

My Spiritual Home

Autobiography by Yamada Mumon Roshi

In the mountains of northeast Aichi Prefecture, not far from the Mikuni Pass on the border between the ancient feudal provinces of Mino and Shinano, lies a valley at the headwaters of the Yahagi River. In this valley, lying at nearly two thousand feet above sea level, is a village named Busetsu, a rustic community where the old beliefs still persist. Even now the villagers believe that swallowing live salamanders from the river will keep summer fevers at bay. The local delicacy, regarded by the villagers as the rarest of treats, is made by spreading a thin rectangular piece of cryptomeria wood with rice paste, roasting it over charcoal till the surface turns a light brown, then spreading miso or sesame soy sauce on top of it. In the past Busetsu provided lodgings for travelers on the Iida Highway, the road that ran from Nagoya over the mountains to the town of Iida in Shinshū Province.¹ During the summer, white-robed pilgrims heading for the holy mountain Ontake² would walk by, ringing their little handbells. Worshippers returning from the great temple Zenkō-ji in the north of Shinshū could be recognized by the pretty souvenir baskets strapped to their backs. Nowadays the village has a small bus station served by buses of the Tokyū Meihan Line.

This is the village where I was born, with a barely noticed cry, in a neighborhood listed in the government register as Ōaza Chōji Yashiki. The name, meaning something like “the residences (*yashiki*) in the main part of the village (*Ōaza chōji*),” is a strange one. I suspect it came to be called that because Busetsu once had a fort guarding the border between the Mino and Shinano domains, and the samurai garrisoning the outpost had their estates in the more developed section of town.

I also wondered about the why the village was named Busetsu. The fact that the two characters composing the name, 武 and 節, are pronounced in the Chinese fashion rather than the native Japanese fashion (in which case the village would have been called Takefushi),³ would ordinarily suggest that the name is of comparatively recent origin. In addition, the two characters somehow suggest an underlying story.

When I was a child I thought it might have something to do with the history of the village. It's said that, toward the end of the Warring States period⁴ in the late sixteenth century, the castle, which was allied with the general Tokugawa Ieyasu,⁵ was overrun by the forces of Takeda Shingen.⁶ The commander, Suganuma Sadaaki, committed suicide by his own sword, and his wife followed him into death by throwing herself down a village well. So, I imagined, since the commander died in carrying out his soldierly 武 duties while his wife died in accord with her principles 節 as a samurai wife, the name of the village became Busetsu 武節.

The origins of the name turned out to be much older, however. When I was in middle school one of my older relatives showed me the genealogical records of the Yamada family. The chart comprised two volumes, one that had been in the family for many generations and another that my relative had compiled in greater detail using information gathered from interviews with various relatives.

According to the latter volume, Yamada Shigetada,⁷ who later died during the Jōkyū Disturbance⁸ fighting for the imperial forces, was appointed feudal lord of the Owari Domain⁹ in the late twelfth century. There, in the village of Yamada Kigasaki, he established the great temple Chōmo-ji in memory of his mother. His descendent in the seventh generation, Yamada Yorinori, left the fief during the period of the Genkō Conflict¹⁰ and the Kenmu Restoration¹¹ and relocated to the northern part of Sanshū (present Aichi Prefecture), an area controlled by his relatives, the Asuke Clan. There Yorinori was placed in charge of the Busetsu estate. In 1336 Yorinori's son, Yamada Shigetaka, accompanied Prince Munenaga¹² to Enshū,¹³ then followed Munenaga's son Prince Yukinaga into seclusion in the hidden mountain valley where Busetsu village was located.

It appears that Munenaga resided for some time in Busetsu, as there exists even today a neighborhood named Goshogainai (Inside the Palace Walls). In addition, Shōshū-ji, a temple in the village, possesses a copy of the *Great Prajna Paramita Sutra* and drafts of poems made by the prince. Munenaga was later killed in battle at Namiai in Shinshū (present Nagano Prefecture). His grave in Namiai is still maintained by the Imperial Household agency.

It would seem that the region around the headwaters of the Yahagi River was a base for supporters of the Southern Court,¹⁴ much like the Totsukawa district in Yamato (present Nara Prefecture). The name Busetsu may have originated in this tradition of loyalty (忠節) to the Southern Court.

At the beginning of the Tokugawa period Yamada Kagetaka, the lord of Kawate Castle, who went by the name of Kawate Mondonosuke and served the Ii Clan, commanded the forces of the clan's renowned Red Regiment.¹⁵ During the summer campaign of the Siege of Osaka Castle he was killed in battle fighting against Kimura Shigenari.¹⁶

The subsequent Tokugawa Period was an era of peace and order under the Shogunate that continued for nearly three centuries, but as it drew to its end there was an upsurge in support for the imperial family. In the region where I was raised people like Furuhashi Terunori,¹⁷ advocating reverence for the emperor and supporting nativist scholars like Satō Kiyō'omi,¹⁸ conspired with the royalists of the Nakatsugawa and Iwamura Domains¹⁹ to restore the Mikado to political power. Hearing that the royalist general Takeda Kōunsai²⁰ of the Mito Domain would be coming down the Iida Highway²¹ that ran through town, they gathered a force of militiamen and waited to join him. Takeda headed from Nakatsugawa toward the

Hida Mountains, however, and was captured there by the Shogunate forces, so this plan came to nothing.

After the Shogunate was defeated by the forces supporting the emperor, political power was returned to the imperial family in the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Five years later in Busetsu the Meigetsu Seifū Kō (Bright Moon Pure Wind School) was opened at the temple Ichion-ji, located at the foot of Castle Mountain, with a faculty consisting of the aforementioned Satō Kiyō'omi and the Rev. Maishū of the temple Zuiryō-ji. Although the Haibutsu Kishaku movement²² was quite strong in the area, so much so that for a time everyone in Busetsu declared themselves followers of Shinto, it was largely due to the high regard that Rev. Maishū's erudition and priestly virtue were held in that the movement never reached the point where temples were actually destroyed. Even now there are at Zuiryō-ji two volumes of Rev. Amish's poem manuscripts that amply demonstrate the depth of his scholarship.

One of the students at the Bright Moon Pure Wind School was Ōshima Ken'ichi,²³ who later attained the rank of general in the Imperial Army. While still a schoolboy he carved on a cherry tree at Castle Mountain the ancient poem, "Heaven, let not Kou Chien die / The time will surely come when a Fan Li will appear," imitating Kojima Takanori's famous poetic vow of loyalty to Emperor Go-Daigo.²⁴ The cherry tree, with its carving, still stands today.

From the time I was born I was raised in this remote little village with its long history of loyalty to the country and the imperial throne. From the time we were first graders we were toughened with hard training in the winter cold, all the while singing in loud voices such songs as:

Behold ye, Asuke Shigenori!
 Demonstrating his reverence for
 The words of the Kenmu Emperor²⁵
 He raised high the banner of righteousness
 And fought with single-minded valor
 Meeting his fate at the castle on Mount Kasagi
 Boundless was his distinguished service.²⁶

Though later in my life I developed a considerable interest in socialist thought, I think I have the influence of this early training, and perhaps of the blood of my ancestors, to thank for the fact that I never went on to espouse communism.

Childhood Days

The family I was born into operated a warehouse and transport agency on the highway that passed through the village. Teamsters on their way up and down the

road would often stop to unload or reload their wagons, or to shift cargoes to vehicles heading for different destinations.

Cargoes from Asuke to the south usually consisted of salt; most of this was destined, I think, for the town of Shiojiri in Shinshū. In addition to salt, a fair amount of trade took place in general goods—I recall seeing loosely woven baskets full of lamps and containers of fish like salted salmon and dried sardines. There were sweets, too, and traders would sometimes me give me one of these rare treats.

From Shinshū to the north came cargoes consisting largely of logs, sawn lumber, and charcoal, but I also remember seeing bark from the *mitsumata* shrub for paper-making. There was also bark from the *maki* tree, which might have been used to make dye.

At noontime the wagon drivers would gather around the hearth in the middle of our large kitchen and eat their boxed lunches. My father always made a point of preparing warm bowls of miso soup or vegetable stew for them. The nearby mountains were also full of sawyers, as well as charcoal burners who had moved up from the Ibi River area in Mino Province.²⁷ My father always enjoyed asking strangers in for some dinner, so whenever these people came to town they would stop at our house for something to eat before returning to the mountains.

At certain times of the year monks from the lodging-temples at Zenkō-ji,²⁸ *tayū* priests from Ise Shrine, ascetics from Mount Ontake, and mountain priests from Togakushi²⁹ would come to town to distribute talismans and perform invocations. They would stay for several days, basing themselves at our house as they made the rounds of the neighboring villages.

Every evening my father would entertain these people with saké and snacks. My mother would wait on them with help from the maids, as though she were the proprietress of a tavern or inn. I never heard her complain, though, as she quietly went about serving complete strangers.

My father used to tell the young fellows, “Making money isn’t all that difficult—if you keep working there’ll always be enough. What’s hard is *spending* money.” I don’t recall him ever doing anything unusually praiseworthy, but he was always generous when it came to supporting religion or showing hospitality to others.

On the other hand, my father couldn’t abide anything crooked. Once I saw him shouting as he took the rod to a manservant bound to a post in one of the outbuildings. When my mother tried to stop him, saying that he didn’t have to be so brutal, my father became even angrier and turned around to hit her. She fled out the back gate toward the rice paddies in her bare feet, with me following after her, crying. Apparently my father had found out that the manservant was gambling on the side.

Another time he heard that one of the men in the local shrine association had developed a taste for beef. “They say you’re eating the meat of four-legged

animals,” he told the man. “You needn’t bother coming to the association meetings any more.”

My father was completely unbending on matters like this. When one of my older brothers sent a letter home using an envelope from the company he worked for, he received a severe scolding. “It doesn’t matter even if it’s just a single envelope,” admonished my father. “If you take company property and put it to private use, it’s still theft.”

That being the way he was, my father would thunder at anyone and everyone in the village who he felt had acted improperly. It was always my long-suffering mother who had to step in and try to calm my father in his implacable rages and do what she could to prevent the other person from taking offense.

From my father I learned that there are such things as right and wrong, and that sometimes anger is justified in the service of what is right. From my mother I learned—contradictory though it may seem—that forgiveness must be accorded to everyone and that all human beings must be treated kindly.

In the midst of that turbulent household I grew up as an introverted child who spent most of his time in his room reading books. I don’t recall running around outside with the other kids much. I’m not sure exactly which books I read, but I remember that it was at about that time that boys’ magazines like *Nihon Shōnen* and *Shōnen Kurabu* first appeared, along with Japanese translations of Western novels like *The Count of Monte Cristo*. I used to order these new publications, then pass them around among my friends when I was finished with them.

For some inexplicable reason I also enjoyed staying at home practicing calligraphy and painting, like some old retired gentleman. I would take up my brush and produce *sumi-e* to which I’d assign poetic titles like “White Water” or something. That was the sort of child I was.

I used to bring poems to the old folks’ haiku gatherings in the village, receiving high marks on occasion. If any of these early efforts were still around someone might mistake them for the work of some prodigy, but fortunately all have disappeared.

I have no idea why the young son of a rural transport agent came to be so fascinated by ink paintings and haiku. It often makes me think that life doesn’t begin with our present existence but has its roots far in the past, so that this world is simply a continuation of former lives. I often meet people and sense that this isn’t the first time I’ve encountered them, that I’ve met them once before somewhere—no, not somewhere, but in a previous existence.

I’m not sure what to make of this feeling. In the biographies of ancient monks one often comes across statements like, “You and I were at Vulture Peak together listening to the sermons of the Buddha.” I feel that way myself sometimes. Could such feelings arise from some mysterious intuition deep in our physical being?

School in Tokyo

When I was fourteen years old my brother took me to Tokyo. My father woke me up in the predawn darkness and took me to the ancestral shrine in Ubasuna no Mori, where he told me to say farewell to the family deities. I pressed my small palms together and in my heart promised that I'd make something of myself before I returned. Conjuring up dreams of coming back one day as, say, prime minister of Japan, I took my leave of that grassy village in the mountains.

Travel conditions at the time were much worse than they are now. The first twenty-three kilometers, as far as the town of Asuke, had to be walked. On the way travelers had to cross the steep Isegami Pass. The name "Isegami Pass" literally means "Ise God Pass," but the original name was apparently "Ise-ogami Pass" (Ise-viewing Pass), since on a very clear day one could see all the way to Ise, almost one hundred kilometers to the southwest. Every year at the time of the Kanname Ritual, when the emperor made offerings of new rice to Ise deity on October 17th, a simultaneous observance was held at this pass. When elementary school pupils reached the higher grades they would attend the observance, and the whole occasion became something of a pleasant outing. On this day only food stalls would be set up on the pass, and they did a lively business. I remember how unusual I thought it was to see ripe pomegranates for sale, their mouths open to show their beautiful red seeds. We never had pomegranates in our mountain village, which wasn't warm enough for them.

After the long walk to Asuke we made our way to the city of Okazaki in a horse-drawn coach, a vehicle I had never before ridden in. It swayed and clattered its way along the road on the banks of the Yahagi River, with a transfer halfway to our destination.

It was about four kilometers from the town center of Okazaki to the railroad station, with an electric trolley—the first I had ever seen—connecting the two. It was already dark by the time we boarded, so as I looked out of the windows it seemed not so much that the trolley was moving but that the streetlights were flowing steadily by. I thought it a beautiful sight. Reaching the station, we boarded the night train for Tokyo. Needless to say, riding a train was also a first-time experience for me.

We arrived in Tokyo the following morning and stopped for a while at the home of my aunt. Everything in Tokyo was a surprise to me—it was almost as though I had gone straight from the wilds of Africa to the city of London.

My aunt served us some tuna *sashimi*, and after I'd tried some I asked her if tuna was an ocean fish. When she said it was, I asked, "Then why doesn't it taste salty?" Everyone laughed at my question. Until then, though, the only ocean fish I'd ever eaten had been salted salmon and dried sardines, so I thought that all ocean fish were salty.

My brother was attending Waseda University, so I enrolled at Waseda Middle School and took lodgings in Otsuka Kubo at the student dormitory run by the Mikawa Friendship Society (Mikawa being the region where my home village was located). Every day I commuted to school from the dormitory, walking over Kuze Hill and along the Edo River.

Waseda's headmaster at the time was Ōkuma Nobutsune (1871–1947), the son of Waseda University's founder, Ōkuma Shigenobu.³⁰ Shigenobu was still alive at the time, and I would often catch sight of his carriage along Tsurumaki-chō Avenue.

At the time the ties between the various schools in the Waseda network were still strong, so the middle school was fortunate enough to have young teachers from the university come to teach. I remember several of them particularly well.

Aizu Yaichi (1881–1954) was a large-bodied man who reminded me somehow of an elephant, with an elephant's gentle eyes. We knew him only as an English teacher, and had no idea that he would later go on to become a renowned *waka* poet, calligrapher, and authority on Buddhist art history.

Not long after the end of the Second World War I was in the ancient city of Izumo lecturing at a certain temple when by sheer coincidence I ran into Andō Kōsei, an old classmate of mine under Prof. Aizu. It was the first time in thirty years that I had met Andō, who in the meantime had succeeded Aizu at Waseda University and made quite a name for himself as an art historian. He was cataloguing Izumo's Buddhist statuary when we met.

In the course of our conversation we reminisced, of course, about Prof. Aizu, who at the time was living in retirement in his native Niigata. As soon as I returned from Izumo I sent a letter to Prof. Aizu, the first I had written to him since graduation. He wrote a warm reply, saying he remembered me well, and we went on to correspond for some time. One autumn I received a letter from him saying that he would be visiting Nara the following fall, and that he would call on me while he was in the area. The trip never came to pass, however, as he passed away that spring. His death deeply saddened me.

Another of my teachers at Waseda was Tanabe Hisao (1883–1984), who taught us physics, although he later became well known in Japan as a music critic. Not long ago I met him, again by pure chance, in the baths of the hot springs resort of Unzen in Kyushu, both of us stark naked. Unlike Prof. Aizu, he had no memory of me whatsoever. This was probably because I was quite poor at physics, and Prof. Tanabe may have dismissed me as a hopeless student. It was disappointing, but I have only my own lack of study to blame.

The teacher who has most profoundly influenced my subsequent life is Matsumoto Kō (1876–1965), who was a professor of Chinese literature. Although his health is not quite as vigorous as before, at the time of this writing he remains hale at the age of ninety. When I celebrated my *Kaidō* ceremony³¹ at Myōshin-ji

some time ago he came all the way from Tokyo to attend, delighted that the headstrong student who had given him so much trouble had finally managed to make something of himself. He is a wonderful teacher whose old eyes well up with tears whenever he meets me.

It was owing to Prof. Matsumoto's influence that from my fourth year at middle school the Confucian *Analects* became for me an indispensable guide. I kept the text always at hand, becoming so addicted to it that I practically had it memorized. There was one line in particular that struck me: "In hearing litigation I am the equal of any man. But what is truly needed is for litigation to be eliminated" (12:13).

It was this line that first disrupted the smooth flow of my life. Confucius was confident that as a judge he could adjudicate lawsuits in as just a manner as possible. What he truly sought was not this, though, but the creation of a peaceful society in which lawsuits never occurred.

When I first came across this line I felt as though I'd run into a large wall and had the wind knocked out of me. Painful thoughts poured through my mind. The fact that my father's hope was to make me a lawyer or judge probably intensified my feelings, but in any event Confucius's words loomed up and blocked my way. I thought to myself, "A world without litigation—isn't this the ideal we're striving toward as human beings? Lawsuits and trials are no more than stopgap measures that take problems and paper them over. Prosecuting and defending are simply ways for lawyers to earn a living. What is the ultimate goal of life?" This question formed a barrier before which I stood in a daze, not knowing what to do.

"In hearing litigation I am the equal of any man, but what is necessary is to eliminate the need for litigation." Expanding on this idea a bit, we might say, "As a doctor I could equal any man in curing disease, but what I truly yearn for is a world free of illness." We could also say, "As a soldier I'm certain I could prevail in battle, but my ideal is to create a harmonious world where war no longer exists," or, "As a businessman I could outdo anyone in making money, but what I'd really like to see is a society where people need not worry about money."

All of this is fine, but what is the *ultimate* goal of our human existence? When I pondered how I might go about resolving this question, I came up with nothing. Thus began my years of spiritual drifting. I became a strange boy who, during chemistry and physics classes, would look down and read the *Lotus Sutra*. I was a great admirer of Takayama Chogyū (whose novel *Takiguchi Nyūdō* was a bestseller at the time),³² as well as of Kunigida Doppo³³ and Tolstoi.

By this time I had lost any desire to continue my education, and as a result my grades dropped dramatically. I managed to graduate by the skin of my teeth, but I didn't even bother to attend the commencement ceremony. Graduation meant nothing to me.

I nevertheless took the entrance exams for the Daiichi Kōtō Gakkō (First Higher School) in Tokyo,³⁴ knowing that my father expected it of me. I failed, of course—there was no way I could have passed, given my mood at the time. I spent the following year studying and sat for the entrance exams at the Daihachi Kōtō Gakkō (Eighth High School) in Nagoya, but the result was the same. Perhaps if they had posed questions about the *Tannishō*³⁵ or the Bible I could have done better, but that was hardly likely.

Meanwhile all of my friends from Waseda Middle School were being accepted to the schools of their choice. I viewed them with some envy—not because they had succeeded in entering famous institutions, but because they were able to proceed with their lives free of any hesitation or sense of questioning.

During the years following the First World War, Tokyo was the scene not only of many social and political movements but also of much religious activity. Anyone walking in Kanda at night was sure to come across soldiers of the Salvation Army beating their drums or followers of the Buddhist Revival Army blowing their trumpets. At the temple Rinshō-in in Yushima one could hear Zen lectures at the gatherings held by Sugawara Jiho,³⁶ while at the Gudōkan in Morikawa a lively schedule of Dharma meetings was offered by the Jōdo Shin minister Chikazumi Jōkan.³⁷ In Fujimi-chō the sermons of the Christian minister Uemura Masahisa³⁸ won a wide audience among the student population. Uchimura Kanzō,³⁹ too, had an enthusiastic following of younger believers. Meanwhile Miyazaki Toranosuke,⁴⁰ the prophet of the new religion Shinsei Kyōdan, could be seen in Ueno Park haranguing the crowds, his long hair blowing in the wind and his frock-coated chest thrust out. If you went to the Central Buddhist Hall you could hear someone lecture each and every evening. It truly was a time of religious ferment. Like a starving stray I wandered about Tokyo, sniffing out the slightest scent of truth.

My favorite destination was probably Chikazumi Jōkan's center, the Gudōkan. I also frequented the Shinsei Kyōdan in Hakusanshita. There, in a desolate, abandoned-looking house with nothing in it, Miyazaki was usually asleep in bed with his little daughter Teruko. The rice bin was almost always empty, so I there assumed they were too hungry to do anything but sleep.

Many years later, after I had moved to Kyoto, I ran into Miyazaki and his daughter on the grounds of Myōshin-ji. He and Teruko, by then a beautiful young woman, were living in the Nagata district of Kobe. Not long afterwards I heard that both of them had passed away, leaving me wondering what sort of life they had lived in Nagata and what kind of end they had met. I also wonder sometimes what became of Endō, Miyazaki's senior disciple.

One day I heard that Uchimura Kanzō was holding a prayer gathering at a church in Tsunohazu,⁴¹ so I went all the way there to attend. After Uchimura's rousing sermon we were told that the Second Coming of Christ would occur that

very evening, so the entire congregation offered fervent prayers far into the night. The Lord never did descend from Heaven.

It seemed pointless to study with no intention of attending college, so I finally entered the Department of Indian Philosophy at Tōyō University in order to learn more about Buddhism. The courses I took there—Buddhist history, by Sakaino Kōyō, president of the school; Buddhist doctrine, by Prof. Shimaji Taitō; the history of Chinese thought, by Dr. Uno Tetto; sociology, by Prof. Nakajima Tokuzō; English literature, by Prof. Tanabe Jūji; and others—were all of great interest and contributed much to my intellectual development. But they provided no key to understanding the ultimate purpose of life.

One day at the invitation of a friend I listened to a lecture on Shantideva's *Way of the Bodhisattva* given by Kawaguchi Ekai Roshi,⁴² a Zen priest who had established the Snow Mountain Monastery⁴³ in the Yayoi-chō neighborhood of Tokyo's Hongo district. The text, transcribed on pages of straw paper, contained a passage that went roughly as follows:

If I could cover the entire surface of the Earth with leather I could freely walk anywhere in bare feet. But that would not be possible. However, with just nine inches of leather on the soles of my feet it's just the same as if I had covered the entire surface of the earth. Likewise, it is probably impossible to make this Earth an ideal paradise. But if I arouse the mind of *bodhi*—that is, if I vow to offer all that I have for the sake of humankind—then it is just as though the Earth had become a paradise.

How deeply moved I was when I read this passage! These lines precipitated the second turning point of my spiritual life.

Devotion to the Way

It's said that there is no end point for progress in science. The same thing can be said, I think, for the progress of the human race. Even if it were possible to achieve paradise on Earth, it would probably require hundreds of millions of years and an effort equal to covering the entire surface of the Earth with leather. But if I put just nine inches of leather on the soles of my feet it's just the same as if I had covered the entire surface of the earth. If I just arouse the mind of *bodhi*, it is just as though an ideal Pure Land in all its perfection had come into existence. So the sacred text said.

“This is the way!” I thought. With a sense of utter conviction I felt that this path—the path of immediately manifesting the Pure Land, of immediately perfecting the self, of right here, right now saving the world and saving myself—was the only path for me. It is enough to vow in one's heart to offer everything one has for the sake of humanity. If that's the case then even I can do it, I thought, and I can do it

this very moment. With all my heart I vowed: “My happiness, my body and my mind, my life, my everything, all of these from this very day I offer for the sake of humanity.” The moment I said this I was overcome with a sense of happiness like none I had ever experienced before. For the first time I knew the bright clarity of the mind that is attached to nothing and the richness of the heart that has given everything.

I composed a long appeal (I have no idea now what it said) and handed it to Ekai Roshi, entreating him to accept me as a disciple. The master’s younger brother Hanzui was there by his side, sternly lecturing me on the severity of monastic training and warning me that a lukewarm sense of purpose wouldn’t suffice to see it through. I remained determined, though. Seeing this, Ekai Roshi decided to check my father’s position on the matter, and without a word to me sent him a letter.

I have no idea how surprised, how disappointed, or how angry my father might have been when he read it. All I remember is that he came and took me to Ōtsu-chō in Nagoya, where we called upon a fortune-teller named Watanabe Ichigyū. Watanabe didn’t ask me anything, but just looked closely at the features of my face. He then said to my father, “This child will never be a family man. He has the features of someone who prefers solitude. Even if you make him take a wife he’s the sort of person who will go upstairs when she’s downstairs and go downstairs when she comes upstairs. Best to have him become a fortune-teller, Shinto priest, or Buddhist monk.”

My wish having finally been granted, I entered the Snow Mountain Monastery as a postulant at the end of my nineteenth year. The monastery had just moved from Yayoi-chō to Miyanaga-chō in Nezu, Tokyo. I wasn’t allowed to wear a monk’s robe yet, so I wore a black kimono with a black hakama. During the day I attended Tōy University, with my head shaved slick as an egg.

In the mornings we would arise at four o’clock and start the day by wiping the floors and making preparations for breakfast. At five we would hit the wooden *han* while reciting the “Verses on Impermanency”⁴⁴ with the plaintive cadences of the Ōbaku Zen school. After school we would sweep the garden and heat the bath. Once a week Iwata Takuhō (my senior at Snow Mountain) and I would go to the vegetable market in Dōsaka to buy supplies. I was a combination housemaid and live-in working student. And since I was there at my own request, I was a housemaid and working student who also paid for his own room and board.

The master was eighty years old at the time but his mother was still alive, living at the monastery though largely bedridden. It was my job to prepare her meals and take care of her bedpan, and I was genuinely happy to be allowed to do so. My lay name was Chōjirō, so she used to affectionately call me “Chō-yan, Chō-yan.”

Sometimes she would hold up her thumb and say, “Is he here?”, referring to the master.⁴⁵ If he was out she would pull some money out from under her mattress and say, “Go buy some sea bream and cook it up for me.” The master was a strict

vegetarian, to the point where on trips he would take his own pots since he found those of other people to reek of cooked flesh, so I prepared his mother's fish in a special pot she kept. When I brought it her face would break out in a huge smile of delight. It made me think that a pure-living monk makes an unfilial son.

Ekai Roshi, a rigid follower of the precepts, would not allow any solid food to be taken between noon and the following morning. Breakfast consisted of a large Tibetan-style pot of dark miso soup in which the cook would boil a handful of dried noodles until they were soft. Lunch, which apparently followed the dietary ideas promoted by Kawaguchi's friend Dr. Futaki Kenzō, was a stew containing one *shō* (1.8 liters) of brown rice, one *gō* (.18 liters) of azuki beans, and one *gō* of rolled barley together with various chopped vegetables. Ekai Roshi was the sort of person who would put down his chopsticks and stop eating the moment the noon bell sounded, even if he was still in the middle of his meal. If he happened to be out on business that kept him away till after twelve o'clock he would go without lunch that day.

At the beginning of the next school semester Iwata Takuhō finally had enough. Saying, "If I stay in a place like this any longer I'll ruin my health," he packed up his things and left, all the while entreating me to take good care of myself. With his departure I was the only monk there. Even so I labored devotedly from morning till night in the service of the Roshi and his mother. Looking back, I can't help being impressed by the single-minded devotion to the Way that I was capable of at that time in my life. I still had a kind of childlike purity and innocence; the various bad habits I've acquired since then had yet to manifest themselves. Even so, fatigue, lack of sleep, and malnutrition gradually undermined my congenitally weak constitution. I finally suffered a physical breakdown during the final exams for my sophomore year at Tōyō University. A week-long fever left my lymph nodes swollen to the point where my neck was wider than my face.

Early in the summer I made my way to Taguchi, a town not far from my home village that served as the county seat, to take my physical examination for military conscription. The inspecting officer measured my height, weight, and the circumference of my chest, then said to me, "We have no use for you. Get out." My weight, as I still clearly remember, was a mere 37 kilograms. I received a paper saying "Exempt from Military Service," stamped with the characters 丁種⁴⁶ and a red official seal.

My physical condition being what it was, I had no choice but to quit Snow Mountain Monastery, which I had entered with such great expectations, and take my leave of Tokyo. Once again I was home in the village I thought I had left for good, my emaciated body prostrate in bed with its swollen neck.

Facing Death

The doctors at the Kōseikan Hospital in Nagoya recommended surgical excision of my tuberculosis (for that was what my illness was), while the radiologists at Aichi Hospital assured me that they could disperse the lesions with X-rays. The internists at Matsunami Hospital then advised against both, telling me that after surgery the tuberculosis would soon recur and that radiation therapy would simply drive the pathology deeper into my body. “Your internal organs are so weak,” they told me, “that you have to recover your strength before considering any treatment.” In their opinion it was best that I return to Busetsu to recuperate, since the village had good clean air. Following their advice, I returned to my home and resumed my bedridden existence.

By a strange coincidence, at just around this time my older brother (the one who had used the envelope at the company he was employed at) was also taken ill, and was accepted as an in-patient at Matsunami Hospital. In June of the following year my mother, who had been staying at the hospital caring for him, came back holding an urn with his ashes. Sitting by my pillow, she said, “Don’t cry, don’t cry, you mustn’t lose strength, your older brother is dead,” then broke down in tears herself. Although my brother’s illness had been mild compared to mine, the tuberculosis had spread to his throat and infected his larynx, finally taking his life. In the end he was unable even to swallow water, and his death had been a painful one.

One day toward the end of the rainy season the *nanten* bushes were covered with white buds. For the first time in quite a while I left my bed and went out on the veranda to look at the garden. A cool, pleasant breeze blew softly against my cheek, as though to soothe my exhausted body. I wondered how many years it had been since I’d felt a breeze like that. Then I thought to myself, “What *is* the wind?” All of a sudden it struck me that wind is simply moving air. The moment I realized this I felt a shock, as though I’d been struck on the back with an iron rod. “Yes, of course!” I thought. “There’s *air*!”

In the entire twenty years since I’d been born I’d been sustained and nurtured by the air, but had never been truly aware of its existence. Yet even though I had paid no attention to the air, the air had constantly and unfailingly embraced me. When I realized this I broke out in tears and wept uncontrollably.

The thought came to me, “I’m not alone, I’m not isolated. Behind me is a great power that sustains me, continually urging me to live! I’ll get better!” I felt to the marrow of my bones that our life is not our own, but something given to us. My heart became clear and bright, and I recited a simple poem to myself:

From the coolness of this morning’s breeze
I know that I’m embraced by something great

Ever since falling ill I had taken a great liking to *tanka* poetry. Writing verse and reading contemporary poets such as Wakayama Bokusui,⁴⁷ Kitahara Hakushū,⁴⁸ and

Kubota Utsubo⁴⁹ in the popular collection *Ichiaku no suna*⁵⁰ were the only things that eased my loneliness and suffering.

At about this time an old fortuneteller from Neba in Shinshū who used to visit us regularly advised that fortune would be with me if I stayed for forty days or longer somewhere to the north of Busetu. It was therefore decided that I would spend the summer with my younger brother in the city of Kaga taking the waters at the Yamanaka Hot Springs resort. I rented rooms at the Yamatoya Bekkan, a hotel that overlooked the mountain stream flowing through the valley, and spent the summer soaking in the mineral baths, writing poetry, and visiting temples.

The temples I visited were three that were associated with the Jōdo Shin school. These temples had taken it upon themselves to offer sermons three times a day, morning, afternoon, and evening, with the temples taking turns of one week each to provide this service every day of the year. As they were located in a well-known hot springs resort they found it easy to attract first-rate speakers, whose talks I made sure never to miss during the months I was there. Listening to these speakers was an invaluable help to me in learning the art of public speaking.

By this time I had recovered sufficiently to go to Nagoya and receive radiation therapy. I stayed at a temple called Ryōjū-ji, not far from the great Shinto shrine Atsuta Jingū.⁵¹ For meals I would go to a fish wholesaler named Toyotoshi, the owner of which had close ties to my father, where I would be treated to raw fish. After about two or three months the proprietress of Toyotoshi asked me how the radiation therapy was going. When I answered that I hadn't seen the slightest improvement, she commented somewhat cryptically, "I know a good place, I'm sure you'd get better, but if I took you there the priest would get angry." When I asked her what she meant, she explained that just north of Lake Hamana to the east of Nagoya there was a temple named Konchi-in, the priest of which could cure even the most intractable illnesses. She said that she herself had been cured of uterine cancer.

I'd heard about this temple before, but had dismissed such talk since I was convinced that Buddhism which dabbled in healing was deviant and that any priest who engaged in such activities was a fraud. But I paid more attention when I heard that Konchi-in's priest scolded the proprietress when she introduced new patients. If the priest was a fraud, I thought, surely he would welcome new patients, not get angry. With this in mind I decided to call upon Konchi-in and meet its priest, Rev. Kōno Daikei. This priest was to become my second master. I still remember the date on which I met him: November 26th of my twenty-second year.

I can truly say that it is thanks to Rev. Kōno that I am alive today. My meeting him was a fortuitous encounter oddly similar to that of Zen master Hakuin with the Taoist hermit Hakuyū.

I will not go into the details of Rev. Kōno's therapy here. Were I to do so the temple would no doubt be inundated by an endless wave of the incurably ill, and I

would be swamped with more requests for advice than I could possibly handle. For the time being let me just say that I hope to focus more on this matter when I'm better able to deal with it physically.

Rev. Kōno passed away in 1953 at the age of eighty-one, but to the best of my knowledge he never had need of a doctor's care during the entire time he was alive. He always used to say, without the slightest concern for who heard him, "Any priest who gets sick is a fake, I don't care if he's the chief abbot of a great temple or the master of a Zen monastery." I regard Rev. Kōno as one of the great men of recent times.

Memories of Hanazono

When I first visited Konchi-in Rev. Kōno held up three fingers and said, "Your illness is nothing more than this!" When I gave him a blank look he shouted, "Blockhead! I'm saying you'll be well in three months! Don't you see—your internal organs are not weak, they're *strong*, so strong that they've forced the disease toxins up to your neck. Can't you get my point!" It was quite a Zen-style wake-up call, but it left me feeling more dazed than ever.

Even so Rev. Kōno treated me very kindly, allowing me to stay at Konchi-in and receive treatment. In March of the following year, when three months had passed, the priest said, "I haven't deceived you. Your life is no longer in danger, so feel free to go wherever you like. Do you plan to go back to Tokyo and resume that ascetic training?"

"If I return to the monastery in Tokyo I'll just ruin my health again," I replied. "I'd like to go to Kyoto and practice zazen."

"You're not ready yet to train at a Zen monastery," Rev. Kōno said. "You should enter the Zen college and focus on study for a while." So it was decided that in April I would enter Rinzaishū College, affiliated with Myōshin-ji, the great Rinzai Zen head temple in Kyoto. This was the school that is now called Hanazono University.

My recovery was nothing short of miraculous. Though still not one hundred percent cured, I was nevertheless in good enough health after a mere three months of treatment to fully resume my university studies. During the forty years since then I have continued to use this form of therapy to maintain my health, and have never once had to see a doctor.

After moving to Kyoto I became increasingly active. Not long after entering the college I recruited a few like-minded students and established a club for the advancement of Buddhism. On the fourteenth of every month we would go in front of the main hall of Seigan-ji in Shinkyōgoku in downtown Kyoto, set up flags and paper lanterns, and deliver streetside sermons to whoever wished to listen. On the twenty-fifth of each month we would do the same at Kitano Tenmangū, the great Shinto shrine in northwest Kyoto. I would stand there on the stone steps and start

my sermons by shouting out in a loud voice, “Those with eyes to see, look! Those with ears to hear, listen!” Looking back, it’s hard to imagine how such a thing was possible for a young man who had been at the door of death mere months before.

Even as I engaged in such activities, however, I never felt the desire to abandon Christianity and the Bible. Each and every Sunday I would attend services at a church somewhere. At the time Rinzaishū College only accepted the disciples of Rinzai school temples, so for convenience’ sake I had registered as the disciple of Konchi-in and wore a monk’s robe. It was in this robe that I always went to church.

The church I frequented the most was the Rakuyō Church, headed by Rev. Endō, and the Muromachi Church, headed by Rev. Hatanaka Hiroshi. Rev. Hatanaka was most welcoming toward me, allowing me to attend not only services but also Bible study classes and even the English conversation group. He later spent some time in Hawaii and was eventually promoted to his present position of president of Kobe Women’s College. I would like to take this occasion express my congratulations, and I hope some time to call upon him and thank him for his kindness in the past. He probably still remembers the pale young man in coarse robes who used to sit in the corner listening to him.

One event that helped me feel more confident was my participation in the English speaking contest for university students hosted by the Osaka Mainichi Newspaper. This was the first such contest ever held in Japan. There were about fourteen or fifteen contestants, one of whom was a young woman who stood out for the bright red clothes she wore, while I, as usual, stood out for my plain black robes. The event was held in the red brick lecture hall of the Christian university Kwansei Gakuin, located on the site of what is now Ōjien Kōen Park.

The speech I delivered that day was entitled “Not Relying on Words and Letters.” After the presentations were finished one of the judges, a certain Mr. F. Parrot who worked for a Bible publisher, came over to my seat. He shook my hand, asked, “Where did you learn English?” then made a number of comments like, “Your understanding of Christianity is excellent” and “Zen is interesting,” hoping perhaps to strike up a conversation, but unfortunately my English speaking abilities weren’t up to much more than delivering a speech at a podium. Mr. Parrot must have been disappointed. In any event, quite to my satisfaction I made it through to the final round of the contest at the Mainichi Hall in Osaka, where I received some sort of commemorative gift.

Prior to the contest I had asked Rev. Hatanaka to look my speech over. One thing he did was to go through the text and change all of the “I”s to “we”s. This left a profound impression on me. Indeed, I took it more to heart than anything I had read in the Bible. It brought home to me the principle that we must never emphasize the “I”, but must always live with the “we” in mind.

One more event associated with Kwansei Gakuin that remains in my memory was a talk I gave there on the introduction of the famous golf sportswriter Nishimura

Kanichi. This was long after the speech contest, in about 1941, I believe. By that time the university had relocated to its new campus in Nikawa, where public presentations of this sort were delivered in the university chapel. It strikes me now that I must be the only robed Buddhist monk, either before or after, to have ever given a speech in the chapel of that staunchly Christian school.

Rinzaishū College

When I was an undergraduate at Rinzaishū College it was still a small, intimate institution rather like one of the old Edo-period temple schools, with ten to fifteen students in a class studying together in a family-like atmosphere. When Prof. Takada Yasuma, who taught at the college for four or five years as a young man, was at the school during the anniversary ceremonies last autumn he commented to me of the warmth with which he still remembers the place.

Professors who taught at Rinzaishū College while I was there included Matsumoto Bunzaburō, whose lectures on Buddhist studies were among the helpful and considerate I have ever heard; Hidane Jōzan Roshi, who offered us his distinctive interpretation of Zen studies; Dr. Nogami Toshio, who taught us psychology; and Prof. Ōya Tokuj, who lectured on the history of Buddhism. The great Zen philosopher Hisamatsu Shin'ichi, who was still young at the time, also taught there, as did Prof. Kōsaka Masa'aki, from whom we learned Western philosophy.

However, the teacher who most influenced my personal development was Prof. Teranishi Kensan, whose field was Confucian thought. Prof. Teranishi devoted himself to Confucian studies under Murase Tai'itsu, who was the final disciple of the great Confucian scholar Rai San'yō of the Inuyama Domain of Tokugawa-era Japan. Later he was adopted into the family of the Osaka scholar Teranishi Ekidō at the latter's request. On several occasions he was invited to join the faculty of Kyoto Imperial University, but he never accepted, remaining throughout his life a gentleman of refined virtue dedicated to the education of Rinzaishū College students. After my graduation I remained at the college for an additional year to study the Taoist thought of Lao zi and Zhuang zi under Prof. Teranishi.

Rinzaishū College also held a Zen retreat (*sesshin*) every semester. Everyone would repair to Enpuku-ji Monastery in Yawata, south of Kyoto, and practice zazen for one week. These sesshins remain among my most pleasant memories of my time at the college.

Know Shame

Even though I always had a quite profound devotion to Christianity, I always had great difficulty with the concept of prayer. Words of prayer are something I have never been able to utter. If I force myself to speak them the words immediately turn false, transforming into the shallowest type of sentimentality. If I called out "God

the Father!”, God seemed to recede ever farther away, ceasing to be the Absolute beyond all concepts and becoming no more than a idol formed of ideas. Little wonder is it that Christ warned his followers against praying in front of the crowds, as the hypocrites do. Rather, he enjoined them to “enter into your private room” and pray in secret, alone with God. Moreover, it always seemed to me that in praying one needs no words, for does not God already know all things?

After I began practicing Zen meditation (*zazen*) I came to regard this practice as the truest form of prayer. In *zazen* one settles oneself openly in front of the Absolute, totally forgets the ego, and enters a state of no-mind where not a single thought stirs. One utterly surrenders oneself body and mind *in* the Absolute, so that self and Absolute are fully one. Could there possibly be any higher expression of prayer than this? In this clear, bright mind, pure as that of an infant, there is not a speck of sentimentality, but only a full immersion in the joyful union of the human and the divine.

This, I believe, is the meaning of the famous beatitude, “Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.” In purity of the heart, God is present.

One semester when the time for sesshin arrived my schoolmates and I took our sitting cushions and daily necessities and sequestered ourselves in the great Zen monastery of Enpuku-ji to the south of Kyoto. Enpuku-ji has a huge meditation hall, but with fifty or sixty people sitting it was filled to capacity.

That particular sesshin the classmate sitting directly across the aisle from me was a profoundly accomplished mediator. Prior to entering Rinzaishū College he had spent several years practicing *zazen* at Shōfuku-ji Monastery in Hakata, Kyushu. Whenever my leg pain became unbearable I’d glance over and see him sitting like a firmly rooted tree. Whenever I became sleepy I’d glance over at him and see him sitting without the slightest movement. Whenever my body grew listless I’d glance over at him and see him sitting as solidly as ever. I aroused a great fighting spirit, and sat with the determination to do every bit as well as him.

By the fourth or fifth day I reached the point where I forgot body and mind, with no sense of sitting as I sat and no sense of standing as I stood. It was truly a stillness in which human and divine were one. On the sixth day I was returning from *sanzen* with the *roshi* when I happened to see the bright yellow leaves of the ginkgo tree in front of the main hall. At that moment my mind suddenly opened, and I was so astonished that I almost leapt into the air. The koan “Mu” exploded, and the world of absolute reality manifested before me. I rushed back to the *sanzen* room and immediately passed my koan, as well as several other problems presented to me by the master.

The Gate of the Celestial Rock Cave suddenly opened and the divine act of creation unfolded in all its infinity. Everything is new. Everything is beautiful. Everything is true. Everything is shining. And everything is Self. I was in a state of

utter ecstasy. This, I thought, is what is meant when they speak of “without realizing it my hands were waving and my feet were dancing with joy.”⁵²

The cosmos and I are one. The world and I are one. Humanity and I are one. With the full intuition of this, how could one not be overcome with joy? I fully savored, as the reality of my own experience, Shakyamuni’s words that “the totality of the Three Realms is my very being, and every creature therein is my child,” and saw that in them there was no exaggeration and no deceit.

I realized that this nondual love toward humanity and the world is the ultimate truth of human nature. The bodhicitta expressed all those years ago when I vowed to offer “my happiness, my body and my mind, my life, my everything for the sake of humanity” was itself the essence of human nature. I knew then in my heart that my aspiration to seek the Way had not been mistaken.

The Zen master leading the sesshin at Enpuku-ji was Kōzuki Tesshū Roshi, who at the time was president of Rinzaishū College and later became chief abbot of Myōshin-ji. The classmate whose sitting had so impressed and motivated me was Shirōzu Keizan, who went on to become the master at Heirin-ji monastery near Tokyo. His presence made me realize how important good companions are if one hopes to attain the Way. Even today I feel a great sense of gratitude towards him.

Many people think that students are not in a situation that allows them to awaken to their true nature, or that people in lay life are unable to experience enlightenment, but this way of thinking is simply not true. There is a Japanese expression, “A mouse attacks a cat,” that refers to the fact that anything is possible if one is desperate enough. With sufficient motivation, anyone can attain enlightenment.

One day on Shinkyōgoku Street I ran into a priest I knew named Murakami Dokutan, who had been a fellow student at Tōyō University. He had subsequently become priest of Jisai-in, an important subtemple of the large Zen temple complex Tenryū-ji, located in Arashiyama on the western outskirts of Kyoto. He invited me to come for a visit, so one day I made my way to Arashiyama and called on him. We talked at length and one subject led to another, until we came up with the idea to start a Sunday school at his temple. This was the start of a deep connection with Tenryū-ji, where I ended up living for the next twenty years and which I regard as my second home.

After some time I was introduced to Seki Seisetsu Roshi, who had just assumed duties as the new chief abbot of Tenryū-ji. The moment I met him I knew that I had finally met the true teacher whom I had been seeking for so many years, a teacher with whom I could entrust my life.

Seisetsu Roshi told me, “I will give you everything I possess,” but I wonder how much of the master’s immense spiritual wealth I was truly able to receive. When I graduated from Rinzaishū College I entered Tenryū-ji Monastery as an *unsui*⁵³ and served the master till his death on October 2, 1945, following him about

like a shadow and received his benevolent instruction. As I look back on the fifty years that have passed since I left my village in the mountains at the age of fourteen I remember with a deep sense of gratitude Seisetsu Roshi and all of the wonderful guides and teachers whom I have encountered. Yet as Confucius said, “You can’t carve rotten wood,”⁵⁴ and I can only reflect with shame on how much I still have left to accomplish.

Notes

1 Present-day Nagano Prefecture.

2 Located on the border of Nagano and Gifu Prefectures, Ontake is the second highest volcano in Japan at 3,067 meters and an important center of mountain worship.

3 The Chinese characters used to write the Japanese language have two types of reading, known as *on-yomi* and *kun-yomi*. *On-yomi* is based on the sound of the character’s original Chinese reading, while *kun-yomi* constitutes the native Japanese word for the object or concept that the character represents. Hence the character 水, meaning “water,” has the *on-yomi* of *sui* (based on the Chinese *shui*) and the *kun-yomi* of *mizu* (the native Japanese word for water).

4 A period of protracted fighting between regional warlords during the years between 1467, when the authority of the Muromachi Shogunate weakened during the Onin War, and 1568, when the warlord Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 (1534–1582) succeeded in unifying most of the nation.

5 徳川家康 (1543–1616), the warlord who finally unified the nation in 1600 and put an end to the Warring States period.. He was the first of the Tokugawa shoguns, who ruled Japan between 1600 and 1868.

6 Takeda Shingen 武田信玄 (1521–1573) was the daimyō of Kai Province (present Yamanashi Prefecture) and one of the preeminent military leaders of the Warring States period.

7 Yamada Shigetada 山田重忠 (12th–13th c.).

8 The Jōkyū Disturbance 承久の変 was an attempt in 1221 by Emperor Go-Toba 後鳥羽 (1180–1239) to destroy the Kamakura shogunate and restore power to the imperial throne. The emperor’s forces were quickly defeated by the shogunate’s armies, however, and Go-Toba was exiled to the Oki Islands in the Sea of Japan.

9 Owari was the feudal domain that occupied what is presently the western half of Aichi Prefecture.

10 The Genkō Incident 元弘の変 was the civil strife between 1331 and 1333, in which Emperor Go-Daigo 後醍醐 (r. 1319–1339) overthrew the Kamakura Shogunate with the help of the general Ashikaga Takauji 足利尊氏 (1305–1358), and thus restored political power to the imperial family.

11 The Kenmu Restoration 建武の中興 was the period from 1333 to 1336 during which Emperor Go-Daigo ruled Japan.

12 Munenaga 宗良 (1311–1385) was a son of Emperor Go-Daigo who fought for the emperor during the Genkō Conflict and during the fighting following the end of the Kenmu Restoration.

13 Enshū 遠州 corresponds to the western part of present-day Shizuoka Prefecture.

14 Several years after the Kenmu Restoration (see notes 10 and 11, above) Takauji turned against Go-Daigo. The emperor was forced to retreat south of Kyoto to the mountainous region of Yoshino, where he established the Southern Court. The rival imperial Northern Court was installed by Takauji in Kyoto.

15 The Ii Clan 井伊氏 was a samurai family allied with the Tokugawa shogunate. Their feudal domain was Ōmi Province (present Shiga Prefecture), with the castle in the town of Hikone. The Red Regiment (*akasonae* 赤備) was the clan's feared samurai force, instrumental in helping the Tokugawa family take power.

16 The Siege of Osaka Castle (1624–1615) was the campaign in which the Toyotomi Clan—the last major opposition to Tokugawa rule—was destroyed and their stronghold at Osaka Castle burned. Kimura Shigenari was one of the Toyotomi forces' top generals.

17 Furuhashi Terunori 古橋暉児 (1813–1892) was a landowning farmer of Mikawa Province (present Aichi Prefecture) who was active in rural economic improvement plans and who promoted nativist thought.

18 Satō Kiyo'omi 佐藤清臣 (1833–1910) was a samurai nativist scholar and Shinto priest.

19 The Nakatsugawa 中津川 Domain was located in the southeastern part of present-day Nagano Prefecture; the Iwamura 岩村 Domain was located in the southeastern part of present-day Gifu Prefecture.

20 Takeda Kōunsai 武田耕雲齋 (1803–1865) was the chief retainer of the Mito Domain (present-day Ibaragi Prefecture) and a proponent of the “Restore the Emperor, Expel the Outsiders” movement of the late Tokugawa period.

21 Yamada does not mention which highway this was, but the context suggests the Iida Highway through Busetsu.

22 The Haibutsu Kishaku 廢佛毀釋 (Abolish the Buddha, Destroy Shakyamuni) movement was a government repression of Buddhism and promotion of Shinto that occurred during the early years of the Meiji period.

23 ÷shima Ken'ichi 大島健一 (1858–1947) served as a general, Minister of the Army, and Privy Councilor.

24 Kou Chien 勾踐 was king of the land of Yueh 越 during the Spring and Autumn Period (771–476 bce) in China. Fan Li was a loyal vassal who helped Kou to avenge a disastrous defeat in battle and restore the kingdom of Yueh. Kojima

Takanori 児島高德 carved this poem on a cherry tree located in a place where Emperor Go-Daigo, on his way to exile on the remote Oki Islands following a failed uprising against the Kamakura Shogun, would be sure to see it. He thus informed the emperor of his continuing fealty.

25 One of the titles of Emperor Go-Daigo.

26 Asuke Shigenori 足助重範 (1292–1332) was a feudal lord of the Kamakura period (1192–1333) who fought in support of Emperor Go-Daigo during the Genkō Incident (see notes 10 and 11, above). He held off the Shogunate forces during the siege of the castle on Mount Kasagi, using his exceptional archery skills to kill several noted warriors, but was eventually captured and executed.

27 The southern portion of present Gifu Prefecture.

28 Zenkō-ji 善光寺 is an important temple affiliated with the Tendai and Pure Land traditions of Buddhism. Located in the city of Nagano, it was in former times an important pilgrimage site. Its main image, a statue of Amida said to have been the first Buddhist image to arrive in Japan, was believed to have miraculous powers.

29 A holy mountain in northern Nagano Prefecture that was in former times an important training place for *shugendō* mountain ascetics.

30 ÷kuma Shigenobu 大隈重信 (1838–1922) was one of the great figures of Meiji period (1868–1912) Japan. Born in Saga, Kyushu, he taught for some years in the provincial school but became active in politics and was placed in charge of foreign affairs and, later, monetary reform under the new Meiji government. After losing his position in the government he founded Waseda University. He subsequently served again in the government as minister of finance, home minister, and minister of agriculture and commerce, and as prime minister in 1898 and again in 1914–1916.

31 The Kaidō ceremony (“Opening-of-the-Hall ceremony”) is the ceremony that marking a Rinzai priest’s attainment of the rank in the Rinzai hierarchy necessary to assume the position of chief abbot of one of the fourteen Rinzai head temples.

32 Takayama Chogyū 高山樗牛 (1871–1902) was the pen name of Takayama Rinjirō 高山林次郎, an influential author and literary critic. His writings, combining romantic individualism with the themes of self-realization and nationalism, were widely read during the Meiji era (1868–1912). *Takiguchi Nyūdō*, a historical romance about a Heian period samurai, was written while Takayama was still a student at Tokyo University and published in 1894.

33 Kunigi Doppo 国木田独步 (1871–1908) was a journalist and author whose novels and poems influenced the development of Japanese romanticism and naturalism. He attended Waseda University but was expelled in 1891 for his political views. At the age of twenty-one he was baptized as a Christian. He served

as a newspaper correspondent during the Sino-Japanese War, after which he focused on writing novels, short stories, and poetry.

34 The precursor of the present Tokyo University.

35 The *Tannishō* 歎異抄 is a short Pure Land Buddhist text written in the form of conversations between Shinran (1173–1263), the founder of the True Pure Land School, and Yuien 唯圓, the text's author. The purpose of the book was to correct deviations from the true teachings of Shinran that had appeared after his death.

36 Sugawara Jiho 菅原時保 (1866–1956) was chief abbot of the great Zen temple Kenchō-ji in Kamakura.

37 Chikazumi Jōkan 近角常観 (1870–1941), a Jōdo Shinshū priest and graduate of the Department of Philosophy of Tokyo Imperial University, founded the Gudō Gakusha as part of his lifelong mission to revitalize the Jōdo Shin School based on the teachings of Shinran.

38 Kamimura Masahisa 上村正久 (1857–1925) was the son of a high-ranking samurai family that lost its position at the time of the Meiji Restoration. He attended a mission school run by the missionaries Samuel Robbins Brown and James Ballagh, under whom he converted to Christianity. After becoming a Presbyterian minister he wrote and translated extensively on Christian subjects, helped found Meiji Gakuin University, and established the Fujimi Church, which grew into one of the largest and most influential congregations in Japan.

39 Uchimura Kanzō 内村鑑三 (1861–1930), born in Edo (present Tokyo), studied at the Sapporo Agricultural College in Hokkaido, where he converted to Christianity under Merriam C. Harris. After graduating in 1881 he worked and studied in the United States until 1888. After leaving a position at the First Higher School in Tokyo because of a refusal to bow to the emperor's signature on the Imperial Rescript on Education he devoted his life to writing and lecturing on Christianity. He never became a minister, but instead taught an approach to Christianity that developed into Mukyōkai (Nonchurch) Christianity.

40 Miyazaki Toranosuke 宮崎虎の助 (1872–1929) claimed to be the third world teacher, following the Buddha and Christ.

41 Present-day Shinjuku Ward.

42 Kawaguchi Ekai 河口慧海 (1866–1945) was an Ōbaku-school Zen priest who visited Nepal on four occasions (1899, 1903, 1905, and 1913) and Tibet on two occasions (1900–1902, 1913–1915) in order to collect Buddhist Sanskrit texts and study Tibetan Buddhism. He was the first Japanese to visit either country.

43 The Snow Mountains (*setsuzan* 雪山) is an old Japanese name for the Himalayas.

44 The Ōbaku Verse on Impermanency is: “All things are impermanent; this is the law of existence and extinction. When both existence and extinction are fully extinguished, Nirvana is bliss.”

45 The Japanese word for “boss” is *oyabun* 親分, so the thumb (*oyayubi* 親指) is often held up to refer to the boss or leader of a group.

46 The equivalent of the 4-F classification in the American system of conscription.

47 若山牧水 (1885–1928).

48 北原白秋 (1885–1942).

49 窪田空穂 (1877–1967).

50 一握の砂 (A handful of sand), edited by Ishikawa Takuboku 石川啄木 (1886–1912).

51 Atsuta Jingū 熱田神宮 in Nagoya is one of the most important Shinto shrines in Japan, ranking with Ise Shrine. It is the traditional repository of the sacred sword that is one of the three imperial regalia of Japan.

52 From the *Classic on Rites* 禮記, “Book on Music” 樂記: 50.

53 An *unsui* 雲水 (lit., “clouds and water”) is a Zen monk in training.

54 *Analects* 5:10.