian, but there seemed no prospect of marriage in the water. Their vows became like the bubbles, and they both felt it better to die, so they twined themselves together with their fins and jumped out of the water into a fishing boat.

This is a kind of *Through the Looking Glass* world. The love of human beings is a love in the air, and we jump out of the boat into water.

“Yajirō, whom I saw in the Land of the Living”

What does this mean? Years ago there was a gold mine in the Island of Sado, and many people lived round it. One of them was a sage, who ate no grain, kept the commandments, was always chanting the sutras, was indeed a Living Buddha, so that people came from near and far to revere him. His servant was man named Yajirō. Now after some years the sage announced that the time had come for him to depart to the next world. When they heard this, all shed tears. On the 20th of the month, the date decided, he dug a deep hole on the moor and entered it, all clad in his Buddhist robes. He told them to shovel in the earth, and was thus buried alive. A wonderful thing indeed! But there were some who said that he had given a certain mine-worker a lot of money to make a secret tunnel by which he got away safely.

Three years later, Yajirō, who venerated his master as a saint, went to Echigo, and ran across him there. He accosted him and asked him if he were not that sage who had pretended to die. Like Peter, he denied it thrice, but after Yajirō pointed to clear proofs of it, he admitted the fact, and said, “Yes, now I remember, you are Yajirō, whom I saw in the land of the living.”

This seems to me an excellent story, with enough left unexplained to

make it both mysterious and life-like.

A Visitor while Toasting Rice-cakes

A man and his wife were toasting rice-cakes, when a visitor happened to come. "Oh, how nice to see you!" They called him in, but the wife said, "Now eat them quickly before someone else comes!"

The feelings of the visitor are as mixed and contradictory as they should be.

The Hatchet

A man visited somebody one snowy day. As he entered the house, from light to dark suddenly, "It's very dark!" he said. Just then his foot touched something, and when he picked it up it was a hatchet, a thing he had wanted for a long time, so he put it under his coat. But as his eyes got used to the darkness, the inside looked lighter, and he felt ashamed when he thought that the people must have seen him putting the hatchet under his coat. But it would be still more funny if he put it back, so he was at a loss what to do. Just then another man came in and said, "How dark it is!" Taking advantage of this he handed him the hatchet, and said, "Put this under your coat, and it will get lighter!"

Cause and effect are here charmingly confused, just as they are in reality, though not in the so-called real world.

The Black Dog of Hyōgo

While a certain stupid man was passing along a street in the town of Hyōgo, a big black dog suddenly appeared and bit him severely in the leg. He was much chagrined at it, till he reached Amagasaki, when he came across a black puppy which he trod on and kicked. People were indignant and gathered round him threateningly, but he explained, "I kicked it to pay back an old

score. I had my leg bit in Hyōgo by a black dog."

Most patriotism is of this calibre.

Star-Catching

There was a certain priestling who, when night came, swung a long pole here and there in the temple garden. The priest happened to come by, and asked what he was doing. "I am trying to get a star in the sky, but they don't seem to fall down." "What a fool you are! The pole is not long enough; get on the roof and try!" "How gracious the wisdom of the master!"

The words of the last sentence redeem the story from being mere hyperbolical nonsense. They Christianise, Buddhise, humanise, humorise, stupidise the mere joke.

An Armed Duck

A man who was regarded as being no genius went to his father-in-law's for the first time, and he wished to make a good impression, so his friend said to him, "If you do not utter a single word you will be thought a fool, so say something, if only a greeting." "Yes, I quite understand." When he went there he was silent from the beginning to the end, but just as he was leaving, he said to his father-in-law, "Have you ever seen a duck with arms?" "No, I haven't." "Nor have I." It would have been better to say nothing at all.

I have often been and still am often in the son-in-law's predicament. What shall we say to father-in-law fools anyway?

Where Are You Going, Oh Priest?

A nit-witted man of Kyōto wanted to make a fool of a certain priest by overcoming him in a *mondō*, a Zen debate, so he asked a clever friend of his what to say. "When you meet him

you must ask him where he is going, and he will reply, 'Following the wind.' Then you will say, 'What about when there's no wind?' and he will be at a loss." One morning he met the priest in front of the gate of Tōji Temple, and asked him where he was going. "To the service at Kansuke's. Is there anything I can do for you?" The man was crestfallen, and said, "Aren't you going following the wind?"

I thought perhaps this story was not good enough to include, but aren't you glad I didn't omit it?

Buried Money

A man buried some money, and said to it, "If others see you, look like snakes! Be money only when I see you!" Somebody else heard what he said, dug up the money and put some snakes there instead. Later on, the man himself dug the place and saw only snakes. "It's me! Have you forgotten me?" he kept on repeating. A funny thing, wasn't it?

Buried treasure, whether in *The Gold Bug* or in kobanashi, is always interesting.

The Life of a Tortoise

It is said that a tortoise lives for 10,000 years. A thoughtful-looking man caught a baby tortoise, and said, "I'll keep this and see if that is true." His friend laughed and said, "Our life is like the dew on the flower of a Rose of Sharon. However long we live, it is not more than a hundred years. How then can anyone see if a tortoise lives for 10,000 years?" The man said, "That's a pity."

Tortoises are frequently found in comical stories. Clearly they are zoological jokes.

The Hood

A priest went to the bath-house with his servant. He was in

a hurry, and took his clothes off and entered the tub, forgetting to remove his hood. He was a man who always spoke with calm authority and aloofness, and the servant pretended not to have noticed it. But the second time the priest entered the tub, after washing himself, the servant said, "Oh sir, your hood is still on!" The priest touched it in a dignified way and said, "It's all right to take it off now."

Never admitting oneself to have been wrong is always comical, almost as comical as believing in a book or a person or a church that is infallible.

Buying Fish

One morning a priest sent his servant to buy some fish secretly, but the servant became ill suddenly and couldn't go all day, so he had himself to go to the fishmonger's. Late at night there was a knocking at the door, "Who is it?" said someone in the shop. "It's a layman come to buy some fish. Please open the door."

The humour of this is the humour of Dickens, the way in which one person can imagine himself into quite a different person.

Octopus

Some priests and laymen held a party, and were talking and laughing together. A priest coughed suddenly and brought up something like hard phlegm. One of the men looked at it and found it to be a piece of octopus. "What a strange thing you brought up!" he exclaimed. "Yes," said the priest, "the octopus that I ate when a child has just come up. They say with truth that octopus is indigestible!"

Somehow or other clever vice seems to us better than stupid virtue.

A Profit-Making

A gambler came home at midnight, woke his wife up, and

said, rocking to and fro with self-satisfaction, "I've never had such a bit of luck in all my life!" His wife though he had won a lot money that night, and said, "How much did you make?" "I lost the same as usual, but I gave my sword for a two thousand debt, but I bought the sword for five hundred the other day, so I made a clear thousand five hundred!"

What makes us laugh here is not merely the unjustified complacency of the gambler, but the deep truth that all profit and loss is illusory.

Lice Don't Sing

A group of children were talking about their own personal affairs. An older child said, "If lice could sing I would be terribly ashamed when I am with other people, but they are quite silent, so it's all right." But another younger child said, "I wish they would sing, then I would have a rest from being bitten sometimes."

Simple things like this make all the nonsense of Christianity and Buddhism unbelievable.

Vinegared Thunder

Some light hearted people were gathered together, and one of them said, "Have any of you ever eaten vinegared thunder?" "No, of course not! Never heard of it. How about you?" "Yes, I have." "How did it taste, sweet or sour?" "Well, it tasted a little cloudy."

This kind of humour is rather slight, but interesting in its delicacy and rarity. The modern world with its brutal frankness and sickening sentimentality is hardly one in which we can enjoy such things.

Bedding

A masterless samurai had just taken lodgings at a certain house. When he talked he seemed to know so much about so

many things the master of the house praised him to the skies, and the samurai began to feel proud of himself also. When bed-time came, as it was cold the master offered him some bedding, but the samurai made answer, "I am a warrior who has spent his life on the battlefield, on the mountains and moors; what do I care for the cold?" And he went to sleep without the bedding. But as night deepened, the cold increased, and became unbearable. The samurai called out to the master, "Have the rats of this house had their feet washed?" "No sir, we never do such a thing." "Then I must borrow some bed-clothes, otherwise my own clothes will get dirty. The rats are treading all over me."

This is fantastic, but not more than most of the excuses people and especially nations make for doing things.

Like Man, Like Monkey

There was a lord who was extraordinarily thin and dark. He said to his attendant, "I hear that people say I look like a monkey. Is it so?" The attendant replied deferentially, "What an improper remark! I wonder who told your lordship such a thing. People only say that a monkey looks like your lordship." Hearing this, the lord said, "That is well said. That is as it should be," and was not in the least indignant.

The lord's generous attitude is like all our generosity; it arises from the pleasant feeling of superiority.

The Ambition of a Night-Watchman

In the town of Sakai in Izumi, there is a man in each street whose duty it is to go around at night calling out, "Look out for fire!" One evening several of those night-watchmen gathered together and spent a long time talking to each other. The watchman in the South Street at last said, "I wish I had ten golden coins. I could go along the street in a carriage, crying

out, 'Look out for fire!'"

This man is nowise wrong. A rich man is simply a man who works in a motor-car.

An Enervating Medicine

In Kyōto a certain man was walking here and there calling out, "I will buy any medicine which lessens the strength!" However, he looked so thin and weak, somebody was suspicious of him and said, "I'll sell you some, come in!" and asked him, "What you say doesn't suit your looks; why do you want such a thing?" He answered, "Yes, I am like this, just as you see, but my wife has all the strength, so I want the medicine for her."

This story, like what the man called out, is suspicious; it sounds manufactured, and, also like the man, rather jaded.

A Stingy Snore

Hearing the sound of rain at dawn a priest who was in bed with a young man (*wakashū*) thought, "Good heavens! I ought to give him some breakfast, as it's raining . . . Well, I'll pretend to be sound asleep, and then I won't have to." After a while the young man got up quietly and went out. The priest waited a bit, and when he thought the young man must be outside the temple, got up and looked out, and found the young man still there inside. The priest was so surprised, he shut his eyes and snored loudly, standing there.

(*Wakashū* has practically the meaning of a (male) homosexual.) The original ostrich who put his head in the sand must have been a man.

A Feline Failure

Whenever the husband was not at home her paramour came

to the wife's house. They had arranged previously that he should enter secretly from the roof by a ladder the wife had prepared, and if the husband came back and asked, "What is the sound on the roof?" he should imitate a cat. One day the husband came home unexpectedly, and asked, "What is that noise? It sounds like a man." The wife said, "Oh, no, it must be a big cat like a man." The paramour on the roof was very surprised, and forgot to cry "Miaow," and said in weak voice, "I'm a c-a-a-a-t."

The interesting point of this Oriental and Occidental chestnut is the philological humour. The paramour forgets that "cat" is not, now at any rate, an onomatopoeic word.

Shikatabanashi, 私可多咄, "Telling Tales with Gestures," in 5 volumes, was published in the second year of Manji, 1659. It was written by Nakagawa Kiun, 中川喜雲, and republished twelve years later with illustrations. The original, like most of the early collections, has no titles to the stories.

Stuck-up

There was a proud man who got even more puffed up when he was praised. When he showed his handwriting to people, they admired it highly, saying "How wonderful! It's just like that of the great priest Kōbō. You must be the reincarnation of Kōbō Daishi!" At that the man murmured audibly, "Yes, dying's no joke!"

This is somewhat subtle. The man takes the remark literally, and adds the corollary that reincarnation involves death, which he had to go through in order to come back to the world and write such a good hand.

Hyaku-monogatari, 百物語, "A Hundred Stories," in 2 volumes, was published in 1659. The author is unknown. The titles are given in the original book.

Overcharging

A certain man had a stupid son. He wanted to make him work in his shop, and told him beforehand, "You must work hard. A fool like you is inclined to tell lies, so be honest and modest, and let me know the account every month." The foolish son did the business whole-heartedly, and at the end of the month his parents asked him to show them the accounts. There was no profit, and no loss. When they asked why, he answered, "You told me not to tell lies, so what I bought for a hundred *mon* I sold for a hundred *mon*." The parents got angry. "Only a fool would be so honest! A merchant must make some overcharge, and by that, profit is earned." The son understood what they said. He went outside the shop, and just then a man who looked like an express messenger came running along, and thought this foolish son was an ordinary man. "Is there a man called Hikoemon of Nomiya in this town, please?" "Two blocks from here." The messenger ran off thanking him. The son called him back. "He lives just in the next street!" Again he ran off, and was again called back. The messenger got angry. "Aren't you making a fool of me?" "It's cheap, but I'll reduce it still more. He lives next door." The messenger got still more angry, but the son said, "My father also got angry, and told me to overcharge everything in business, so I overcharged you." The express messenger went away laughing.

The truth should always make us do this. Perhaps it always does. The Rich Young Ruler became rich through somebody's overcharging. Banks are even more ludicrous than churches.

An Umbrella that Leaked

There was once a man who was born absent-minded. On the way to a certain place rain came on, and he dropped in a friend's house and borrowed an umbrella. The umbrellas were

hanging on the wall, but he took a broom hanging there by mistake and walked away holding up the broom, thinking it to be an umbrella. There was another absent-minded chap who happened to meet him on the way back. He said, "I'm glad I met you! Please let me in under your umbrella." "Certainly! Keep close to me." They walked on, and those who saw them laughed but they were quite unaware. At last one of them said, "Look how wet we're getting even though we have an umbrella!" The other said, "This umbrella leaks."

Why is daftness so delightful? Because the universe is daft, as daft old King Lear found out.

The Conversation of Beggars

As I passed over the Bridge of Sanjō, the beggars were talking under the balustrade. "What do you think? There are many rich people in this town. It must be nice for them, they can do what they like. How much money do they have?" "They don't have so much as they are supposed to have, just as we don't." "What do you mean?" "Oh, they say in the capital that a beggar has a bushel of lice, but we each have at most a peck."

It is true, we all exaggerate about one another; no man is as good or bad or happy or rich or poor as the others suppose.

Seeing the Festival of Gion

A countryman went to the cross-roads of Shijō at Teramachi Street to see the festival of Gion Shrine. He wandered here and there among the crowds of people, and suddenly he wanted to go to the lavatory. There was a pale-faced man nearby, standing at the pole of the gate like a flat-bellied spider. He said to him, "You know this place, perhaps; would you mind telling me where the lavatory is?" That man said in a whisper, "Oh, you can walk about and ask like that, but look at me! I cannot

even move a step!"

There is an enormous amount of misery all over the world at every moment in the millions who want to go to the lavatory but for various reasons can't. We are free to laugh or weep at this, or pretend it is not so. Take your choice.

Rice-bran Stars

A certain man was terrible humble about everything, not only his own things. One day a visitor came and said, "Has the moon risen?" The host rolled up the rattan blind and said, "It has just now presented itself before you," making even the moon obsequious. One day he was looking up at the stars in the night sky. His neighbour said from over the fence, "There are so many stars above your roof!" The man replied, "Yes, that's true, but they are all tiny stars like so much rice-bran." Even about the stars he was so 'umble.

This is a sort of inverted exhibitionism and masochism.

Karukuchi Kyokutemari, 輕口曲手鞠, "Light-mouthed Hand-ball Feats," four volumes, is said to have been published in 1675. The following comes from it.

The Sound of Rain

There was once a scatter-brained fellow who went out to the verandah one rainy night and did not come back to his bed though day had dawned. His wife wondered what had happened, and went out to look. There he was standing on the verandah, all exposed in front. "What on earth are you doing?" she said. "I'm making water," he replied, "but so much is coming out!" He was standing by the rain-pipe from the eaves.

This seems to be based on the Chinese story given on page 137, which however tells of three such nitwits. Somehow three impos-

sibilities are more believable than one.

Kerakera-warai, けらけら笑ひ, "Merry Laughter," in two volumes, is supposed to have been published at the end of the Teikyō Era, 1684-1688. The following story comes in it.

The Broken Bowl

The priest of a certain temple went out to hold a service. During his absence a young priest broke a bowl that the priest made much of. At a loss what to do about it, he thought the matter over, and decided that certain questions about the Buddhist Law would meet the case, so he waited for the master at the gate. The priest came back and knocked at the gate, and the priestling appeared and asked him, "What will happen to those who are alive?" The priest answered, "They must cease to be once." "What will happen to those not alive?" "The time comes." The priestling opened the gate, ran inside, and brought the broken pieces of the bowl, saying, "The time has come to this bowl too!"

This not so funny or so witty but has a kind of charming ingeniousness, in the priestling making the priest deal with the broken bowl from the position of the absolute, instead of the relative, so that he is not able to get angry, officially.

Hanashi Taizen, はなし大全, "A Complete Book of Stories," in three volumes, is said to have been published in 1687. The author is unknown. There are few good stories in it, two of the best being the following.

The Fallen God of Poverty

A certain man tried this and that, but it was all no good; his luck was out. Someone said to him, "Believe in the god Benzaiten," so he did so, and waited for seven nights. On the seventh night, it became very noisy in the ceiling and suddenly a dark-coloured, white-eyed, skinny creature fell down through a

hole in the ceiling. The man caught hold of him and cried, "Now I have caught the god of poverty! I must have my revenge on you," and began to beat him, but the other cried out, "Don't hurt me so much! It's not my fault. There are so many of us in the ceiling I was jostled and pushed out."

The point of this story is of course that there were a large number of gods of poverty collected there, so nothing the man could possibly do would bring him good fortune.

The Radish-Seller's Quarrel

"Radishes! Radishes!" A mountain priest (yamabushi) bumped against the radish-seller, who got angry, and shouted, "Now then! you stinking old yamabushi!" The yamabushi was also angry and cried, "You and your radishes! You struck me!" They began to tussle, but the people round pulled them apart. The radish-seller went off trembling with rage, his radishes on his shoulder, and calling, by mistake, "Yamabushi! Yamabushi!"

This is a good story. It must have actually occurred, for no one could invent it.

Kano Buzaemon Kuden-banashi, 鹿野武左衛門口傳ばなし, "Stories told by Kano Buzaemon", in 3 volumes, seems to have been published in the 3rd year of Tenwa, 1683. The illustrations are by Hishikawa Moronobu. Kano Buzaemon was the founder of humorous stories told with gestures.

The Elder Brother's Understanding

There was a flower-seller named Mohei who had two sons. The elder was about twenty, the younger about eleven. When the south wind began to blow, dust blew into the shop, so the father told the elder son Tarosuke to water the front of the shop. The younger son was sitting inside. His mother had gone the

neighbour's. Though she was over forty, she was still a young, spring-like person, and she came back in beautiful clothes. The younger son looked at her and slapped her hip, saying, "You coquette! you beauty!" The father saw him do this and said "Smack him! he shouldn't do such a thing to his mother!" The mother only said, "Now, now, what a foolish boy!" The father struck him, and Jirō cried out, so the elder brother ran in and said, "Who struck you, who?" The father said, "I did, and what about it?" "What did you strike him for? You know it is still the New Year!" "Why shouldn't a parent strike his own son? I don't want to excuse myself, but I tell you, I struck him because he slapped his mother's hip." The elder son said to the younger, "Father is right; why did you slap the hip of someone who is married?"

The interesting point here is the Freudian, the zoological fact that a mother is a woman, and a father is a man, and a son is a young male animal.

Eda Sangoju, 枝珊瑚珠, "Branched-Coral Gems," in five volumes, was published in the 3rd year of Genroku, 1690, by Kano Buzaemon. In this collection also there are no excellent stories. The following are the best of a bad lot.

A Gimlet in a Wine-Tub

A boy-servant from the of Koshisaya district, about eighteen years old, worked in the shop of Itamiya. One day he was told to bring some wine from the wine-tub. He came back and said, "I opened the spigot, but no wine came out." "Of course not! You must drive a gimlet into the tub first." When he did so the wine rushed out in a flood. The boy shed a corresponding flood of tears, and lay on the ground there, sobbing and sobbing. The master was surprised, and asked him what the matter was. "The wine reminds me so much of my father!" "Your father? Was he such a drinker?" "No, no! my father died from

being unable to urinate. If only I had driven a gimlet in his head he need not have died!"

The humour of this is simply our feeling of superiority in the matter of medical knowledge, but many surgical operations are no better, and end equally with the (hastened) death of the patient.

The Aid of Others

There once was a man who redecorated the drawing-room of his house. He invited his neighbours to the new room, and while they were enjoying the saké, his wife appeared and greeted them. "We have no dainties, but please drink saké in our new room." The guests said, "It must have cost you a lot to make such a fine room as this." The wife said, "We could not have done this by ourselves. We are grateful for the aid of you neighbours." Yosaku, coming back home, praised her to his wife and said, "She is such a clever woman! She never says anything wrong. With their fortune it was not necessary to ask the aid of others, and yet she talked like that!" His wife protested that anybody could have said such an easy thing. A fortnight after there was a feast at their own house; they had invited the neighbours to celebrate the seventh night of the birth of their baby. The guests said, "Congratulations! Your wife must be very glad. She was very fortunate in her confinement, and got a boy to crown it all." The wife came out and said, "The baby was born, not due to my husband alone, I am grateful for the aid of the young men in the neighbourhood."

It is difficult to speak without saying something all too true, and the more at random the more true.

The Fire-Watchman

Smoke billowed up from beneath the fire watch-tower of Iwai Street, but somebody soon saw it and put the fire out. People gathered, and began to wonder why the watchman did not sound

the alarm. The watchman declared stoutly, "You are right, but the head of the town told me to strike the bell three times, quietly, when the fire is far away; quietly but continuously if fifteen blocks distant. If the fire is in the next street I am to bang away at it like mad. But a fire just underneath the bell-tower! He said nothing about that. I didn't know what to do, so I just threw the stick down."

This is happening all over the world, in every house, in every heart.

Karukuchi Tsuyu ga Hanashi, 軽口露がはなし, "Light-mouthed Dewy Tales," in five volumes, is a collection of the stories told by Tsuyu no Gorobē, 露の五郎兵衛, of Kyōto, from whose name the title was taken. It was published in the 4th year of Genroku. Two characteristic stories follow.

Father's Glasses

A certain man went to get a seal which had been ordered at the seal-maker's, but the master was absent, and the son said he did not know the messenger. "That's impossible! When I came here the other day, you were here too, so you must remember me!" The son was troubled, but then said, "Wait a minute!" and took out his father's spectacles and put them on his nose. "Ah yes! when I look at you through these I can see—you were the man who came the other day," and he handed the seal to the man.

The magic power of things, especially personal belongings, relics, holy water and so on still remains with us enough to make us laugh at the superstitions of others, not our own.

Calligraphic Illiteracy

A very ignorant country samurai was walking along the streets of Kyōto, looking at the name-curtains of all the shops, but there was not a single character he could read. He stopped in front of a house which was shut up, and had a sign-board which said,

"House and warehouse to let." He asked his servant in a whisper "What does it say?" "House and warehouse to let." He nodded, and said in a loud voice, "The handwriting is poor, but the style is excellent."

This is what we say of Shakespeare.

Shōjiki Hanashi Taikan, 正直咄大鑑, "Complete True Tales," five volumes, published in the 7th year of Genroku, 1694, was "written" by Ishikawa Ryūgi, 石川流宜. The illustrations are better than the stories.

The Sham Centipede

While a group of people were talking about different things, someone said, "If a man carries cuprite [red copper ore], no centipede can approach him." The host said eagerly, "I was given a cuprite knife. I'll show you it." The other looked at and said, "Oh, this is only a sham one; this is no good." The host got angry. "This is no imitation! The person who gave it to me valued it highly. You just don't know what cuprite is!" Just then, because the roof was a thatched one, a centipede fell down from the ceiling. "This is a good chance!" they cried, and put the knife near it. The centipede crept onto it. "Look! It must be a sham!" The host became all the more vehement. "This cuprite is the real one! The centipede is probably a sham centipede!"

This is a justly famous story, and was repeated again and again in later story collections. The real point is that all belief is foolish, and the stronger the funnier.

No Women Know No

A certain man married a beautiful woman, and all day long they were canoodling, and all night long embracing. The maid-servant, Natsu, saw and overheard all this, and felt correspondingly envious and uneasy. One day the wife went back to

her old home. To comfort his loneliness the husband invited all his friends. As they were going back one of them said, "We know how you feel. You'll miss her tonight!" The husband laughed, and said, "Well, it can't be helped. Tonight I must lie on Miss Natsu's breast."

In her bed Natsu thought, "How lucky it is my mistress is away! My master is going to sleep with me!" And she waited there as children wait for the New Year. But still he didn't come, so she thought, "Perhaps he has fallen asleep; I'll go and wake him up." So she went to his room and opened the sliding screen very quietly.

"Who is it?" "It's Natsu, if you please." "What have you come here for?" I came to say 'No,' because you said you would come and lie on my breast."

This is a more delicate version of the Chinese story given on page 129.

The *Tsuyu Shin Karukuchi-banashi*, 露新輕口ばなし, "Dew's New Light-mouthed Tales," in five volumes, written by Tsuyu no Gorobē, was published in 1698. The stories are short and easy, but rather good. This collection is the best of the Genroku Era. The following come from it.

Direction

A young lord went to his realm for the first time, and the people of the district gathered to receive him. He asked them, "Which direction is the west here?" and the farmers said to him, "During your late father's life, this direction was the east and that was the west, that was the north, and that was the south. Please be gracious and merciful to us and allow us to have this direction as the south as before, and we shall be most obliged."

This sounds like the wise men of Gotham, but they are supposed to have only pretended to be foolish.

The Illiterate Father

A father who couldn't read was at a loss what to do when his sons were out of the house and letters came. "We'll leave some answers behind." "That's impossible!" "All right, I have an idea." He went down to the bottom of the garden and prepared some plaster. When a letter was brought by a messenger, requiring an immediate reply, he would stick his hands in the plaster and then show them to the messenger and say, "As you see, my hands are like this, so I will write the answer later."

Like blindness, illiteracy sharpens the mind.

A Greedy Priest

A certain priest was slightly indisposed, and in bed. A friend came to visit him, and saw a lot of offerings at his bedside. "How nice for you!" he said. "We work so hard, and lose so much money on credit, but you earn ever so much even in bed!" The priest said seriously, "Yes, but I'm far inferior to the Buddha of Zenkōji Temple. And also, I must eat."

He means that the offerings to the Buddha at the famous Zenkōji Temple are infinitely greater. In addition, the Buddha there does not and need not eat, but he must. This is the true greediness, which is insatiable, thoroughly egoistic, and above all things, unhumorous.

The Rest of the Song

On the way back from Mount Higashi, where father and son had gone to enjoy themselves, the father got into a very good temper and entered the village singing. He went past his own house, and the son said, "But father, there is our house!" The father looked quite unruffled and said, "Yes, but if I go in now the song will be in the middle."

This last sentence does not seem to be very good English, but

conveys the father's idea accurately enough, which is that of life for art's sake.

Sham Dumb

A dumb beggar was going round the houses beating his begging bowl. Someone said, "He's not dumb, he's only pretending." The master of the house said, "Oh, don't say such a cruel thing! Pitiful creature! How troublesome it must be for you to be really dumb!" The dumb man was touched by his human feeling, and said, "Yes."

Dumbness is one of the minor sources of our (sadistic) pleasure. What on earth we could enjoy in heaven is the greatest of all psycho-theological problems.

No-Talking Penance

Three men decided to perform the ascetic practice of absolute silence until midnight, when they would gaze at the harvest moon. One of them happened to say, "It's difficult not to say anything at all!" The second said, "Aren't you speaking during the time of silence?" The third man said, "I'm the only one who hasn't spoken yet."

The parabolic meaning of this is so universal as to defy exemplification.

Hatsunegusa Hanashi Taikan, 初音草壱大鑑, "The First Note Grass Great Collection of Stories," in seven volumes, was published in 1698 with ukiyoe illustrations by Gūgenshi, 寓言子, whoever he was. There are about thirty stories in each volume. The demand at this time for new stories is shown by the remark in the preface that "the humorous stories of Sakuden are now old-fashioned, like ancient gold lacquer." The stories themselves are told in an easy and not very distinguished style.

A DWARF

This picture, of a dwarf with a man and a priest pointing at him and two boys dancing with joy at his deformity, is part of the *Yamaizoshi*, 病草紙, "Pictures of Illnesses," painted at the end of the Heian or the beginning of the Kamakura Period. The illustrations are said to be by the 12th century Tosa Mitsuana, the writing being by the priest Jakuren, who died in 1202. The *Yamaizoshi* is a single scroll with fifteen pictures of sick people, including a man (and his children) with black tips to their noses; a man without an anus who defecates through his mouth; a woman with foul breath; a woman with a mole on her face; a hermaphrodite; an albino; and a man with many anuses. The book is a reference work for physicians, a portrayal of customs and the daily life of the people, but also points to causes and effects in human affairs. It shows us deformities and monstrosities, but without vulgarity or morbidity, and the comicality of such things is neither asserted nor denied, so that it is felt naturally, without contempt or pity. It was called, from the Muromachi Period, "The Six Roads Pictures," the six roads being those of Hell, hungry ghosts, beasts, Asuras, men, and gods. At the side of the picture it says:

Sometimes a dwarf comes up to Kyōto and walks here and there asking for food. Children follow him, laughing at him. He looks back angrily, but they are unabashed, and laugh at him the more.

Cripples, negroes, men with no hats or who wear sandals, foreigners, most women, all politicians, very rich people, those in love or insane upon other excuses, vegetarians, teetotalers,—all these are comical, and must be seen so.

The picture reminds us of the saying, "Even in laughing, there is a sword," 笑ひの中にも劔あり. The dwarf, as he looks back at the far from lovely people who are deriding him, illustrates to our eyes the proverb given on page 307, "The leper envies the syphilitic,"

京都にて
ひたひた
を食ふに
てはしり
てはへり
いかん
の見る
くあり
とま
を
侏儒
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保偏 214, 一 214 食 214 214 非
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The Master's Bowl

The retainers had gathered together and were drinking during their master's absence. One of them, named Sunehei, took out the master's bowl and drank from it. "Hey! that's the master's!" they cried, but he continued to drink, looking sulky, and said, "Even if it is the master's, he is not a beggar, and has no infectious disease, so why shouldn't I drink out of it?"

There is something sublime in this. Most virtue is simply disguised weakness, and we are refreshed by strength, ego strength. This story became very popular and appeared again in later collections.

The Width of Japan

Father and son came down from their mountain village to see Kyōto. They passed over Amanogawa and the Moor of Ikuno. The prosperous capital, the busy merchants, the crowded streets amazed them, and the son said, "Father, I have seen many places, but never such a one as this! Is this what they call 'Japan'?" The father replied "Oh, don't talk so silly, people will laugh at you, and I shall be shamed. Listen, Japan is three times bigger than this!"

Sometimes, while we are laughing at somebody, we suddenly remember that somebody else may be laughing at us. This last, the laughless laughter is the real Macoy.

The Unlendable Ladder

Everything has its limit, even though we draw the water of the River Gyokusen, taking them to be the infinite pleasures of life. There was once a very stingy man. Someone sent a messenger to borrow a tea-mortar from him, but he replied, "A tea-mortar gets into a habit of being used in a special way, so please come and use it here." Later on, the stingy man sent a servant to borrow a ladder, but the owner replied, with great

relish, "A ladder has a special way of being used, so if you want to climb up somewhere, please use it here."

This story is attributed to Ikkyu in *Ikkyu-Banashi*, 一休咄, published in 1672, but it sounds too old, too fabricated to be anybody's property.

A Death-Song

A young man suddenly fell down in a faint. People gathered around and tried various remedies, but none were of any avail. One careless man gave him a throat medicine in mistake for a restorative. The effect of it was that the young man began to move his lips. "He's coming round!" they cried, but while they watched him, he began to sing a song, "Cannot stop me till death," in a loud voice, and died.

This is a very good but somewhat difficult story. The throat medicine given him by mistake enabled him to sing a song, and one appropriate to the circumstances. There is here a making fun of doctors and their medicines, which are supposed to proceed as if by magic to some particular organ of the body, but there is also a macabre criticism of life itself.

Premature Gratitude

It is said that parents give the body to their children, but not the mind. As if to illustrate the truth of this, the eldest son of a certain worthy and respectable father had already won, at the age of twenty, the name of blockhead. His parents had a very clever servant attend him, but one trouble was that when invited out he ate up everything in sight, but never said thank you for it, or bowed, so the host always felt and looked awkward. The servant was sorry, and told him what he should say, before he went. The next time, he was invited out to some congratulatory party, and being the guest of honour, sat in the top seat. When all the dishes had been brought in and everything was ready he

suddenly called out to the host, "So many delicious things for me! They look nice, and taste nice!" The attendant, who had broken out into a cold sweat, glared at him, so the blockhead added, "Before I forget it."

"This is not altogether fool, my Lord." He reminds us also of the Red Queen in *Through the Looking Glass*, who screamed *before* she pricked herself.

Tōsei Hanashi no Hon, 當世はなしの本, "A Book of Tales of the Times," was published in the Teikyō Era, 1684-1688, just before Genroku.

Two Temples and Their Dogs

In a certain town there was a temple of the Hokke (Nichiren) sect and another of the Jōdo sect next door to each another. At the temple of the Nichiren sect they had a dog which they called Hōnen. The priests in the next-door temple of the Jōdo sect said to each other, "What a nasty thing to do! They call their dog by the name of the sacred founder of our sect. Let's pay them out!" So they also kept a dog which they named Nichiren. After they had made it very thin by giving it no food at all, they called the children of the neighbourhood and told them to set the next-door Hōnen and their own Nichiren on to each other. The children all came and called, "Come on Nichiren!", and, "Come on Hōnen!" and the dogs began to fight. As Nichiren was such a lean dog, it was soon bowled over, and the children jeered, and cried, "Nichiren lost! Hōnen won!" The monks in the temple of the Hokke sect were furious about it, and soon after got rid of their Hōnen.

The whole history of Christianity, from Peter's denial of Christ up to the present Pope's, is contained in this short story.

Karukuchi Hyakunari-byōtan, 軽口百なり瓢箪, "A Hundred Light-mouthed Gourds," in five volumes, was published in the 14th year of Genroku, 1701, by an unknown author, and republished in 1716

under the title of *Karukuchi Fukuzōsu*, 軽口福藏主, "Witty Stories of the Master of the Lucky Warehouse."

Easily Offended

A certain man said to his friend, "Mataemon next door is not an impatient, irritable man, so I thought, but actually he gets offended easily!" "I can hardly believe that; he never flies into a passion. What did he get angry about?" "While he was dozing yesterday, I put a small bit of hot charcoal, you know, a teeny-weeny bit as big as a pea, in his ear, and he got really angry. He's not the man I thought he was."

About such people we can say nothing, only keep an awed silence.

A One-Legged Legging

There was once a rather careless and care-free samurai. He was attending his Lord at falconry, but had on only one legging. His companion laughed at him, so he sent his servant to get the other. When the servant came back with it, someone asked where it had been. The servant answered, "It was put on round the verandah post." The samurai said nonchalantly, "It's a pretty dull world if we don't do that kind of thing sometimes."

The samurai had put one legging on his leg, the other round the post. When confronted with this absurdity, he declared he had done it on purpose, to amuse other people.

Tonsaku Hanashi-dori, 頓作はなし鶏, "Impromptu Free Chickens," was published during the Hōei Era, 1703-1710. This was a republished collection with a different title.

Goblin à la Mode

There once was a haunted house no one dared to live in. A

man called Jibudayu, proud of his physical strength, asked his lord to let him have the house. The lord, though he thought his wish odd, was persuaded by his earnest entreaty and allowed him to have it. Jibudayu went that night to the haunted house wearing a long sword which had been handed down for generations in his family. He sat there, and time passed, and it was already after two o'clock in the morning, but nothing happened. He was sure that the goblin was afraid of his power and would not come out. He pretended to go to sleep, and there appeared from a corner of the room the enormous head of a woman breathing out fire. Opening his eyes, Jibudayu said, "No, no, I am not afraid of a thing like you. You're old-fashioned, obsolete!" The goblin displayed various tricks: the arm of a devil came down from the ceiling; the paper-covered light danced round the room; a pillar got a pair of eyes and a nose. But he scorned each and all of these tricks, saying that they were stale. The goblin grew tired of disguising himself, and stopped appearing.

When the day dawned and the morning sun began to shine, there came a messenger from his lord, who said, "Well done indeed, Jibudayu! Your exploit of last night was beyond all description. His lordship will increase your stipend by two hundred *koku*. Be of good cheer!" On hearing this, Jibudayu bowed down with his forehead to the ground, and said, "I am most obliged." Looking up, he found not a soul there! He was astonished, when a voice was heard from the ceiling, "Come now, Jibudayu, is this old-fashioned too?"

To give the ghost also a sense of humour is the very finality of ghost stories.

Karukuchi Arare-zake, 軽口あられ酒, "Light-mouthed Pellet-rice Wine," in five volumes was published in 1705. The author is said to have been Rokyū, 露休, which is one of the pen-names of Tsuyuno Gorobē. The stories are not very interesting, but here are some of them.

A Stingy Father

A child had died, and the old man said to his son, "My son! don't cry so loudly. People may hear you and come to the funeral service and we shall have to give them some tea. That would be a pity, so say nothing about it. Put the body in a hamper and take it and bury it yourself. When you fill in the hole, some earth will remain over, so bring back the soil in the hamper and we can use it as the final coating of the cooking-range."

What strikes us here is not so much the stinginess of the old man, as the violent effort of the author to write a funny story. But one point may be noted, that only the father speaks. This is a new technique.

I am I. He is He

A blind musician called Sugoroku always carried a lantern with him when he went out in the evening. A man said to him, "You can't see; what's the use of your lantern?" The blind man answered, "I need it lest someone should bump into me."

Take symbolically, this means that all our pretended learning is to prevent others from injuring us.

A Competition of Weakness

There was a quarrel in a certain street. It got so violent that the bystanders said, "Now then make it up! Beg each other's pardon!" One of them ran away, and the other said, "Damn him! He got away before I did!"

The other man did not want to be defeated even in stopping. In peace-making and forgiveness and mercy also there is rivalry. We are told to love God because He *first* loved us.

A Witty Old Man

A certain old man was reading a book with his spectacles on, then gradually fell into a doze, and at last snored. His wife woke him up, rather unkindly, and said, "If you want to sleep, take off your glasses and go to bed properly." The old man replied, with a knowing look, "I was dreaming."

This means nothing in English but the Japanese is, "I am looking at a dream." "To dream" is "to see a dream."

Karukuchi Miyako Otoko, 輕口都男, "A Light-mouthed City Man," three volumes, was published during the Hōei Era, 1703-1710. The first volume has ten stories by Tsuyu no Gorobē; the second ten by Matahachi, 又八; the third two sets of stories by Tsuyu no Gorobē and Kano Buzaemon, 鹿野武左衛門. They all have marks showing the opinion of the selector(s), and comments, but there are no good stories with the name of the author. They were made artificially, and lack a natural humour.

The Temperature of the Bath

The new servant was told to go and see the temperature of the bath. "Very well, sir," and he brought a cupful of hot water, and offered it to him. "Here it is, sir." "No, no! What a fool you are! How can you draw the hot water of the bath with a cup? Break the cup and throw it away. What I meant was, is it all right to get in the bath or not." "I understand, sir." The servant went to the bath-room, and came back all wet, "It's all right now to get in, sir." The master was surprised. "What's the matter with you? You look as though you had come out of a bath." "Yes, sir, I got in to see the temperature."

This story is slightly more impressive in Japan, where the order of entering the bath is still (feudalistically) fixed.

A Different Man Dying by the Roadside

"I say, is Gorobē at home? When I passed along Kōjimachi, there was a man dying at the side of the road, with many people around him. I looked at him, and it was you! Good Heavens, I thought! To make sure, I rushed back here!" Hearing these words, Gorobē ran out of the house without even answering. When he got to Kōjimachi he at last found the dying man, and came back, and said, "Don't worry, it was not I."

This story also is less incredible in a country where egolessness is so much admired.

Fukurokuju, 福祿壽, "The God of Wealth and Long Life," in four volumes, was published in 1708, with a preface by Kūgendō Roken, 空言堂露嫌, who does not say, however, who the author was; he himself may have been.

The Nose

Someone praised someone else's nose. "A beautiful nose!" The owner however humbled himself: "It looks so outside, but inside it's only full of snot."

This is the real humour, which no one will laugh at; which makes a sadder and a wiser man.

Unlending Hammer

A stingy man sent a servant to borrow the next door people's hammer, but they said, "Ever so sorry, but we don't happen to have one." "Stingy brutes," he said. "Well, it can't be helped, use our's."

Stingy people only do what others would like to but are too ashamed to.

Who Farted?

A man and his wife were sitting in a room, when unknown

to them a burglar broke in, and hid himself under the verandah. Late at night the wind made a sound at the back door, and the husband asked his wife, "Did you fart?" "Certainly not!" said his wife indignantly. She was so angry the husband was troubled and said, "Oh well, perhaps a thief has broken in and is hiding somewhere, and *he* did it." The thief came out from under the verandah and said, "Now I must protest . . ."

This story is eminently oriental, in that one's reputation is everything. The man must apologise, not the thief.

Shinwa Emi no Mayu, 新話笑眉, "New Stories with Smiling Eyebrows," in five volumes, was published in Edo in 1712 by an unknown author.

An Unprayerful Prayer

The drought continued so long that no one could remember when it rained last. Everyone felt sorry for the farmers, and as there was a wonderful geomancer living in a certain street in Edo they went and asked him to do something about it. He was so good at praying for rain that it would fall even before he finished praying for it. The geomancer said he would do it, and came out of the house in persimmon-coloured clothes, a big sword at his hip, a black hat, a flat-beaded rosary, and a wooden staff, and set off to Kasai. He met an acquaintance on the way, who said to him, "Where may you be going?" "I was asked to go and pray for rain." "I see; that is why you are all dressed up." "Yes, so I hope it won't rain today."

Few prayers would ever be offered up in this world if the consequences of their being answered were deleterious to the one who prayed.

Well In

On a board it said, "House to Let in This Alley," so someone went to the owner and said, "I want to rent that house."

"What is your occupation." "I am a rice-huller." "Then it's impossible. The posts will sink into the ground, and the house will get all crooked." The next man was a tall, dark, husky-looking man. "What is your occupation?" "I'm a well-digger." "Then it's quite impossible. I wouldn't let even a rice-huller rent it. The joists would all get spoilt." "That's a funny thing to say, I'm quite different from a rice-huller. I go to many places to dig wells; what's it to do with the house?" "Oh, I thought you would dig the well at home, and then sell it."

This a rather good example of the saying, "One half of the world doesn't know how the other half lives." Clever people never realise how stupid the stupid are, and vice versa.

The Beggar Chōryo

A white-haired, mean-looking old man was passing over a bridge wearing new clogs. He happened to drop one clog over into the river bed. Looking round he saw a beggar on the bridge, and asked his name. "Chōbe." "Chōbe, just go and get that clog for me." "No, not for nothing," the beggar grumbled. Then the old man got a mean idea. He kicked off the other clog into the river bed and said, "Chōbe, go and get them and I'll give you a penny."

The title refers to the story of Chōryo given on page 272, which is thus burlesqued. Further, the old man is too mean to pay for one clog, and he throws the other over the bridge, so as to get something for his money.

Karukuchi Fukuzōsu, 輕口福藏主, "Light-mouthed Lucky Man," in five volumes, was published in 1716, and is said to be a republication of an older collection with a changed title. The author is unknown. The stories are not so interesting on the whole, the following being the best ones.

PLATE XXIV

WARRIORS AND BEGGARS

This is part of the *Yüzünembutsu Engi*, 融通念佛緣起, "History of the Circulation Nembutsu." *Yüzünembutsu* is repeating the name of Buddha for the sake of others, according to the principle of 一人一切人, 一切人一人, 一行一切行, 一切行一行, 是名他力往生, "One man is all men, all men are one man: one act is all activity, all activity is one act. This is called Salvation by Other-Power." The founder of the sect was Ryōnin Shōnin, 良忍上人, a monk of Hieizan, who became enlightened in 1117, and began to preach the doctrine of *Yüzünembutsu* from that year. He died in 1132. The scroll depicts the life of Ryōnin and the affairs of the sect. Such scrolls appeared at the end of the Kamakura Period, and many were produced in the Muromachi Period, some printed, some hand-painted. This particular scroll dates from 1463, the paintings being by Tosa Mitsunobu and the writing by the Emperor Gohanazono and the Shōgun Ashikaga Yoshimasa. The time was one of aristocratic prosperity, but the state of the people was wretched, and even the beggar in this picture are only half-human. The men at the top seem to be warriors, but they look somewhat odd, with flowery garments; one has a Buddhist staff. The man on the extreme right must be a servant. The beggars below appear bold and brazen, all "characters" of various kinds.



The Bill-Board

"Come and see the living tiger all the way from Holland. Your money back if it's not the real thing. See it first and pay afterwards!" A smartish-looking man asked the door-keeper, "Does the tiger look just like this picture on the bill-board?" "Yes, absolutely! Come in and see, there's no difference at all." "If it's just the same as the bill-board I don't need to go in and see it," and he went away.

The man was not merely mean but wise, because nothing on this earth is ever as good as the advertisements of it. No doubt Heaven itself will be a disappointment, even to the clergy.

Salutations

A son-in-law who had married into the house of some country people, was told always to bow to the people of the district, and to greet those who were working. One day he went out into the fields and saw someone cutting off branches at the top of a huge tree, so he beckoned to him. The man stopped, and came down the tree. "What is it?" "Oh, it's nothing. You are a very hard worker, aren't you?"

It would be too much to expect that the tree-climber should go back up to the tree smiling.

A Fire

There was a fire at a certain place, and many people collected and put it out. The master of the house said, "The fire came as far as the next door house, but through your kindness we were saved. Have a drink." "Oh, thank you!" said the half-witted son of the house, "and when yours burns we'll come."

This story is a little confused, but perhaps that is as it should be.

Tōryū-banashi Hatsuwarai, 當流咄初笑, "First Laughs of Tales of the Times," in five volumes, was published in 1726. The author

seems to have been Kozō Shōsenfuku, 小僧松泉福.

Crossing a River

Several men were making the rounds of the holy places of western Japan. They came to the River Seki of Ise, but there was no bridge or boat, and they didn't know how deep it was. Helplessly they gazed over the water, and saw a man going across it with only his head sticking out of the water. "Look! the water will come up to our shoulders." They knew nothing of the water hereabout, so they were very much afraid, but they screwed up their courage, and chanting Buddha's name, they stepped into the river hand in hand. But the water only came up to their knees. "It is unexpectedly shallow! This must be due to the favour of Buddha!" Gratefully they chanted Buddha's name with all their heart and soul, and reached the other bank safely. Now the one who was crossing the river before finished crossing at last, and climbed up the bank, and said to them, "Please sirs, give me a *mon* for the secret pilgrimage to the Great Shrine of Ise!" He was a cripple.

Chanting Buddha's name was originally the chanting of Kannon's (Avalokitesvara) name. This story is a later elaboration of the original (?) story, in which there is only the crossing of the stream by a cripple, given on page 222. The addition of the pilgrims' attributing the shallowness to the blessing of Buddha makes an already good story far better.

The next collection is *Karukuchi Kigenbukuro*, 輕口機嫌袋, "The Light-mouthed Bag of Good Humour," in four volumes. The preface was written in the 13th year of Kyōhō, 1728, by Shōsen, 松泉, the author of *Tōryū-banashi Hatsuwarai*.

A Top-shell

Ark-shells, clams, and top-shells gathered together and said, "What do you think about it? Those with fins can move

freely, but they are easily caught in a net, and that is good-bye to this life. We have our houses, and we are so safe when we shut our doors and hide in the sand." Before they finished saying this, the ark-shell opened his shell and said, "Good Heavens!" The rest of the shells all said, "Don't open your shell so recklessly, you may be caught!" "What are you talking about? We are on the shelf of a fish-monger's before we knew it."

This story must be the original of that in *Kyūō Dōwa*, 鵲翁道話, "The Moral Fables of Kyūō," published by the son of the blind moral philosopher Shibata Kyūō in 1834. The later story is much improved in the telling.

Zakyō-banashi, 座狂ばなし, "Stories of Fun," in three volumes, was published in 1730.

The Servant Dispossessed of a Fox

A new servant boy was possessed by a fox. After the prayers and exorcisms, he was dispossessed of it at last, but he seemed to be still absent-minded. The master got angry, and shouted, "You became a big fool since you were possessed by a fox!" The fox stuck his head in the window, and said, "He was like that from the beginning!"

This is the kind of story I like best of all. When I read it I really believe it, just as I do *Hamlet* and the gospels.

Egao Fuku no Kado, 笑顔福の門, "Lucky Gate Laughing Face," was published in 1732 by Kiseki, 其碩. We can see in this collection how great the difficulty was to write new stories.

A Well

"Oh, you are digging a new well? The old one will be wasted. Instead of filling it up, let me have it." "What can you do with an old well?" "Oh, I can keep a ladder in it."

The subtleties and ramifications of meanness are a source of never-ending pleasure to anyone with a spark of meanness in him.

Karukuchi Hitori Kigen, 輕口獨機嫌, "Light-mouthed Happiness Alone," five volumes, was published in Kyōto in 1733. The author seems to be unknown. The stories are either not very good or repetitions of older good ones. The following is not so bad, if read sympathetically to both parties.

The Stolen Bundle

"Santa, we are in the capital, where a thief may steal something from you even during the daytime if you are careless. So be careful how you carry this bundle." Saying these words, the master set out with his servant. When they got to a busy place in front of the theatre, the servant pulled the sleeve of the master and said to him, "As it is so crowded, please be careful of your purse." "Well said! I'm being careful of course, and you too with your bundle." "Yes, I had it stolen just now, so I told you to be careful."

The same story appears in *Edo Kobanashi* in a shortened form.

Karukuchi Shinnembukuro, 輕口新年袋, "Light-mouthed New Year Bag," was published in 1741.

A Souvenir from Naruo

A certain man was presented with some torigai (a kind of shell-fish) from Cape Naruo in the country of Tsu, and he was very glad, and said, "Well, well! I haven't seen a torigai for such a long time. What a pleasure! However, his wife, who was a very jealous woman, glared at it and was much displeased, but her husband, not noticing her feelings, said, "I say, dear, just mend this tear, will you?" and threw her the garment, but his wife looked nasty, and said, "Why don't you get Miss Torigai to do it?"

This story is interesting, first, as showing that a jealous woman will be jealous of anything. Second, she has an instinctive understanding of the meaning of this shell-fish, it being a (female) sexual symbol.

Warai Hotei, 笑布袋, "Laughing Hotei," is not given in the list of humorous story collections, but it seems to be stories written during the Enkyō Era, 延享, 1743-1745.

A Warehouse

There was a sound of someone making a hole, so the master of the house went there with a fire-shovel and put it against the wall where the hole making was being done. As the thief could not make any progress, he tried to make a hole at the side of it. Again the master put the shovel there, and the thief murmured, "It's funny, it's like iron or copper, I can't cut through it at all." The master of the house said from inside, "A good building, eh?"

What is interesting here is the super-moral irony of the master.

Karukuchi Haru no Asobi, 軽口春の遊, "Light-mouthed Spring Pleasures," in five volumes, is said to be the republication of *Karukuchi Hanasaku Kao*, 軽口花咲顔, "Light-mouthed Blooming Face," published in 1747. The stories are all second-class or second-hand.

The House of a Fox

A certain man was walking along a mountain path he did not know well, and as he wandered about in perplexity he saw a faint light in the distance. Going to the mountain cabin, he begged the owner for a night's lodging, which was kindly granted. But when he looked closely at him he found it was a fox. "Good Heavens!" he said, but it was too late to escape, and he made himself small in a corner of the room. Later, a visitor seemed to have come, so he looked outside, but this was also a fox, who inspected the man and asked the owner of the house what he might be. "Oh, that? That's a human being.

He asked to stay here for the night, so I let him.” The other fox clapped his hands and said, admiringly, “How nice and domesticated he is!”

This is an improved version of the bear-story given on page 551. Foxes are more suitable than bears for this kind of putting human beings in their proper place.

CHAPTER XXVI

Short Stories II

(after 1750)

As the 18th century passed, good stories became scarcer; imitated, vulgar, and artificially made up ones increased. Also, like *senryu*, stories were selected by judges and given prizes. Good literature can hardly be produced by such methods; repression and persecution (within limits) are better. The names of the collections and the authors became more *recherché* and more untranslatable. Yet in spite of all this, and the increasing commercialism and vulgarity, the best *kobanashi* continued to be what they had been from the beginning, not "rib-breakers," not designed to cause "belly laughs," but revealing certain hitherto unnoticed aspects of human nature. The mere truth about human beings is humorous. Only what is humorous is true. Only what is true is humour.

Karukuchi Ukare-byōtan, 輕口浮瓢箪, "Light-mouthed Gay Gourds," five volumes, was published in 1751, the author or editor being Tankatei Razan, 探花亭羅山.

The Point of the Point

There was a cowardly fencing master who one day gathered his disciples around him and said to them, "They say that when a man goes outside he has seven enemies. You must therefore be like the point of a sword." The disciples thought that just as a sword has a sharp point, a man should have a sharp, unyielding spirit. "Yes, we understand, master!" He went on, "You understand? The point of a sword comes out later, and goes in quicker."

This not very funny story seems to mean that it is better to keep a sword in its sheath, and not fight. It shows that by the mid-eighteenth century the samurai class was beginning to be openly despised by the merchant class.

The Servant's Pulse

There was a maid-servant who was excessively humble. Her mistress caught a cold and sent for the family doctor. He came, and after he had seen her she called the servant and said to her, "You don't seem quite well either; show the doctor your pulse." The maid-servant said self-depreciatively, "How should a woman like me have a pulse?"

Let Whitman speak to her:

And I say to any man or woman, Let your soul stand cool
and composed before a million universes.

A Doctor's Self-Praise

A certain doctor used to boast how he had brought the dead to life, and cured one after another the most difficult cases that no other doctor could have any effect on. An intimate friend of his said, "It may be as you say, but you are speaking only of your successes. Haven't you ever killed any of your patients?" The doctor replied, "That sort of thing is spoken of at the houses of my clients, so I needn't mention it."

Thus is a proper balance maintained in human affairs.

Her Past Betrayed

A ragman came to a back slum where a woman lived by herself. When he bought some rags from her, he found three koto plectra in the basket. The ragman said, "Since you have these plectra, you must have known better days. It is a pity that you have to live like this; times have changed." The

woman replied, "Yes, I used to live handsomely before. What a pity! I kept the whole set of five plectra until very recently."

The actual number of plectra which makes a set is three, not five as the woman supposes. She thus shows she had never played the koto (harp), which is plucked with three fingers only.

The Meeting of Forgetters

There was formed an association of people who were perfect in their forgetting of everything. Daibōya Gakuemon, whose turn it was to have the meeting at his house that month, sent out a circular letter which said,

On the 25th inst. a Meeting of Forgetters will be held at my house. Please attend without fail.

Gakuemon, so as not to forget the 25th himself, kept thinking of it all day long, from morning to night, and when the 25th did come, for the sake of those who would assemble he said to his wife, "You must clean the house today because many people are coming." His wife cried out in despair, "What are you talking about? Today is the 26th!"

Not only Gakuemon, but all the rest of the members had forgotten.

Karukuchi Tōbōsaku, 輕口東方朔, "Light-mouthed Tung Fangshuo," (a witty counsellor of the Emperor Wu, 2nd century B.C.) was written by Namiki Shōzō, 並木正三, in 1761.

The Failure of a Night-Watchman

A night-watchman, half asleep, beat the alarm drum to tell of a fire. The people in the town were astonished and disturbed to find that there was no fire at all. They grumbled at the night-watchman and told him to go round the town and say it was a false alarm. The night-watchman was obliged to beat the drum loudly, and go round crying, "The fire was postponed! The fire was postponed!"

This reminds us again of the Red Queen in *Through the Looking Glass*, who always wept before she hurt herself.

Karukuchi Taiheiraku, 輕口大平樂, "Light-mouthed Fool's Paradise," was published in 1763.

A Cowardly Samurai

There was once a very cowardly samurai who one evening wanted to go to the (outside) lavatory, but felt afraid, so he told his wife to bring a candle and go with him. From inside the lavatory he called to her, "Arn't you frightened?" "What is there to be frightened of?" she replied. He said admiringly "You are indeed worthy to be the wife of a warrior!"

After all, to be married to a courageous woman is better than nothing at all,—or isn't it?

Shōfu (Hsiaoфу) was transliterated into Japanese in 1767 by Nōtōsai Shujin, 蒙懂齋主人.

Dreaming

A certain man had not called on a courtesan for a long time. He met her, and they talked about how much they had wanted to see each other. She said, "Since we parted, every night I saw you, and we ate and played together. In my dream I longed for you indeed!" The man said, "Yes, I dreamed of you also." "What did we do in your dream?" "I dreamed you didn't dream of me."

This is a softened version of the Chinese story on page 136.

Karukuchi Haru no Yama, 輕口春の山, "Spring Hill Witty Stories," in five volumes, was published by Obata, 小幡, in 1768.

The Ghost of Nishidera

"They say a ghost appears in the grave-yard of Nishidera Street, and so nobody goes by there at night." "I'll soon

PLATE XXV

A GRAVE-YARD

This is a scene from one of the *Gakizōshi*, 餓鬼草紙, painted at the beginning of the Kamakura Period by Tosa Mitsunaga, the words said to have been written by Priest Jakuren, d. 1202. At the lower left there is a grave with a small stupa on it. Above, a dog is eating the corpse of a woman in a coffin. By the side, a Hungry Devil is holding an arm-bone in one hand, nursing a skull on his lap, while another Devil seems to be hurrying to join the feast. On the other side of the hillock lies a man, below, a woman, both evidently too poor to have a funeral or even a coffin. Above them and to the right there are two more mounds with stupas. The two Hungry Devils at the bottom are just looking around for something to eat. There seems to be a difference between those with red and those with black hair, but all have enormous and protuberant stomachs. As Hamlet says, "A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm." Perhaps this picture of a grave-yard is what God sees when he looks at our earth.



polish him off!" After a drink, he went to the cemetery and waited for it behind a big grave-stone. Just as he expected, it appeared with a rumbling sound at midnight, and went off southward. The man took some clay, filled up the hole the ghost had come out of, and stamped it down hard, and hid himself again. After some time the ghost came back, and with a rumbling sound tried to get back in the hole, but couldn't. Again it tried, with a rumbling sound, but again it failed, and at last said resignedly, "Alas! I fear my life is at an end!"

The humour of this is the humanity with which the ghost is described, its desire not to die.

The Notice-Board on the Bridge

A narrow river ran across the straight road, and there was a rather weak-looking bridge over it, and a notice-board which said no one should pass over it carrying more than 4 kg. A certain bill-collector came along with more than 6 kg weight of coins in a leather bag. He read the notice, and looked perplexed. After some thought, he divided the coins into three, and crossed the bridge throwing them up in the air, "One, two three; one, two, three!" like a child playing dubs.

I am quite perplexed myself to know to what, if any extent, throwing the money up into the air would decrease the total weight. It seems to me to depend partly on the length of the bridge, and partly on the number of times they are thrown up.

The Beggar and the Fire

A fire-alarm rang out loudly and one of the beggars on the bank got up, and cried excitedly, "There is a fire in the neighbourhood! It is quite near!" His fellow-beggar said, "You have nothing to burn. Why are you making such a fuss?" He answered, "I'm enjoying myself for a while doing and saying

what rich people would."

This is what constitutes all pleasure, imagining ourselves to be happier than we really are.

The Young Widow

There was a young widow in a certain place who lived in comfortable circumstances. One evening her servants and regular workmen gathered together round her and talked. "The late master was good-natured and merciful. He liked to take care of others. He was very kind to us all. A man of backbone!" Hearing it, the young widow said, "Yes, indeed. You are right. Were he alive now, he would never leave me a widow."

The implications of the last sentence are so delicately complicated that it is almost impossible to unravel them.

Karukuchi Fuku Ekubo, 軽口福えくぼ, "Light-mouthed Lucky Dimples," was in five volumes, but the original text and the author are unknown.

A Radish in Ohari

An old man who had been to Ohari said that he had seen a radish which was two metres long and one metre round. "That's a wonderful radish. I'd like to have the seed of it." "What for?" "I would plant it, pull it out, and use the hole as a well."

This is a story in the Chinese style, a pseudo-farmer's hyperbole.

What a Big Fool!

A certain man was always saying, "What a big fool!" so someone said to him, "The other day I heard of a man who was in the habit of saying 'What a big fool!' just like you, and he was arrested and executed for it, so you'd better be careful!" "What a big fool!"

So Buddha and Christ called people fools, and so we call them

Tomodachi-banashi, 友だちばなし, "Friendly Tales," was two volumes, published about the 7th year of Meiwa, 1770, with illustrations by Torii Kiyotsune, 鳥居清経, who was perhaps the author. The illustrations of almost all these collections of stories are never as good as the best stories, that is to say, they are poor artistically, like most of the stories.

Keys

A kamuro, the little girl-attendant of a courtesan in the Yoshiwara, found a bag of keys in the purse of a visitor. "You have so many keys, give me this one." "That's the key of the incense-box, so I can't give you it." "Then this one, please." "That's the key of my bookcase. No, you can't have that." "Then this one." "If I give you that one, I shan't be able to get in the house."

The humour of this is slight, but the painfulness of it makes it valuable. The little girl, wise beyond her years in all matters of sex and human relations, does not know anything about the world outside. She cannot go in and out of the Yoshiwara. There are only pornographic, trashy books there, and incense boxes are unnecessary things, so to her keys are only jingling, quaintly-shaped ornaments.

Kanokomochi, 鹿子餅, "The Rice-cake of Fawns," was published in the 9th year of Meiwa, 1772. The author was Sampū, 山風, one of the pen-names of Kimuro Uun, 木室卯雲, with illustrations by Katsukawa Shunshō, 勝川春章. The title is from the rice-cakes sold at Ryōgoku by Arashi Otohachi, famous for their deliciousness.

The Wrestling Hall

There was a match between Shakagatake and Niōdō, so the hall was record-makingly full. Even those with tickets could not

get in. "It can't be helped," thought one man, went round to the back, broke the fence, and tried to get through it like a dog. The manager saw him and pushed him out, saying, "No, this is not the way in!" So the man thought it over for a while, and pushed backwards with his hindquarters. The manager saw him, and pulled him in, saying, "No, that is not the way out!"

This reminds one faintly of the Korean story given on page 196. In other words it has a touch of Zen in it.

The Cow and the Horse

"With all the animals, those with divided hooves are fleet of foot. So the rhinoceros is extremely fast." "Yes, but the horse is fast too, and its hooves are undivided; how is that?" "As its hooves are not divided we can ride on it. If they were divided, nobody could get on such a swift-running creature." "How about the cow? The feet are divided, but it is terribly slow." "If the cow's hooves were not divided, it simply couldn't move at all."

It seems to me that this logic is no worse than that of scientists generally and doctors especially.

Three Quarters

A son of a rich man became ill from continuous heat and couldn't eat, so the people of the house gathered round and asked him if there was anything he fancied. "I don't want anything particularly, but I'd rather like a cold orange." "That's cheap and easy," they said, but as it was June, when they tried to get one there weren't any. There was one only in Suda Street, but they wouldn't sell it for less than 10 ryō. At last they bought it as they were rich people. The son was delighted and sprang out of bed. There were ten quarters in it. He ate seven, and said, "It's so nice; take them to my mother," and handed the three quarters to the assistant clerk, who received

them, and on the way there, absconded with them.

This has a distant resemblance to the Chinese story of the Man who Saw the Gold Only on page 50. When the clerk saw the three quarters of orange he saw only the money they cost.

Scraplessness

One rainy day, a masterless samurai sat with his sharp elbows waiting for fine weather. A beggar came and stood at the entrance, and said, "Sir, please give me your scraps." The samurai, with an expressionless countenance, replied, "There aren't any scraps."

You have to have some quietness, not quickness, of mind to appreciate this. Let me tell you a similar story of my childhood. One boy was eating an apple, and the other said, "Give us a bite!" "No," said the boy. "Well, how about the core?" "There ain't gonna be no core."

Koreans

A certain Korean came back from Japan to his own country, and his friends all gathered round and said, "You must have seen a lot of odd things in Japan, tell us about the queerest one of all!" "Well, everything was curious, but the funniest thing was an animal called 'ball.' First of all they make an enclosure in the garden and four men go inside. Then this 'ball' appears and bites their feet at random. One kicks it with his foot so as not to be bitten, then it goes and bites another's foot and *he* kicks it off. After some time one of them trod it to death; it gave a deep sigh and died."

This is a facetious description of the old Japanese "football," *kemari*, 蹴鞠. The ball was made of leather. The game seems to have been to prevent the ball from falling to the ground. At the end, the original says, "it farted and died."

Kikijōzu, 聞上手, "Clever Listening," one of the best collections, edited by Komatsuya Hyakki, was published in 1772.

Money

A certain samurai came to Kyōto from a distant province to improve his health, and employed a man-servant in a house he rented there. The year drew to its close, and 30 ryō was sent to him from his native place, and when the man servant saw this he began to think that 30 ryō was just the sum he needed to set himself up in business, so with some bloody thoughts in mind he approached his master and said, "What would happen to a man who killed his employer and robbed him of his money?" "A man who murders his master and takes his money will be searched for all over Japan, arrested, bastinadoed, and crucified. That's the law." "Well, I think I'll go to bed."

The anti-climax here is as good as any I know. Further, most morality is little better than this man-servant's.

The Copper Torii

The wife next door was having a very difficult delivery. Oh, it was such a nuisance, sending for a doctor, or buying some expensive ginseng! At last, her husband took off all his clothes, ran to the well, poured bucket after bucket of water over himself, and cried, "Oh, god of Kōmpira, please give her an easy delivery, and I will present you with a copper torii for your shrine!" Hearing his prayer, his wife called to him, "But dear, even if I have an easy delivery, how can we offer a copper shrine gate? Why do you talk such nonsense?" "Sh! have the baby quickly while I am deceiving the god!"

This man who is trying to make fool of the god is more religious than he looks, because he really believes in the god, whereas Christians don't and can't, since "He" is so transcendent and superhuman.

The Stutterer

"This year Hachisuke, who stammers, will scatter the beans to the devils. It will be fun." While they were saying this, Hachisuke held the pot of the beans at his side and shouted, "G-g-g—g—good f-f-f—fort-t-t—une ins-s-side, d-d-d—devil" The devil popped his head in at the window and said, "Am I to be in, or out?"

Does God listen to stammered prayers? Does He turn a deaf ear to hiccups, and to dropped h's?

The Halberdier

A warrior set out with a beautifully arrayed attendant to visit a certain mansion. The sheath of the attendant's spear rattled, and he turned round on his horse and said to the attendant, "Don't drop that spear-sheath!" Again he turned back and said, "Be careful of that sheath! Don't lose it!" Many times he repeated this, and when he turned round the last time,—there was no sheath! Now he was really angry, and said, "I told you to be careful so many times, and after all you have gone and lost it!" The attendant looked extremely bored, and said, "You were so worried about it, I put it in my pocket."

There is something of Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller in these two characters.

An Everyday Cat

"I heard that your cat has had kittens. Won't you give me one, please?" "Why certainly, I'll bring one immediately." When he brought it, the girl said, "This cat is not a very pretty one, I'd like a specially nice one." "Well I have brought it, so just make this your everyday cat."

This story has a very tender humour, rare at any time and in any place.

Hair-Tweezers

A man came up to a group of his friends and said to them triumphantly, "Look, I've just bought this pair of hair-tweezers." "Yes, nice tweezers! How much were they?" "Thirty two *mon*!" "Really? that's cheap!" Someone tried them on his cheek. "Why, they don't work!" "Yes, that's why I got them so cheap."

Nothing is better than something we don't need.

Sprinkling Water

One summer evening a man was sprinkling water in front of the house. A beautiful lady came along, so he turned his dipper to the other side and was just going to throw the water there when a pretty girl came up. He was afraid of splashing her, but the lady had come nearer, and not knowing what else to do with the water, he poured it over himself.

This is quite a Freudian story. The bollowing is a skit on the pedantry of all systems of theory or practice.

Amateurs

They were practising at a gymnasium of Jūdō, when a quarrel occurred in the next street. The Jūdō teacher ran off to the place, and came back with a big bump on his forehead. The disciples asked what had happened. He answered, "It was a quarrel between a carpenter's boy and the servant of the wine-shop. I tried to settle it, but they wouldn't listen to me. So I thought I would get them under, but was struck like this." "It seems funny! If it had been between samurai . . . but by a carpenter!" The teacher looked serious and said, "You know, they were non-professionals."

The Greatest Non-Drinker

There was a great non-drinker who felt sick even when he

passed in front of a wine-shop. He believed himself to be the greatest non-drinker in Japan, but heard one day that there was a great non-drinker who had moved to the next street recently from Kamigata, so he went there to compete with him. "I am the non-drinker of Edo. I heard about you and have come to see you." "Welcome! And just how dry are you?" "Well, listen, the other day I ate a tub persimmon, kept in an emptied wine-cask and got quite drunk, and it is said I let out some secret. I felt ashamed when I heard about it after I came to myself. That's how dry I am." On being told this the listener grew red.

If we drink, we are proud of drinking. If we don't drink, we are proud of not drinking. If we don't care which we do, we are proud of that.

The Kite

A little boy was trying in vain to fly his kite. The father came out of the house, saw him, and said, "Come along. I'll fly it for you. Let's go to the other side of the stream." He went there with the boy and when he ran a little, the kite flew wonderfully. The father was interested, and got absorbed in drawing it back and letting it out. The child urged, "Daddy, give it to me now. Let me have it!" The father answered, "Hold your tongue. I wish I hadn't brought you with me!"

This is so common and natural as to be almost not humorous.

Widows Are Best

Whenever men get together, they are sure to begin to talk about love. "I myself choose innocent girls in long sleeves." "Oh, no, I prefer ripe beauties to young ones." "No, I don't like non-professionals. Courtezans are more attractive." One of them said, "I like none of these. No woman is equal to a widow. A widow is best of all." On hearing this, all agreed unanimously. "Yes, that's true. A widow is the thing." Then

one man said, "Ah, I wish my wife were a widow!"

As Christ said to James and John, the sons of Zebedee, when they wanted something equally impossible, "Ye know not what ye ask!"

Valour

People gathered at a swordsman's house, and said, "There is a rascal hanging round the village who robs people of their clothes. The other day even a samurai was stripped; he seems to know how to use a sword!" The master listened attentively to what they said, and remarked, "That may be so, but the samurai must have been a pretty weak creature to have lost all his clothes like that. This evening I'll have a go at him. You come with me." That evening they all went out to the pine-trees, and the swordsman said them, "You wait here, and I'll settle his hash!" He went off alone valiantly, but after a while he came back all naked. His disciples were astonished, and said, "Master, what happened?" He whispered, "He was still there!"

The humorous point here, besides the shopman's scorn of the swordsman, is the latter's characteristic understatement, invariable when defeated.

Tannō, 譚囊, "The Story Bag," by Komatsuya Sanemon, 小松屋三右衛門, was the sequel to *Kanokomochi*. It was published in 1772.

A Footpad

A certain man was always saying that the world is so unsettled nowadays, we should most careful when we go out of the house. That very night someone knocked at his gate, and when he asked who it was, it was the voice of a man he had visited that day. He opened the door, and in came his friend all naked. "You see! Just as I told you, you must take care when you go out at night. Where were you stripped of your clothes?" "Nowhere. I was very careful, as you told me to be, and came like

this from my home.”

This is a burlesque of Bunyan's “He that is low need fear no fall,” which is true, but too true, for the very lowest is a mere blank.

Gakutaiko, 樂牽頭, “The Drum,” was published in the 9th year of Meiwa, 1772. The author or collector was Inaho, 稻穂. The stories are not very laugh-provoking, but they have some non-western flavour which may be interesting to a curious mind.

The Countryman

A countryman went to the Yoshiwara, and said to the courtesan when in bed with her, “Your name is Chiyama (a thousand mountains); as you belong to such a big house, your extravagant name is quite suitable. And your skin is like the snow.” “Oh, no, that's not true! Are you making fun of me?” “I don't mean the colour, I mean it's so cold.”

The story is laughing at the insensitiveness and introversion of the countryman type, obliviousness of any form of *iki*, elegance and charm, and insensibility to other people's feelings.

Suicide

The keeper of the Ryōgoku Bridge was summoned to court, and reproached. “Every night someone drowns himself from your bridge. Why aren't you more careful? From tonight you must keep a sharp look-out!” On that very night, while he was keeping a strict watch with eagle eyes, along came a suspicious-looking chap who tried to get under the parapet. The keeper seized him from the back and cried, “No mistake about it, you are the one that keeps on drowning himself every night!”

Is it too much to say that what we laugh at is our own inability to see the transcendental truth that it *is* the same person who commits suicide every night, who is born every moment . . . ?

Head-Seller

A man was walking along the road, calling, "Heads for sale!" "How much?" "One ryō." "That's cheap. I'll have one." He paid the money and pulled out his Masamune sword, lifted it,—and at that moment the head-seller twisted his body and thrust out a head made of cardboard. "But I bought your head!" "No, that was only the advertisement!"

The world of fantasy also has its value, though less than that of the imagination.

Bad at Chess

A traveller from Edo had to stop at Tatebayashi because of continuous rain. He asked for someone to play chess with him to kill time. Two men of the place came, but the man from Edo could not win at all. "Those who came a little while ago must be good players here." "No, they are beginners." "Will you please call a weaker one for me?" "I'm sorry, there are no weaker ones." "What an inconvenient place!"

The world is conveniently full of inconvenient things.

Big Characters

A courtesan wrote a letter in very big Chinese characters. "Are these big characters to be put on a paper screen?" "No, no! It's a letter!" "From the time of Buddha, I've never seen such a letter. It must be requesting something enormous." "No, it's to a man who is deaf."

Oddly enough, it is the characteristic of a Buddha to hear sights and see sounds.

Karukuchi Daikoku-bashira, 輕口大黒柱, "Light-mouthed Central Pillar," was published in the second year of Anei, 1773. It consisted of five volumes by Buchōtei Issui, 舞蝶亭一睡, who also made the illustrations.

Simplified Speech

A man kept a servant, who was so mean he made everything as short as possible. He always said “konyaku” instead of “konnyaku” [a paste made from the starch of the devil’s tongue], “tofu” instead of “tōfu” [bean curd]. In this way he made every word one syllable shorter. One day the master told him to buy “fu” [a light cake made of wheat-gluten], and the servant nodded and ran off. “What will he say this time?” the master thought, and followed him to the shop. The servant threw down the money, and said nothing.

With hyperbole as with everything else, the more the better.

Tobi Dango, 都鄙談語, “Capital Country Dumplings” was published in 1773. (Here the English puns as well as the Japanese.)

A Shower of Umbrellas

Just outside the window of the guard-house, a head-workman sheltering from the rain called out, “Go to Nagakichi’s and say, ‘Umbrellas have begun to fall, so please lend me some rain.’” The daimyō overheard this, and thought it very funny, and called his principal retainer and said to him, “Just now, a low-class person passed by and said, ‘Rain has begun to fall, so I want an umbrella.’ Don’t you think that was funny?” The principal retainer bowed deeply, and said, “Yes, indeed!” but did not laugh, so the daimyō said, “You seem to be standing on ceremony; you may go into the next room and laugh.”

The daimyō, as his position demands, is the most comical of the three.

Tobidango, 飛談語, “Flying Dumplings,” was published in 1773 by Uzu Sanjin Shōbubō, 字津山人菖蒲房. The title seems a pun on the former collection.

The New Servant

“Hachisuke, I want you to go on an errand to Mr. Genzae-

mon!" "Yes, sir!" And off he went. "He went on a message without waiting for the message. What on earth will he say, thoughtless creature!" Here he was back again. "Hachisuke, what message did you give?" "Luckily, he was absent."

It is often said, but seldom believed, that our worst troubles are those that never come.

Be-Beating

A retainer of the Bichū clan, a Shintō priest, quarrelled in the town, and was beaten and kicked, and came back very forlorn. His friends were vexed, and said, "Why didn't you tell them you were a retainer of Bichū?" "I tried to. But every time I said Bi- they beat me, and I never got to chū."

There is something parabolic here. All our life we are saying Bi; but the universe never lets us get to chū.

Bequeathing his Wealth

The old man next door who came here recently became seriously ill and they are speaking about how he is leaving his money behind, a hundred ryō to the eldest, two hundred to the second, three hundred to the youngest. A strange way of dividing out his money! It should surely have been three hundred to the eldest and less and less to the others. But no; on closer inquiry, he was leaving his debts.

So it should be ladies first, even at an execution.

A Cold Hot-Bath Is Awful

A countryman was persuaded to buy a bath-tub when he came up to Edo, and took it back to his village, where they had never seen one before. Everyone came to see it, and asked, "What's it like? Is it something good?" "Yes, it's fine, but it's unbearable until it gets hot."

This story would hardly make the *New Yorker*, or *Punch* even, but it has something that they have not, human sweetness and innocence.

Zokudan Kuchibyōshi, 俗談口拍子, "Popular Beating Time Orally," was published in 1773 by Karukuchi Miminuki, 軽口耳抜, whose name means "Light-mouthed Pulling-ears-out."

New Year's Day

"Listen! As soon as the new year begins, the nightingale sings." The nightingale heard this and said, "How should I know it is New Year's day? I just sing."

This is the comic spirit denying false poetry.

A One-Sen Prayer

A stingy old man visited a temple with a boy servant. He wanted to offer a 3 *sen* coin, but when he searched in his purse he found only 4 *sen* coins, so he offered one very unwillingly, and said to the boy, "You'll have to pray, too!"

This seems to me a true description of almost all prayer and its psychological basis, which is the profit principle, giving nothing without something in return, flattering the god, sometimes even blackmailing him.

Zokudan Kotoshibanashi, 俗談今歳花時, "Popular Stories of the Blossoming Year," (the name is a parody of *otoshibanashi*) was published in 1773 by Bushi, 武子.

The Death Verse

A thief was at last caught, and was going to be executed, but he said, "Wait a bit, I want to write my death poem." "Well, that's no bad thing. Please tell us it." So the thief recited:

かゝる時こそ命の惜からめ
兼てなき身と思ひしらすば

At this time
 How I would regret
 To leave this world,
 Had I not known from the first
 That I must die!

Those who heard it cried, "Hey! that's by Ota Dōkan!"
 The thief said, "Yes, and this is my last theft."

This is like many European stories of excutions, for example of Sir Thomas More, who moved away his beard from the block, saying that it was guiltless. Ota Dōkan, 1432-1486, is famous as a warrior and a poet.

The Owl

A man asked, if there were a medicine to enable one to see well at night. Someone told him to burn the eye of an owl black and put it in his own eye. He did so, and he could see to several blocks away as if in the daytime, and he walked about all night enjoying himself, but when day broke, it turned pitch-dark!

A Münchausen example of Emerson's doctrine of compensation.

Futatabi Mochi, 再成餅, "More Rice-cakes," was published in 1773 by Kogaku Seikasai, 古岳崋青可齋.

Entering a Pupil

A man wanted to become the disciple of a professor of thieving, and while they were discussing the matter, a thief entered from the back, opened the chest of drawers and was taking off all the clothes in it. Seeing this the prospective pupil said excitedly to the professor, "Master! a thief has got in from the kitchen, and has taken out the clothes!" The master said, with a dignified look, "Today is exercise-day."

The idea of "honour among thieves" is a most interesting one. It

shows that man is incurably moral.

Longevity

"It is not true that a tortoise lives for ten thousand years. I bought this tortoise some days ago and it died last night. We can't believe what people say."

"But perhaps it was just ten thousand years old last night!"

There is no arguing with a fool, that is, with anybody.

Breakfast for the Deaf

A deaf man was sitting basking in the sunshine. The servant boy came up to him and said, "Master, breakfast is ready," but the deaf man could not hear. So he said again in a loud voice, "Breakfast is ready," but his master still took no notice. So he bawled into his ear, "BREAKFAST IS READY!" The master scolded him, saying, "Why do you make such a secret of it?"

Deafness, blindness, and dumbness (spiritual and physical) are second only to death (spiritual and physical) as subjects of humour.

The Day of Abstinence

A certain man was given the first bonito of the season by a neighbour of his. How lucky! But unfortunately it happened to be the day of abstinence for his late father. He wondered for a while what to do. Then he carried the bonito before the altar where his father was enshrined, and, "Father," he said, "I received this bonito from someone. But as it is a day of abstinence for you, I can't have it. Do you mind my eating it? If you don't mind, it is not necessary for you to say so."

This is perhaps an epitome of all religion. Silence is always taken for consent to the most preposterous ideas or disgusting actions.

The Exhibition of Buddhist Treasures

Treasures were being exhibited at Edo-in. "The sacred treasures are shown on the left. This is the skull of Lord Yoritomo. Approach near, and look closely at it." Hearing this, one of the viewers said, "I thought the skull of Yoritomo would be larger. This looks too small." The explaining priest answered, "This is the skull of Lord Yoritomo when he was three."

It is odd that this lie, this impossibility is so much more interesting, more true, than the so-called truth.

Bill-Collecting

"Good morning, Miss Plum Branch, I have come to collect your bill. Please pay it within the year."

Courtezan: "I wish I could. But things have not turned out as I expected. I am worse off than before. Please wait till next year."

Bill-Collector: "I am sorry. Please pay me half the money at least."

Courtezan: "I can't raise any money. Please forgive me."

Bill-Collector: "But how can I face my master if you delay paying? I shall have to hang myself."

Courtezan: "Please end the year in that way."

Men exaggerate facts humorously, women emotions seriously. The courtezan takes him to be quite serious about suicide, and feels relieved that she won't have to pay this year. This impersonal humourless humour is divine.

Red if not Read

A man was sent two salted bonitos from his relative in Edo. As he was illiterate, he was at a loss, not knowing how to read the letter. In came the landlord. Jumping at this opportunity he said, "Well, I have got these from Edo. Would you kindly

read the letter for me?" The landlord couldn't read either, but he concealed the fact and said, "All right, I will read it for you. Listen to me. Er . . . I hope you are quite well. I am sending you these two salted fish and five straw-bags of millet." "Sir, these bags of millet are ours." "Oh, yes, that's true. So he writes in the postscript."

There are some people, among whom I myself am not included, who always say exactly what they know, and never pretend to anything more. But there is something a little bit uninteresting and inhuman about them.

Otogigusa, 御伽草, "Story-Grasses," 1773, was by Rakugan, 楽丸.

An Assumed Voice

A man couldn't sleep well, being alone; and also the rats were making a scuffling noise. As they ran about altogether too freely, he miaowed, and a rat on the shelf became still and silent. He thought he had succeeded, but another rat said to the rat on the shelf, "Why do you stand still?" And it answered, "Come and listen to this imitation of a cat!"

This seems to me a not entirely impossible story.

A Hat

"Good Heavens! Where on earth did I put it?" He looked everywhere. His daughter-in-law asked, "What are you looking for?" "I can't find my hat." "It's on your head!" "So it is! Why did I put it in such an extraordinary place!"

This may seem but a feeble story, but we must understand it a little more deeply, a little more kindly. The man has taken off his hat, and wants to put it down somewhere, but there seems no suitable place for it, so he puts it in the most peculiar place of all for a hat when not wearing it,—on his head.

Mamedango, 豆談語, "Bean-Dumplings," is a small book of 35 stories. The author is unknown, but the illustrations were done by Katsukawa Shunshō, 勝川春章, and it seems to have been published about the 3rd year of Anei, 1774.

The Purse

When her husband was not at home the wife said to the young man next door, "Tonight my husband will be back late." They were in medias res when the husband knocked at the gate. Exclaiming, "Good heavens!" the young man escaped over the roof, but dropped his purse. After giving the matter much thought, the next day he came with an innocent look, and said to them, "There's something I want to ask your opinion about." The husband said, "About what?" "It is nothing of importance, but I'm fond of some woman and I went to her house yesterday. The trouble is I left my purse there and if her husband should notice it" The wife said, "Oh, what nonsense you talk! A woman who had a paramour would never let her husband even suspect such a thing." The husband said, "A fool whose wife has a paramour will never notice the purse even if it was just beside him."

All three are fools, and are saved by their stupidity. The young man should not ask such a dangerous question. The wife should not say that a woman can easily deceive her husband. The husband should not suppose that he is not a fool.

Hamashi Wakajishi, 嚙雛獅子, "Stories of Young Lions," was published in 1774 by Senzō, 千三.

Lantern-Seeing

A countryman who was staying at a courtesan's house went to see the lanterns, and wanted to come back. But he forgot both the name of the house and the direction. At last he managed to find something he remembered, and asked a young man of a

certain house, if there was a guest who had gone to see the lanterns, in blue clothes. "Yes," he replied, "There was, but he is not back yet." "Am I the one? Look at me."

This is a variation of what afterwards became the absent-minded professor story.

Shinkō Hanaegao, 新口花笑顔, "New-mouthed Flowery Smiling Face," was published by Ryūjisai, 龍耳齋, in 1775.

A Big Lie

"Listen! When I went to the mountains the other day, a huge wild boar rushed out and I took it by its horns!" "What? How can a wild boar have horns!" "Ah yes, I took it by its tail." "Nonsense! It has no tail!" "Then what did I take it by?"

This kind of story has its justification in the fact that though the imagination may sometimes be too strong, as in the above case, without imagination even a dog would find it difficult to live at all. It must "imagine" a thing to some extent, in order to be able to see or smell it.

Chanokomochi, 茶の子餅, "Tea and Rice-Cakes," was published in 1774 by Akera Kankō, a writer of *kyōka*, and a friend of the First Senryū.

An Unemployed Samurai

A very stiff-and-starched samurai was waiting for the barber to come to shave his head. He had the hot water all ready when the barber arrived. "Good afternoon, I'm sorry I kept you waiting!" "You were a long time." "Yes, that's so. Today there's a wedding at the wineshop near here, and a lot of people wanted to be shaved." "Yes, but I wanted to be shaved too." "I see; are you invited also?" "Well, no, not exactly. No one has come to invite me yet. But if someone does, I shall go, and if they don't, I shan't. That is the samurai spirit!"

The point here is the way in which the samurai attributes the most ordinary act to the noblest of motives. We find this kind of thing taken off very often in Dickens.

A Mean Man

A stingy old man who was about to die made his last request, that they should not spend much money, and that they should send him to the temple before daybreak for cheapness sake. The relatives gathered together, and said they couldn't do this and that. The old man sat up and said, "Well, I won't die then!"

This is an inferior and invented version of Pope's description of old Euclio's death in *Moral Essays*:

"Your money, sir?"—"My money, sir, what, all?

Why,—if I must—(then wept) I give it Paul."

"The manor, sir?"—"The manor! hold! (he cried),

Not that—I cannot part with that!"—and died.

Tobacco

"It's a nuisance, I forgot my tobacco pouch. Let me have some of yours, if its not too strong." "Mine is very strong."

"Then let me have a good deal."

When we are dealing with impudent people, neither yes nor no will do, not even silence, only absence.

Mourning

There was a man who was always fully prepared beforehand. When his father caught enteric fever, he put up a notice of mourning at the gate. The relatives thought this was too much, and said, "That is going too far. You can prepare for the funeral privately. But the notice of mourning is something public. The neighbours will come and offer condolences. You had better take it down." "You should read it more carefully,"

said the son. When they looked at it again, they found a line at the corner, which read: "As from one of these days."

Shin-otoshibanashi Ichi no Mori, 新落ばなし一のもり, "New Witty Stories, One Pile," was edited by Raifū Sanjin, 來風山人, and published in the 4th year of Anei, 1775.

The Attendant

Short of stature, a doctor was out with his attendant, who was very tall. The attendant tried to spit over the head of his master onto the ground, but failed, and it fell upon the head of the master. The doctor got very angry. "To spit on the head of one's master! It leaves me speechless! Outrageous creature!" "Oh please pardon me! I didn't do it on purpose. It was going all right, but the wind happened to blow that way." "Well, never do it again!" And the master went on ahead. The attendant muttered to himself, "It always went over quite well before . . ."

The attendant still feels inclined to blame his master. This story reminds of the salivatory prowess of the Americans described in *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

Tea-Art Man

A man went to Fukagawa and saw a fine residence. The gate was open, so he went in the garden and found a tea-house in it, in which the fire-place was ready. As there was nobody there, he entered the room and drank the tea. A servant found him and went to his master, "Oh, please look! There's a funny chap in the tea-room, maybe a thief! Shall I knock him down?" "No, no, wait!" While they were talking about what to do the man clapped his hands. "What a man! Just go and see what he wants." The servant went in, and bowed to him, "Is there anything I can do for you?" "You are very noisy out there!"

The true artist, the true musician, the true poet, that is, the true man always has this impudence.

Hell

A very ugly woman died suddenly after a quarrel caused by jealousy and went to Hell. She wished to become a ghost to haunt her husband and asked Yama, the King of Hell, to this effect. Yama looked at her and grumbled at her, saying, "You are so ugly that I cannot allow you to be a ghost." The devil attending her pulled her by the sleeve and whispered, "Ask to be a goblin."

The art of life is the using of our goodness, beauty, and truth,—or our badness, ugliness, and falsity. It does not matter in the least which it is.

Mamedarake, 豆だらけ, "All-over-Beans," was published in the 4th year of Anei, 1775. The author is unknown, but the painter of the illustrations was Katsukawa Shunkō, 勝川春好, a disciple of Katsukawa Shunshō. There are 21 stories and 13 illustrations in the book.

The Medicine-Fee

A certain poor courtesan became seriously ill. When she became well better she said to the doctor, "Thank you very much. I am better now—and—I must pay you, but I have been in bed so long I have no money. Please sleep with me one night, and take that as my medicine fee." They came together one evening, and the doctor heard a creaking noise underneath the bed and put his hand under and pulled something out. It was a tray.

To understand this we must remember that the "bed" is quilts laid on the floor, and that the tray was used to hand money or something valuable on. This story is extremely good. Christ was right and Freud was wrong; man does not live by sex alone.

THE EARTH-SPIDER

The artist was Tosa Nagataka, the writing by Kenkō Hōshi, done at the end of the Kamakura Period. The pictures of the scroll are examples of what is called *yamato-e*. The story is as follows. Once when Minamoto Yorimitsu, 源頼光, went to Hasudai with a henchman, a skeleton appeared and flew off into the clouds. They followed it, but it disappeared as they came to a dilapidated house. They entered it and found an old white-haired woman, her upper eyelids thrown back over her head, her breasts hanging down on her lap. She said she was 290 years old, and wanted them to kill her. In the evening, it began to thunder, and there was a sound of drums being beaten and the forms of many monsters, and then a nurse with a big face appeared, naked to the waist, all dolled up. In the early morning a woman as beautiful as Yōkihi appeared, and stood up suddenly and threw ten balls of cloud at Yorimitsu. He drew his sword and cut them down. With the dawn, he found his sword broken, with white blood on it, and followed the traces into the deep mountains. He found an Earth-Spider in a cave and cut his head off. Then 1990 heads grew in its place but he burnt the whole thing, and got a medal for it. The present illustration is of the killing, but the story is told in a cheerful and light-hearted way. The Earth Spider itself (called in the text a Mountain-Spider) is a rather childish and fantastic creation, and belongs to the family of Jaberwocky.

In the Nō play, the Spider appears first as a monk. There is a *senryū* which puns on this story and Minamoto Yorimitsu's henchmen, who were known as the Four (heavenly) Deva-Kings, 四天王:

土蜘蛛は化けて四天へ巣をかける

Tsuchigumo wa bakete shiten e su wo kakeru

The Earth-Spider metamorphosed itself,

And threw its web

Over the Four Heavens.



Takawarai, 高笑い, "Loud Laughter," in one volume, was selected by Chimpunkan, 陳奮翰, (Nonsense) a comical pen-name of Shokusanjin. It was published in the 5th year of Anei, 1776.

The Bill-Collector

On the very last night of the year, "Hello!" "Who is it?" "It's the rice-dealer." "Oh, the master is not at home." The voice sounded just like that of the master himself. So the bill-collector made a hole in the paper-sliding door and peeped inside. The master was warming himself in the kotatsu (foot-warmer). "Hey, you said the master was not at home, but there you are!" The master got angry. "Why did you make a hole there? This is my house, you know." "I'm sorry; I will repair it." He repaired the hole. "Now it's all right." "You can't see me any more?" "No, sir." "Then, I'm not at home."

After all, "not at home" may mean physically or socially or financially.

The Doctor

A quack doctor bowed to his spoon every time he came back from a patient's. His wife wondered why and asked him about it. The doctor answered, "Don't be silly. But for this I would have been executed long ago."

This doctor only is honest, all others dishonest.

Urikotoba, 賣言葉, "Tit for Tat," was published in 1776 by Seizei Han-shiwa, 整々畔市和. (Nearly half a wrinkle?)

Drowning Herself

A woman of about thirty years of age came to the New Great Bridge. Throwing down one *mon*, she began to pass over the bridge in haste. The bridge-keeper called her back, saying she had to pay another *mon*. The woman answered, "I am going

to drown myself from the middle of the bridge.”

This is perilously near the maximum of cruelty and the minimum of (mathematical) humour.

Eyegnorance

A man called at his landlord's and said, "I didn't know at all that you were unwell. When I came back home today my wife said that you had ophthalmia. How do you feel now?" The landlord appeared from within, saying, "You are welcome. I feel better since yesterday." Looking at him, the man said, "I see. You are not only suffering from ophthalmia, there's something wrong with your eyes."

The great fault of men is that they use words that are meaningless, such words as God, infinity, the absolute, perfection, ophthalmia.

Satonamari, 柳巷訛言, "Red-Light Brogue," published in 1777 by Chikura, 知久良, consists mostly of stories of the Yoshiwara.

Oh to be a Samurai!

Courtezan: "I'd like to be a samurai." The samurai said, "Thank you, it's a nice compliment." "No, no, I really wish to be a warrior." "Why?" "Because a warrior receives money for fighting in a war which does not exist."

A soldier is paid even if there is no war, but a woman only if she struggles. War is romantic. Sex is strictly business.

Shin-otozhibanashi Hatsugatuuo, 新落咄初経, "New Comical First Bonito Stories," was published in 1777.

Sleeping Out

A poor man made up his mind to go to his native place to get some money. He went on the journey with his child. As they had little money for travelling expenses, they decided to sleep outside. He found a pair high clogs and gave it to his

child as a pillow. After a while the child said, "Daddy, my head aches on these clogs. I'd rather sleep with bare feet."

This is the poetry of children, which is simply poetry, in its bringing together of apparently unrelated things, (clogless) feet and (pillowless) head.

Hanashi-zumō, 咄角力, "Story Wrestling," was published during the Anei Era, 1772-1780.

A Failure of Memory

The chief priest said to a priest who was visiting him, "I hear you went up to the capital the other day." "Yes, I did." "Anything interesting?" "Yes, there was." "What?" "I gave a Buddhist name to a ten-year-old boy, and he composed his death-poem." "How pitiful! And what did he say in his poem?" "Oh, yes, ah, let me see . . ." "You've forgotten?" "I did remember it, but it has just slipped my memory." "If a priest is so forgetful how can he get enlightened? Be careful! There was a disciple of Shaka who was just like you, who was called . . . his name was . . . ah, let me see . . ."

I myself forgot who this disciple was; then I remembered that he comes in the *Nō* play *Sotoba Komachi*, where it speaks of the folly of Handoku, 槃特, Panthaka, who could not remember what Buddha told him although it was repeated by the five hundred disciples of Buddha every day for three years. See Plate IV.

Ki no Kusuri, 氣の藥, "Medicine for the Mind," was published in 1779 by Kokko Tsūjin, 黒狐通人.

Shooting to Far Away

"I am going to the offing of Shinagawa long-distance shooting. Would you like to come with me and see it?" said the samurai. His regular merchant came with him gratefully. They reached the offing in a boat, and the samurai drew his bow to

the full and shot the arrow with a thrilling sound. The merchant bowed and said, "For the first time I saw an arrow go so far away." "Oh, that poor man in China!"

The samurai meant that he had hit a Chinese man in China. This is a good example of imaginative hyperbole.

The Watch-Tower

A thief climbed up a watch-tower and was going to steal the bell there. The watchman woke up and challenged him. He pretended innocence, and said, "I want to ask you, how can I get to Honchō Street?" "Ah, Honchō Street! You come down this ladder, and . . ."

The ingenuity of the thief and the ingenuousness of the watchman make an absolute contrast that is absolutely satisfactory.

Susuharai, 壽々葉羅井, "Spring Cleaning," (literally "Congratulatory-leaf-gauze-well") was published in 1779 by Shijō, 志丈.

A Pack-horse Driver

At the end of the year, a country horse loaded with radishes made water often. The horse-man felt irritated. "You make water too often, and I have to keep on waiting when the day is so short. Can't you do it walking?" The horse said, "Sorry! I'm not a horse-man!"

This has a refreshing "vulgarity." We can see the interesting picture of the horse-driver walking along, pissing in a waving motion, —through the eyes of his horse.

Okiniosewa, 大きに御世話, "Ever so Nice of You!" was published in 1780 by Kami Shinjin, 神真人.

The Bedding

A certain man stayed the night at a bachelor's house and

they slept in the same bed. During the night he felt cold, and woke, and found that the other man had pulled the quilt all over himself. The guest pulled it back, got warm again, and fell asleep. Then the bachelor awoke and pulled it back. Pulling this way and that, several hours passed, until the guest got sick of it and sat up and had a smoke. The bachelor woke up and said, "Is it morning already?" "No," said the other, "it's not four o'clock." "Then why are you up?" "I thought we'd better have a little rest."

Play is often harder work than work.

A Hunter

A hunter went into the deep mountains after a great snowfall. He happened fall into in a ravine far below. When he looked round, he found two bears, in a big cave there. "Oh lord! It's all over with me! What shall I do?" He had heard that bears are kind though they are animals, so he tried to beg their mercy by kneeling down in front of their cave, and weeping. One bear nodded and invited him inside the cave, and the hunter followed it timidly. The other bear wanted him to lick his paw, and stuck it out. The hunter thought it was to tell him to lick it, but somehow it was uncanny, and he hesitated. The other bear then again licked his paw and offered it, so he timidly tried to lick it. It was very very sweet. The other bear stuck out his paw, and this time he licked it well. The bear said, "Well, now he's domesticated."

It would be interesting indeed to see some men tamed by animals, guarding houses, giving milk, and performing in circuses. This story is somewhat the idea of *A Man in the Zoo*. In the next the world of men is seen from the ant's point of view.

Ants

Several ants were pulling with all their might and main a

grain of rice, "Now let's have a rest. I hear that human beings eat this rice we pull with such effort. They are said to put it into a bowl and eat millions and billions of rices at one time. Human beings must be great huge creatures!" The other ants said stoutly, one and all, "I don't believe it!"

Mamebatake, 男女畑, "The Field of Men and Women," was published in the first year of Temmei, 1781, the author being the famous ukiyo-e painter Katsushika Hokusai. He wrote and illustrated this book when he was a young man named Shunrō, 春朗. Beside painting he wrote *kibyō-shi* and *senryū* and *haiku*, so it is not strange that he should write this kind of book, but this is the only one with his name as the author. However, his original stories are not numerous, the others being imitations, many from *Kotoshibanashi*. It is a small book with 27 stories and 11 illustrations.

Half-sleep

A man stayed at his friend's house. He woke at midnight and found him sleeping deeply, so he got up and went into the wife's bed. The husband then woke, saw them, and got very angry. The friend begged his forgiveness, saying, "I'm so sorry; it was all a mistake. I was half-asleep—please forgive me!" "Well, it's not altogether impossible," he said, and they went to bed again. The friend regretted his mistake very much and got up again, and finished it safely this time. Hearing their excited breathing, the husband woke again, and called out, "Now then, wake up! wake up!"

Not to understand, especially to misunderstand such simple things as death or pain or sex is of the essence of comedy.

Ureshūgozansu, 賣樂御座詩, "How Glad I am!" (the literal meaning is "Selling Collection Honorable-sit-congratulation") was published in 1781 with an introduction by Nandaka Shiran, 南陀御柴蘭, whose name puns to "Somehow I don't know."

Father and Son

The father came back home intoxicated, and said to his son, "Hey, Magoroku, you've got three heads. I'm not going to leave my fine house to a monster like you!" The son, just as drunk, retorted, "That's all right with me. Who'd want a house going round and round like this one?"

After all, we *are* on a world that goes round and round, and it *was* bequeathed to us by our ancestors.

Marking the Place

Someone on a choki boat dropped overboard his heavy silver pipe, more dear to him than life itself, into the Asakawa River. "O Lord!" he groaned. The boatman was aghast, and said, "Where did you drop it?" "Just here," said man, so the boatman kept his finger on the place on the gunwale.

A choki boat was one that went to the Yoshiwara, but I saw this happen the other day in a Tokyo bus.

Uguisu-bue, 鶯笛, "Nightingale-Flute," was written by Shokusanjin in 1781.

Thin Clothing

"I'm stronger than my elder brother, so I'm more lightly dressed than he. If he puts on a padded dressing-gown I'll put on a lined garment, and if he wears a lined garment I'll have an unlined one. If he wears unlined clothes I'll wear hemp clothes, and if he has on hemp clothes I'll be in only a loin-cloth." "Then what will you do if he wears only a loin-cloth?" "Well, then I'll just let it dangle."

There is a certain artlessness and innocence in the conclusion, which makes the story alive.

Otoshibanashi Kikujū Sakazuki, 落咄菊盃, "Comical Stories of Chrysanthemum-Congratulatory Wine Cups," was published in 1781.

An Express Messenger

A big wolf was lying in the road with its mouth open. An express messenger came running along right into the wolf's mouth, and without knowing it passed through the wolf's stomach and came out of the anus, still crying, "Essassa! Essassa!" The wolf muttered, "I should have worn a loin-cloth!"

This has a Münchhausen cheerfulness and transcendentalism.

Fukukitaru, 富久喜多留, "Luck is Coming," in one volume by an unknown author, came out in 1782.

The Great Image of Buddha

A man dropped in a rice-cake shop after worshipping the great image of Buddha, and asked, "How much is this rice-cake?" "It's three *mon*." "It's too small for three *mon*." "You are looking at it after seeing the great image of Buddha, so it looks small." "Yes, that may be so," he said admiringly. As he walked a few steps away from the shop, he found a deserted baby by the roadside. Thinking it a gift from the Great Buddha, he took it in his arms and went off. When he looked at it closely back at home, it was a monk.

This story is a sort of warning against taking the theory of the relativity of things too seriously. To live at all, and to live rationally, we must suppose that all things are absolute in their qualities.

Fukujusō, 腹受想, "Belly-receiving (Lucky) Thoughts" (pheasant's eye) was by Santō Kyōden, 山東京傳, but it was written when he was young, and named Kitao Masanobu, 北尾政演, that is, when he was an ukiyo-e painter.

A Nap

A mother was taking a nap with her kimono a little open. The little son saw it and poked at it with a bamboo stick. The mother woke up and scolded him severely, and the boy began to

boo-hoo. His elder brother came in and asked him, "Why are you crying?" The mother said, "He poked me so I gave him a pinch." Hearing this, the elder brother said to the younger, "The other day you teased a dog and it made you cry. In future don't meddle with furred or feathered things."

There is too much sex and too little humour in this story, which is thus a failure, or near-hit.

Taruzake Kikijōzu, 樽酒聞上手, "Tub-wine Good Listening," was published in 1789.

Girls

Some girls are talking together. "Generally speaking an ugly woman marries a handsome man, and a handsome woman an ugly one." One of the girls spoke up. "I'm sure to marry an ugly man."

The only point of this story is the humourlessness of women.

Heso ga Cha, 臍が茶, "Navel-Tea" (A Huge Joke) was published in 1797.

An Open-Air Bath

A master was taking a bath in the back garden. It began thundering, and came on to rain. "Hey! Anybody there?" An apprentice came out to carry the tub into the house. Seeing him, the master put his hand over himself. The boy said, "Master, it is higher!"

It was believed that the thunder god would carry off one's navel, and the boy thought it was this that the master wanted to cover.

Konohazaru, 木の葉猿, "Leafy-tree Monkey," was published in 1800.

Husbandly Negligence

Somebody said, "Usually those who are robbed, look foolish and walk carelessly. Their own negligence brings it on." A

very stubborn man who heard this said, "No, no, however foolish I look or lazily I may walk, no one can steal even a handkerchief of mine. If you don't believe it, I'll walk carelessly and look stupid, and try!" So the next day he got up earlier than usual and walked from Ueno to Asakusa in a leisurely way, but was robbed of nothing. "Just as I said, a man may walk along as negligently as he likes, nobody will steal anything from him!" So saying, he arrived back home, when his servant rushed out to meet him and said, "Oh dear! oh dear! Somebody took madam and they went off together!" The stubborn man said, "That's queer!"

The point of the story is, "Be sure your sin will find you out," in some way or other, usually an unexpected one.

Edomae Hanashi Unagi, 江戸前鰻, "Edo Eel Tales," was published in 1808 by Jippensha Ikku, the author of *Hizakurige*.

The Go-Between

"Hachibe, you're not married yet, are you? Hachibe, as far as I know, she's about 30 years old, fairly ugly, with pock-marks on a twisted face, but she dislikes work, is fond of sleeping late, and gets a headache the moment she picks up a needle. She is obstinate, and a great drinker and extremely quarrelsome. How about marrying her?" Hachibe said, "No, thank you." "Really? Well, it seems somehow that her marriage prospects are not so good."

A greengrocer must sell even his rotten apples, and as merchandise they are still precious to him. To the go-between, as to God, all things are possible. This story is an example of insensitivity, but an example of the delicacy and subtlety of *kobanashi* itself we may take the following.

Caress

"How are you, madam? I haven't seen you for quite a long

time. Hello, my little boy! How you've grown! Let me hold him, won't you? What a lovely baby!" He holds him in his arms and cuddles him. "Oh, yes, my wife sends you her compliments."

The soft indirectness, sexuality, and harmlessness of this, impossible to the Chinese, makes it typically Japanese, but it must be remembered that the typical is hardly ever the best. Another example is the following, by the same author.

A Wild Boar

On the wedding day of the daughter of the head-man of a mountain village, the bridegroom, wearing a *kamishimo*, was walking along the mountain path together with the match-maker and their friends. A wounded wild boar came rushing towards them at full speed. The bridegroom failed to evade it and stumbled. As it jumped over him, the wild boar snatched away his *kamishimo* by accident. The match-maker was astonished, and ran after the wild boar. Meeting a man on the way, he asked, "Hallo, didn't you see a wild boar with a *kamishimo* on?"

A *kamishimo* was a sort of waistcoat with very prominent shoulder pieces, used on ceremonial occasions. It is not easy to explain the humour of this story, lying as it does not so much in the comical figure of a wild boar wearing a *kamishimo*, as in the idea of the match-maker that a wild boar would "wear" it.

One more, still by the same writer, which shows an oriental (moral) democracy hard to parallel in the West:

The Thief

A thief sneaked into a bachelor's house. He opened a closet, to find a suit-case which contained nothing. The cash-box was also empty. Though he tried every drawer of the cabinet and

searched all over the house, he could find nothing to steal. Greatly disappointed, the thief cursed his bad luck and made a noise. The master of the house awoke and began a vigorous search for the thief, who hid himself in a corner. The man lit a candle and looked around and said, "I have had everything stolen. Gone are those silk garments of mine and all the money I had in the cash-box. I'll tell the landlord what has happened." He was about to go out, when the thief appeared and seized him by the scruff of the neck and said, "You shameless fellow! You have nothing in here and yet you declare that you had your clothes and money stolen. You have no right to say such a thing." The thief threw the master down on the floor. The master apologized, saying, "Please pardon me; I said it merely from a moment's impulse."

This is a very subtle example of the "forgetfulness" we noted many times before. The master forgets his non-existent mastership, and what is Zen but this?

A Wedding Present

A man, having heard that a friend of his had got married, called on him with a fish he had bought on the way as a wedding present. "Hello, Hachi-kō, I hear you have married. I've come to congratulate you."

"That's very kind of you," he answered, "But I divorced her yesterday."

"That's too bad. I bought a fish for you. But luckily another friend of mine married lately. I'll take this fish to him." He went off with the fish.

"Hi, Gonshichi, someone told me that you are married. Congratulations!" "No, she went away yesterday," was the answer.

So the man was disappointed, and thought he had better take the fish back home and have it with his wife. He went back home, to find the owner of the house waiting for him.

"I say," he said, "I just had someone go and look for you. Your wife has run off with her lover." "Good heavens!" he cried, "Is there nowhere I can take this fish?"

This story has a universal application, and the fish has perhaps a Freudian significance.

Ibaraki, The Ogre

Ibaraki, his arm cut off at Rashōmon, came back to Mt. Ohe, and said, lamenting, "What an experience! Look! I had my arm cut off. It is inconvenient with only one arm. What do you think I'd better do?"

A fellow ogre suggested, "You might join another arm onto it. Here's a man's arm fresh from his body. Transplant it for the time being."

"That's a good idea," said Ibaraki, and joined it onto the stump. "Well, this will do. But now I am deformed, a cripple."

"Why?"

"You see, this hand has got five fingers. How funny it looks!"

In the 14th century *Taiheiki*, 太平記, we are told how Tsuna cut off the arm of an ogre who came down from the sky. There was an "Ouch!" from the clouds, and there fell down a black hairy arm and hand *with three fingers*. The point of this story is that all so-called deformation is a purely (human) subjectivity with no absolute basis. So strictly speaking we should not laugh at anything.

Hanashi no Kurando, 噺の藏人, "A Man with a Warehouse of Tales," was also written by Ikku.

A Ghost

A letter came from a courtesan he was intimate with. It said that she could live no longer if she did not get twenty ry,

before a certain day. She further said that, not having the twenty ryō she could not become his wife as she had promised, so she would have to die. It was a request by his beloved, and a matter of life and death, so he wanted to get the money for her, but he could not manage it, and that day had passed already. The son was sitting thinking of her all by himself. "How pitiful! She said she would have to die if I could not manage to get the money for her. So she must have died already." Just then the ghost of the courtesan appeared, and reproached him for not giving her that money. The son clung to her, "How glad I am to see you again! It's so nice you came, I have a lot of things to tell you, stay here for a time!" "No, I cannot." "But why not?" "I have other places to visit!"

Women, even the most exclusive of them, always have several strings to their bow. But so have men, many more strings, and so must every living creature. And God has the whole thing, bows and strings and all.

Harusame Yawa, 春雨夜話, "Spring-Rain Tales," was published in 1839.

Easy-Going

The master of a certain place was a very deliberate and long-tempered man, and employed only equally slow-going servants. One evening the head clerk came to him and said, "Master!" The master opened his eyes and murmured, "What do you want, at this hour?" "Well, that chap Sansuke needs scolding." "Hm! Why?" "Recently he is careless, and a thief got in. Yes, he broke in because of Sansuke's carelessness in fastening the door." "Now, that's a disagreeable fellow! It's said he goes out every night to . . . Is he at home tonight?" "Yes, he's here all right. He came back a little while ago, left the front door open and went to bed." "That's bad. Go and shut it!" "Well, it's no good shutting it now." "Why not?"

"The thief is already in." "Good heavens! where is he?" "At the moment he's in the kitchen eating like mad. Shall I beat on a basin and make a hullabaloo?" "No, no, wait a bit. Wait till he's finished eating and then call out, 'Thief! thief!'" "All right then, let's wait." While they were thus discussing the matter, the thief in the next room gave a loud yawn, and called out, "Mr. Clerk, when you're ready, just let me have the key of the safe."

I really think this would be a better way of dealing with thieves than alarm-bells, policemen, thumb-screws, and so on. Our smile at this story is a really human and humane one. Only humour makes us truly moral.

Dotage

A certain man had a doddering old fellow as his servant. One day he dropped and broke a pictured vase, and the master was furious. "You half-dead old dodderer! You broke this precious vase?" "Certainly, sir." "You think it's all over when you just say 'Certainly, sir'? I'll truss you up!" "Certainly, sir." "Well, I will truss you up!" and he bound his hands behind his back. "Now I'm going to thrash you." "Certainly, sir." "Get ready!" "Certainly, sir." "Are you sorry for what you did?" "Certainly, sir." "Then I'll forgive you."

A truly soft answer, a really soft and soft-headed answer turneth away wrath.

Shimi no Sumika, しみのすみか, "A Moth's Dwelling," was published in 1831 by Ishikawa Masamochi, 石川雅望. It contains 50 stories, some humorous, some anecdotal, some gossipy.

The Fox in the Forest of Shinoda

There once lived a fox in the Forest of Shinoda. Unlike other foxes, he was so surprisingly silly that he could not fool men by transforming himself. Even those who were younger

than he could skilfully change themselves into something else, and among them there were some who were famous for their skill. So the fox thought, "Well, I'm going to learn how to transform myself," and he asked his friends about the method. Following their instructions he went to a pond nearby, got some water-weed, and put it on his head. As the weed was dripping wet and slippery, it did not remain on his head, but fell off. So he took it up again, and put it on his head, when it slipped down again. He tried the same thing again and again, but it slid off and would not stop on. The fox was greatly irritated, and took the weed, and threw it on the bank, and said, "Oh, what a nuisance! I'd rather live at ease, enduring being called a good-for-nothing fox than go to all that trouble!" He cried "ko-ko" and went away into the bush. It is said that an angler saw him, and told the story to others on his returning home.

This story is a fable, a warning to all ambitions and greedy people, that is, to almost everybody.

Bumbuku Chagama, ぶんぶく茶釜, "Magic Tea-Kettle," was published in 1842.

The Thief

The wife aroused her husband, and whispered, "Dear, a thief has broken into the kitchen!" The husband jumped out of bed and seized him. But the thief was so strong that he grappled with the husband desperately for about an hour. In the end, the husband was stronger, and at last got the thief under his knee. He panted to his wife, "Dear, give me a glass of water!" The thief from under him gasped out, "And one for me too."

This is very Japanese, both in the impudence of the burglar and the kindness of the burgled.

Shungyō Fukujin-banashi, 春興福神咄, "Spring-flourishing God-of-luck Tales," was published in 1844 by Ryūkatei Tanekazu, 柳下亭種員

Fishy

There was once a man who did not like fishing, but went one day at the pressing of his friend. He drew up a purse with 50 ryō in it, and, elated, went back home at once. The next day he came again, and caught a carp about three feet in length. The onlookers said, "A wonderful catch!" He grumbled, and said, "Confound these fish! I want nothing to do with them!"

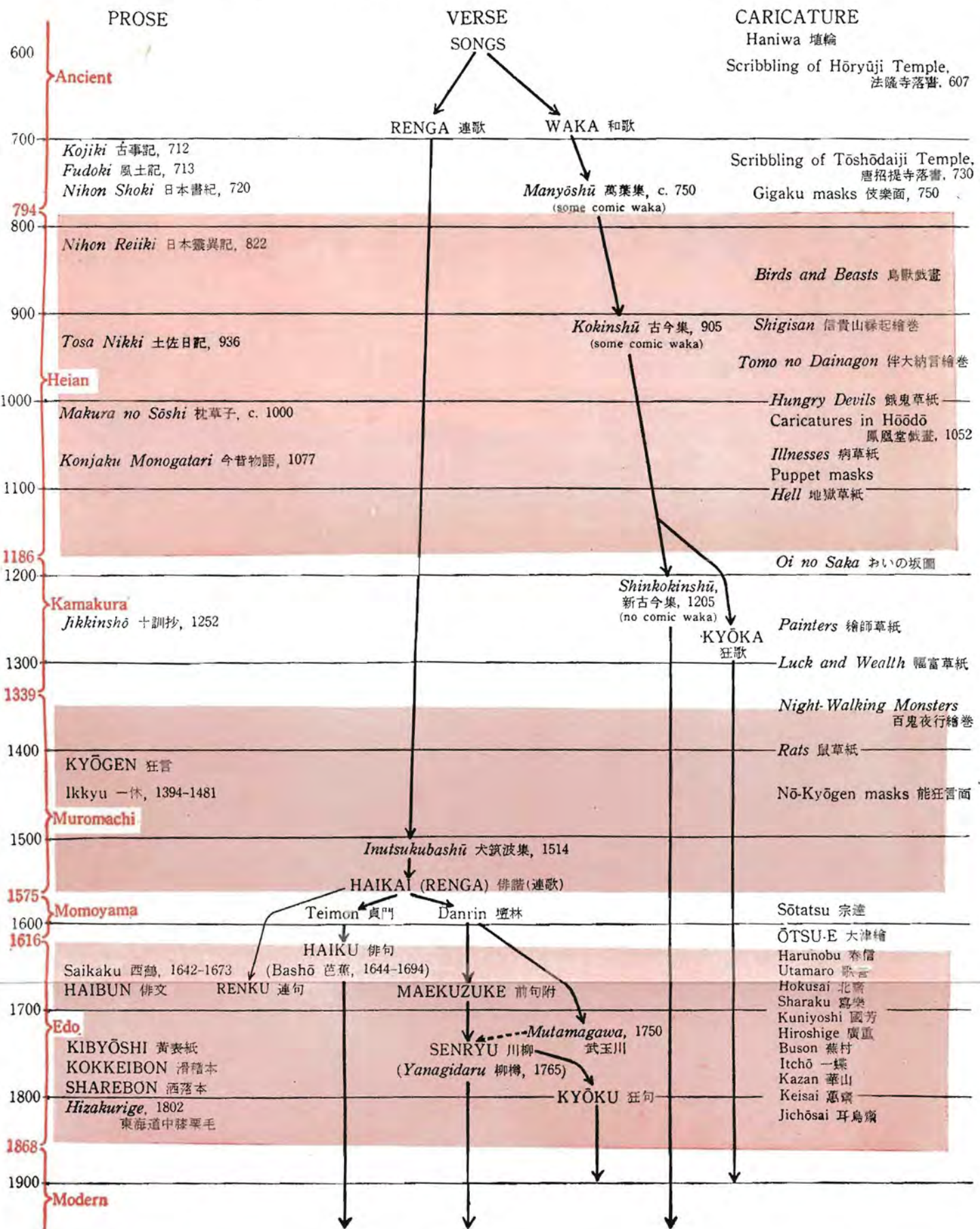
The better is the enemy of the good.

* * * * *

When we look back over the two hundred year history of short comical stories, *koanashi*, we find that they portray scenes and events of daily life which cannot be confined within the 17 syllables of *senryū* or the 31 of *kyōka*. The Japanese realised at last that *kobanashi* are a form of literature, that is to say, that there is a Platonic Form, an Idea in the mind of God to which a humorous story of from five to fifteen lines corresponds. *Kobanashi*, like their European counterparts, the 14th century *Gesta Romanorum*, and the *Adagia* (1500) of Erasmus, reveal the subconscious mind long before Freud; they underline what we overlook. But they not only hold up the Shakespearean mirror for us to see our own weakness, folly, hypocrisy, and self-love; they make us accept and enjoy it. They do what Dr. Johnson said *The Vicar of Wakefield* did, and we too "bless the memory of the (unknown) authors who contrive so well to reconcile us to human nature."

EPILOGUE

There are three world views, and three only, the Buddhist, the Christian, and the Japanese. The Buddhist is that of super-mundane calm, transcendental desirelessness; the Christian, of suffering into power; the Japanese, of unsought and inevitable interpenetration with nature. The strange birds and ferocious beasts, the oddly-shaped plants and trees, and the charming vagaries of wind and weather, land and water, not to speak of the antics of the lords of creation must make the lover of nature-and-man smile, at times grimly, at times with Mozartian tears. The Japanese view of things is thus poetic and humorous, and though not so high as the Buddhist, or so deep as the Christian, is wider, and embraces more than either. Poetry and humour seem to have been consciously discarded in both China and Korea. How long will it be before the Japanese follow suit, and “leave the world to darkness and to me”?



NOTES

I. Verse

1. Renga is linked waka, i. e. alternate lines of 17 and 14 syllables. The name was first used in the *Kinyōshū*, 金葉集, 1126 A.D.
2. Haikai Renga is light, witty renga.
3. Haiku are the hokku, the first verse of haikai renga, always 17 syllables, which has become independent. (Shiki popularised the word "haiku.")
4. Maekuzuke was the writing of one or more 17-syllable verses *after* the 14-syllable verse; it was not continuous like renga.
5. Senryū (later) omitted the 14-syllable verse, and became 17-syllable, like haiku.
6. *Mutamagawa* was a selection of the 17-syllable verses, or the 14-syllable verses, of haikai renga.
7. Renku was very long renga, written from the Genroku Era.
8. Kyōku is unpoetical, merely witty senryū.
9. Kyōka as conceived by Shokusanjin, is essentially puns and word-play, with only the form of waka. It was at its best in the 2nd half of the 18th century.
10. The Teimon School of haikai was founded by Teitoku, 1570-1653; it emphasised word-play and pleasantry. The Danrin School, under Sōin, 1604-1682, was (at first) more poetical.

II. Prose

1. *Nihon Reiiki*, "Annals of Wonders in Japan," is unwittingly witty, in that it tells stories (146 in all) of the miraculous effects of Buddhist faith, involving metamorphoses, invisibility, levitation, and so on.
2. Examples of humour of the *Kojiki*, *Fudoki*, and *Kokinshū* will be found in the author's *Japanese Humour*. Humorous verses are found in the *Manyōshū*, and the *Kokinshū*, not in the *Shinkokinshū*.
3. Haibun and kyōbun are short pieces of poetic and light writing respectively.

III. Caricature

1. *Oi no Suka*, "Oi Slope," and *Nezumi Zōshi*, "A Booklet of Rats," I have seen, but have forgotten their details.
2. *Eshi Zōshi*, "A Booklet of Painters," is said to be by Fujiwara Nobuzane, born 1176, but probably appeared about 1300. A certain painter received some laud from his Lord, but as a result became poorer and poorer. The humour of his descent is portrayed.

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† This list of books was sent to me by Professor Koo Ja Gyun of Korea University. Up to the present, there has been no book written on Korean humour either in hanmun or in onmun, and it is to be hoped that someone will use this list and write a full account of the humour Korea is so rich in.

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