

Kintōsho

Zeami's Song of Exile

by SUSAN MATISOFF

EXILE at the age of seventy-one is so harsh a punishment that it would seem to imply some heinous crime on the part of the person banished. Yet Zeami,¹ the great playwright and theorist of noh drama, suffered this extraordinary trial for reasons so obscure that history does not record them. Numerous theories attempting to explain the circumstances of his exile and eventual pardon remain, in the absence of reliable documentation, mere conjecture. A single literary text and a letter written by Zeami provide the only certain information about his life in exile. The text in question is *Kintōsho*,² 'The Book of the Golden Island', completed in 1436 after its author had spent nearly two years on the island of Sado, and Zeami likens himself herein to 'a man of old' who 'once wished, though without blame, to see the moon of exile.' Although clearly implying his innocence of any act deserving such a severe penalty, Zeami generally maintains throughout the composition a tone of calm acceptance and expresses no resentment concerning his fate.

Among the theories adduced to account for Zeami's exile, the oldest and most quaint explanation holds that the playwright was chastised for attitudes unbecoming a father. According to this line of reasoning, Zeami favored his son-in-law Komparu Zenchiku³ over his own sons as his principal successor in the art of the noh. Not only does exile seem a punishment completely out of proportion to such a 'crime', but Zeami's attitude toward his son Motomasa⁴ is inconsistent with this explanation. He had great hopes for his son as his successor and was heart-broken when Motomasa, who had taken over from his father as *dayū*,⁵ or head, of the Kanze school of noh, suddenly died in 1432.⁶

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¹ Kanze Motokiyo Zeami 観世元清世阿弥, 1363-1443.

² 金島書

³ 金春禪竹, 1405-c.1470.

⁴ 元雅, 1394?-1432.

⁵ 大夫

⁶ This is shown by Zeami's remembrance of his son in *Museki Isshi* 夢跡一紙, in Omote Akira 表章 & Katō Shūichi 加藤周一, ed., *Zeami Zenchiku* [=zz] 世阿弥禅竹, (*Nihon Shisō Taikai* 日本思想大系, 24), Iwanami Shoten, 1974, pp. 242-3.

The shogun Ashikaga Yoshinori,⁷ the man responsible for Zeami's exile, was a mercurial character who tended to favor banishment as a means of dealing with enemies or those who incurred his wrath. Although even a mere passing fit of anger might have been sufficient cause for his sending him off to Sado, some suspect that Yoshinori's displeasure stemmed from Zeami's refusal to recognize the shogun's protégé, Zeami's nephew Motoshige,⁸ as the new Kanze *dayū* in 1434 following Motomasa's death. Zeami had been close to this nephew in an earlier day but by this time had apparently become estranged from him; certain resentments and difficulties arising from Yoshinori's patronage of Motoshige and coldness toward Zeami and Motomasa were the probable causes of the rift. At any rate Zeami refused to accept Motoshige as his successor and to pass on to him the texts of some of his plays, thus possibly consigning himself to exile.

But there may have been a more fundamental reason underlying the shogun's hostility toward Zeami and his son Motomasa. A former shogun, Yoshimitsu,⁹ had been personally close to Zeami and his firm supporter, but the playwright rapidly declined in favor after his patron's death in 1408. Subsequent shoguns treated him with increasing coldness, which culminated in the exile recorded in *Kintōsho*. As Motomasa moved the home base of the Kanze guild around the year 1430 to Ochi in Yamato, near the area where the Yoshino court had been located during the division between the northern and southern courts, it has been suggested that, justly or not, Zeami was suspected of sympathizing with the diehard supporters of the southern court.¹⁰

Zeami did not die in exile. At some point he was pardoned, returned from Sado, and lived either in Yamato with his grandson, Motomasa's son, or in Nara with his daughter and son-in-law, Zenchiku. The date of his pardon is as uncertain as the reasons for his exile. He may have been held on Sado less than two full years or as many as eight; at worst he may have remained there until the general amnesty granted after the death of Yoshinori in 1441. On the other hand, another hypothesis suggests that Zeami was already back in Nara at the time he wrote and dated the final section of *Kintōsho* in the second month of 1436. This theory rests on the interpretation of the lines, 'To this very day, . . . before our eyes, wonderful, the way of the gods lasts eternally.' If this is taken not as a general statement but as an eyewitness reference to the ceremonies at Nara, Zeami must obviously have returned from Sado before this date. However, in light of the epilogue poem with which *Kintōsho* concludes, I am inclined to believe that he completed the work on Sado and sent the manuscript back, presumably to Zenchiku.

⁷ 足利義教, 1393-1441.

⁸ 元重 (also known as On'ami 音阿弥), 1398-1467.

⁹ 義満, 1358-1408.

¹⁰ The various theories concerning the reason for Zeami's exile are discussed in

Matsuda Tamotsu 松田存, *Zeami to Nō no Tankyū* 世阿弥と能の探究, Shindokushosha, 1972, pp. 77-79, and Konishi Jin'ichi 小西甚一, *Zeami-shū* 世阿弥集, (*Nihon no Shisō* 日本思想, 8), Chikuma Shobō, 1970, p. 382.

In a letter written on Sado and addressed to Zenchiku,¹¹ Zeami laments the impossibility of obtaining ‘in this strange countryside’ proper paper on which to write the material he had recently sent to his son-in-law. Doubtless he found life on Sado both unfamiliar and inconvenient in various respects, but such difficulties are not mentioned in *Kintōsho*. The positive, highly lyrical tone of the work would seem to reflect the ultimate purpose for which the text was composed. In the sixth section, ‘Ten Shrines’, Zeami writes of visiting a shrine to the ten deities of Sado and there offering a composition in reverence to the gods. The rest of this part is clearly an offertory piece,¹² celebrating the relationship between man and the gods and rejoicing in the eternal prosperity of the land. On the basis of the last section of the work, it is generally believed that Zeami intended the whole of *Kintōsho* to serve as an offertory piece to be sung at *takigi noh*,¹³ the firelight performances held annually in the second month at Kōfukuji. There is no record, however, of the work ever actually being performed in this way.

It is not known precisely how Zeami wrote *Kintōsho*. The final section, containing an epilogue poem and date (1436) and referring to *takigi noh*, differs from the preceding parts. The first seven sections evoke Zeami’s experiences en route to Sado and in the places he visited while in exile. Although these passages may not all have been composed at the same time, they fit together in a coherent whole, with the eighth section serving as a type of postscript. The author may well have kept a diary of his experiences in exile and have used some of this material when writing *Kintōsho*. But there is no way of knowing when *Kintōsho* provides diary-like fact and when Zeami may have revised the record of his experiences and perceptions for literary effect.¹⁴ He certainly seems to have reworked some passages, possibly written at the time of the events they describe, to create the carefully crafted effect of *Kintōsho* as a whole. As reflected in the translation, at times Zeami’s choice of verbal inflections indicates descriptions of scenes written while they were actually being viewed, events as they were actually happening, while in other places the writing is retrospective.

In creating a work of literature by ‘anthologizing’ or associating semi-independent shorter pieces, Zeami remained within the literary tradition of his time. Although different from *renga*, *noh* or an anthology of poetry, *Kintōsho* bears a certain similarity in places to all these genres. But the work as such defies exact classification into any single traditional genre; Omote Akira, for instance, calls it a *koutai kusemai shū*,¹⁵ ‘a collection of short songs and narratives’, a label coined to describe this particular composition. Each section opens with a prose introduction which leads into a poetic passage and is essential for the full comprehension of

¹¹ zz, pp. 318–9.

¹² *Hōraku* 法楽

¹³ 薪能

¹⁴ Unlike, for example, the later case of Bashō’s *Oku no Hosomichi* 奥の細道, which can

be compared to the literal account of the journey kept by Bashō’s traveling companion, Sora 曾良.

¹⁵ 小謡曲舞集: zz, p. 569.

the poetry. In this respect *Kintōsho* also resembles a far earlier genre, the *uta monogatari*, although it is of a far more varied texture in that the poetic passages are not exclusively made up of *waka* and include equivalents to various *shōdan*,¹⁶ that is, set musical and poetic patterns identifiable as structural elements in the composition of *noh*. In fact the manuscript which was the basis for modern printed editions of *Kintōsho* included notations designating patterns, such as *tada kotoba*, prose, and *age uta*,¹⁷ poetic passages sung in a relatively high pitch to a rhythm matching the beat of the music. It is not known whether Zeami himself included these designations or whether they were added by a later copyist. In some cases the terms appear to be garbled versions of those used in *noh* texts. I have transcribed in parentheses these terms but have omitted further designations provided by some modern editors based on their interpretations of the rhythmic patterns of the lines.

Careful analysis of *Kintōsho* offers a challenge, both because of the conceptual problems of the text itself and also because of the lack of reliable information concerning its composition and intended use. The only known manuscript of the work was a copy dating from the first half of the seventeenth century, but this was destroyed in the Kantō earthquake of 1923, and all modern annotated texts are based on the first printed edition published in 1910.¹⁸ The manuscript was rife with errors which seem to have developed from scribal slips in recopying and from mistaken choices of characters. The original version may well have been written largely in *katakana*, as are other of Zeami's extant holograph materials, and in various places editors have been obliged to rethink some *kanji* compounds in terms of sound alone in search of the most probable meanings.¹⁹

Whatever the difficulties, *Kintōsho* is an uncommonly moving testament, infused with quiet, contemplative beauty. Perhaps expecting to end his days in exile, Zeami concluded the work with the following epilogue poem:

Kore o min
Nokosu kogane no
Shima chidori
Ato mo kuchisenu
Yoyo no shirushi ni.

Look on these words,
 The plover tracks
 Of one left on the Golden Island,
 To last as a sign, unweathered,
 For future generations.

In the spirit of Zeami's wish, this translation is offered.

¹⁶ 小段, a term introduced by Yokomichi Mario 横道万里雄 in his analysis in *Yōkyoku-shū* 謡曲集, NKBT 40-41, Iwanami Shoten, 1960.

¹⁷ 只言葉, 上歌

¹⁸ In Yoshida Tōgo 吉田東伍, ed., *Zeami Jūrokubu-shū* 世阿弥十六部集, Nōgakkai, 1910.

¹⁹ Kōsai Tsutomu 香西精, *Zoku Zeami Shinkō* 続世阿弥新考, Wan'ya Shoten, 1970, pp.

324-7, provides a clear example of the kind of difficulty involved by tracing several annotators' different analyses of a few terms in *Kintōsho*.

Except where otherwise noted, my translation follows the interpretations of the editors of zz.

Kintōsho

by KANZE MOTOKIYO ZEAMI

*Jakushū*²⁰

WE left the capital on the fourth day of the fifth month, Eikyō 6,²¹ and on the next day reached the port of Obama in Wakasa province. I had seen this place many years earlier, but now in my old age my memories were uncertain. The sweeping view of mountains by the shoreline, touching clouds over the waves, called to mind a famous Chinese scene.²² 'A single sail returning to the distant shore' must have looked like this.

(utau)

With the boat at harbor,
 As I look out across the Bay of Tsuda,
 As I look out across the Bay of Tsuda,
 Already in the fifth month
 Mandarin trees blossom.
 Wakasa, the path of youth remembered,
 Now Nochise,²³ mountain of old age.
 The pines are green still, growing thick,
 The treetops in lively color.
 The summer reflection of Mt Aoba
 Floats, wavering, clear in the sea.
 With waves too, greening on the rising tide,
 The water seems bottomless, though near the shore,
 The water seems bottomless, though near the shore.

'Belting a green moss robe
 Suspended from rock-crag shoulders,
 White clouds resemble a sash

²⁰ The alternative Chinese name for Wakasa province.

²¹ 1434

²² A standard theme in Chinese landscape paintings known as the Eight Views of Hsiao and Hsiang 瀟湘八景 (J. *Shōshō hakkei*) in Hunan province. The quoted line is a caption describing one of these scenes.

²³ The complicated 若狭路と見えしものを今は老の後背山 involves word play on the names of the province Wakasa (youth) and Nochise (after-life or old age) mountain. Nochise, a mountain to the south of Obama harbor, is an established *utamakura* 歌枕 with poetic associations dating from the *Man'yōshū* 万葉集.

Encircling the waist of the mountain'—²⁴
 So Po Chü-i has written.
 'Boats to the east, boats to the west',²⁵
 Emerging and disappearing
 In the moonlight,
 Cast deep shadows.
 Hsün Yang inlet, too,
 Appeared like this, I know.

Sea Route

(*tada uta*) Since the winds had become favorable, we loosed the hawsers, climbed aboard the boat, and set out over the waves. When asked, 'How far is it across the water to Sado?', the oarsmen replied, 'A long, long way.'

(*sage*) Though far distant,
 Surely I could never be
 Excluded from your favor.
 Beyond the Eight Islands, too,
 The same seas and mountains.²⁶

(*age*) Now I realize
 My destination lies far off
 On the distant sea of Sado.
 Worn and old, I face the journey,
 Rough seas for ten thousand *ri*.

(*sage kuri*) Is this 'a journey of a single sail'?²⁷
 On a boat, a single leaf,²⁸
 A thousand . . . , a myriad . . .²⁹

(*kosesawa*) Truly, 'to what shall I compare this world?
 The wake of a boat rowing off at dawn.'³⁰

²⁴ These four lines render into Japanese a poem by a minor Chinese poet. Both here and in the *noh Haku Rakuten* 白楽天, the poem is mistakenly attributed to Po Chü-i 白居易, or Haku Rakuten as he is commonly called in Japanese.

²⁵ The first four characters in a seven-character line from the poem *P'i-pa Hsing* 琵琶行; the line is from a passage describing Hsün Yang 潯陽 inlet at evening. This poem is the work of Po Chü-i.

²⁶ This *waka* is apparently Zeami's own composition. *Yashima* 八島, 'Eight Islands', was a general name for the principal islands of Japan. Zeami here treats Sado as an outlying area, not part of the Eight Islands proper. But he implies that even Sado is, like the rest of Japan, blessed by the favorable influence of the

Emperor. 'Your favor' translates *kimi no okage* きみの御かげ.

²⁷ Reminiscent of a line in the *noh Yashima*: 'A myriad *ri* voyage on a single leaf! Trusting to the wind of a single sail' 一葉万里の舟の道ただ一帆の風にまかす.

²⁸ The use of 'leaf' 葉 as a counter for boats may stem from the Chinese legend that the boat was invented by a counsellor of the Yellow Emperor inspired by the sight of a spider floating on a leaf. The story of the origin of the boat is given in the *noh Jinen Koji* 自然居士.

²⁹ 千頼万徳のつうしょあり. Owing apparently to a copyist's error at some point, the meaning of this line can be only conjectured.

³⁰ Zeami here incorporates, with some changes in the first and last lines, a poem by

Already far across the waves,
 The northern sea is vast,
 Among the clouds, no islands.
 When I gaze far eastward
 Through a sky of fifth-month rains,
 There alone, no sign of summer,
 Shirayama,³¹ the mountain white with snow,
 Is faintly visible,
 As snow patches linger long.
 As we continue on our journey
 Past the sacred places of Noto,³²
 Suzu, cape of the gods,
 And the shores of Seven Islands,
 Float faint and far to view
 Over 'waves that wash the setting sun.'³³
 As evening darkens into blackness
 Fisher-lanterns I took for fireflies
 Guide us to night mooring.

(age)

Trailing clouds rise from Tateyama,³⁴
 In the dawning sky at Mt Tonami³⁵
 I see as far as Kurikara peak,
 As the boat is rowed across the distant waters
 Off the Mikoshi route.³⁶
 Far ahead is Ariake³⁷ shore,
 Lit, as its name, by dawn moonlight.
 Over the waves, the boat sails night and day,
 Moving fast as the arrow of time.
 With the moon already low in its waning bow,³⁸
 Pines are seen amid dawn waves.

Mansei 満誓, in *Shūishū* 拾遺集, #1327.

³¹ The text has しら山, although the mountain is now called Hakusan. The shrine on the mountain, however, is known as Shirayama Hime Jinja 白山比咩神社.

³² There is some doubt as to which shrine's divinities Zeami is referring to here. Information concerning the places passed on Zeami's journey is provided in the notes in zz.

³³ The final two lines of a poem by Go-Tokudaiji Sadaijin 後徳大寺左大臣 in *Shin-kokinshū* 新古今集, #35. The original poem has 'white waves' 白波.

³⁴ Like Hakusan, Tateyama 立山 in Etchū province was a major center of pilgrimage in the Hokuriku region.

³⁵ Tonami 砺波 stands on the border between Etchū and Kaga provinces, and Kurikara 俱利伽羅 is one of its peaks.

³⁶ The text has *mitashiji* みたし路, but this appears to have been a copyist's error for Mikoshi, the three provinces of Echizen, Etchū and Echigo.

³⁷ Both a specific place name and a word used to describe the light of the moon seen lingering in the dawn sky.

³⁸ The last third of the month; also linked associatively with the 'arrow' of the preceding line. The phrase indicates that Zeami's journey, which began on the fourth day of the fifth month, has now continued past the twentieth.

Suddenly, here, reflection of the shore.
 ‘Where are we?’ I ask and learn,
 On the sea of Sado,
 We have arrived at the Bay of Ōda,
 We have arrived at the Bay of Ōda.

Place of Exile

(*tada kotoba*) That night we stopped at the Bay of Ōda and slept pillowed on stone in a fisherman’s hut. At dawn we set off up a mountain trail, and when we arrived at Kasakari³⁹ Pass, we let our horses rest. The name of this place is famous even in the capital. ‘How can this mountain’s maples fade?’ I was filled with awareness of the sensitivity of these summer mountain maples, even their first withering leaves.

Descending the mountain trail we passed through a place called Hase, a spot sacred to Kannon. To this great Buddha, famed even back at home,⁴⁰ I offered fervent prayers.

That night we reached a place called Shinpo in Sōta district. There the provincial governor’s local deputy took charge of me and housed me in a small temple called Manpukuji.⁴¹ Behind the temple a grove of pines clings to the rockface. Mountain winds sound through the treetops in the garden, inviting the approaching autumn. In the shadow of the trees, water trickles coolly through the moss; the stone walls are slippery with dew and dripping water. The place truly looks old, weathered by time. I was filled with gratitude upon learning from the monk in charge that the principal statue at the temple was of the Buddha Yakushi.

(*sage uta*) ‘Spring flowers of the Buddha’s holy name
 Bloom fragrantly, even in the village of ten evils.
 The autumn moon of healing for all mankind
 Dwells clear, even in the waters of five corruptions.’⁴²

³⁹ かさかり, apparently an error for Kasatori 笠取, as a Mt Kasatori in Yamashiro figures in a poem by Ariwara Motokata 在原元方 in *Kokinshū* 古今集, #261; Zeami here quotes the last couplet, changing the verb. In this autumn poem, the poet implies that he expects the ‘rainhat-taking’ mountain to protect the maples from the ravages of the weather.

⁴⁰ Possibly a reference to Hasedera 長谷寺 in Nara province.

⁴¹ The actual location of Zeami’s first place of exile and of Izumi, mentioned later, is a matter of conjecture. zz, p. 495.

⁴² Lines similar to these quotations appear in the noh *Kagetsu* 花月 and *Tamura* 田村, and

may have been a popular *imagō* 今様. The images of spring flowers and autumn moonlight are symbols for Amida Buddha’s vow of salvation for all who invoke the Buddha’s name. The ‘ten evils’ (*jūaku* 十悪) are a catalogue of evil conduct, while the ‘five corruptions’ (*gojoku* 五濁) are manifestations of decay and disorder in the age of the decline of the law (*mappō* 末法). The passage is based on *Yakushikyō* 薬師経 and the vow is here attributed to Yakushi Nyorai, with the reward for the faithful invoking Buddha’s name being salvation, specifically freedom from illness. The imagery extolling the vow blends with the description of the temple garden.

My heart is purified by moonlight,
 Reflecting afresh in the garden waters
 The saving vow of Yakushi Buddha.

A temporary resting place,⁴³
 Here my grave, and yet,
 Here my grave, and yet,
 That moon dwells also in the cloud-sky of the capital.
 Such thoughts, my only consolation, bind me
 To the capital in the wakefulness of old age.
 A man of old once wished, though without blame,
 To see the moon of exile.⁴⁴
 I know the feeling now, know for myself,
 I know the feeling now, know for myself.

*Hototogisu*⁴⁵

(*tada kotoba*) Now when I look off to the west, waves in the bay break over the white sand, covering it as with snow. Amid this pure white scene a grove of pines is visible. Although we are in the sixth month, the scene looks like spring.⁴⁶ Within the grove there is a shrine dedicated to the spirit of Hachiman, so this locale is called Yahata.⁴⁷ When I went to offer reverence at the shrine, I learned something strange about the place.

Hototogisu abound in these parts, although they are rarely heard in the capital. It goes without saying that you can hear them on the mountain trails, but they are also up in the trees around my temporary dwelling, in the branches of the pines near the eaves. They make a great racket, raucously clamoring in my ears. But here at the shrine they are silent.

I asked the reason, and the shrine attendant told me that long ago the Minister Tamekane⁴⁸ had been exiled to this place. He had once heard a *hototogisu* call and composed this poem:

You cry and I hear you,
 Hear you with longing for the capital.

⁴³ The meaning here depends on a *kakekotoba* 掛け詞—しばし身をおき ‘to rest for a while’, and *okitsukidokoro* 奥津城処 ‘a grave’.

⁴⁴ A reference to this ‘man of old’ is found in *Tsurezuregusa* 徒然草, 5. Zeami makes this allusion in order to express his own innocence.

⁴⁵ The *hototogisu* and the *kakkō*, mentioned later, are closely related birds, and are often translated as ‘little cuckoo’ and ‘cuckoo’ respectively. The unpoetic association of these English names, however, makes it preferable to

retain the Japanese terms.

⁴⁶ The sixth month of the lunar year is the height of summer.

⁴⁷ Hachiman and Yahata are different readings of 八幡.

⁴⁸ Kyōgoku Tamekane 京極為兼, 1254–1332, was in exile on Sado from 1298 to 1303. The poem quoted here is not included in his personal poetry collection, but apparently it was attributed to Tamekane in the locale on Sado.

O mountain *hototogisu*,
Leave this place!

Since that time the birds here have fallen silent and never sung again. I know that nightingales calling among the flowers, and even frogs living in the water, sing with the voice of poetry.⁴⁹ Why, then, had I not expected *hototogisu*, living creatures like them, to share their sensitivity?

(*age utau*) The falling blossoms drop cleanly,⁵⁰
The *kakkō* gives its first song.
Brilliant moonlight sends off the autumn,
Beneath the pines we see snow.
These words can be found in poems of old.
You know your season, *hototogisu*, bird of time,⁵¹
Famed as a bird of the capital,⁵²
Hototogisu, with your nostalgic voice,
Just sing, sing away.
I, too, in my old age,
Weep for my former home.
I, too, in my old age,
Weep for my former home.

Izumi

(*tada kotoba*) At the foot of the mountains to the west can be seen Izumi, a place with rows of tiled roofs which give it the appearance of the capital. The retired emperor Juntoku⁵³ was exiled here in the past. Here he composed the poem,

My days of glory ended,
I have seen the moon
Over eaves of thatch.
Man never knows
What future skies await him.

⁴⁹ The images of the poetry of nightingales and frogs are to be found in the preface to the *Kokinshū*.

⁵⁰ This and the following three lines have the flavor of a Chinese poem recast into Japanese, but the source is unknown. Zeami may be stringing together suitable imagery to indicate the four seasons.

⁵¹ Zeami here calls the bird *toki no tori* 時の鳥, 'bird of time'; the characters were normally read as *hototogisu* when used in reference to the bird. Elsewhere in *Kintōsho*, Zeami writes *hototogisu* in *kana*.

⁵² The *miyakodori* 都鳥, 'capital bird', is a

different bird entirely; because of a famous poem in *Ise Monogatari* 伊勢物語, 9, it has strong associations as a 'messenger to the capital'. Here Zeami calls the bird '*miyakodori*' to indicate apparently that the *hototogisu* was familiar to him in the capital before his exile.

⁵³ 順徳, 1197–1242, was exiled to Sado in 1221 and died there in 1242. Zeami mistakenly attributes to Juntoku a poem actually written in exile by the retired emperor Go-Toba 後鳥羽. The first line, *kagiri areba*, is freely translated here following the commentators' assumption that it refers to Go-Toba's fall from power to exile.

The Prince of Ten Virtues, Commander of a Myriad Horsemen,⁵⁴ prince of sweet memory, was famed like the mountain cherries which blossom here, flowering on every twig. The mellow spring of the capital far gone, he lived in this distant country lane. How sad to think of him. Now the grasses of the eaves of thatch and the rattan blinds⁵⁵ that remind us of him are nearly faded and rotted away.

(*sage utau*) Evening rains flood the garden,
Might they too be a spring?⁵⁶

(*age*) ‘Flowing downward,
The water seems to bring in autumn,
The water seems to bring in autumn,
And my hands chill
On scooping from the spring.’⁵⁷
At times he drenched his sleeves.
‘They are not men,
Yet rocks and trees
Are sadder still
On an autumn evening
In Mitsu no kojima.’⁵⁸
Such was his poem and his state of mind.

(*sage*) ‘Picking anise
Wet with dew
Along the mountain path,
Up at dawn
In sleeves dyed black.’⁵⁹
For you as well, such sleeves,
And sleeping mats of moss.
Sad, who would have thought it
For one who bedded on brocades?

(*age*) ‘Their kindling gathered,
Remote mountain dwellers
Turn toward home.

⁵⁴ The compound *jūzen banjō* 十善万乗, ‘ten virtues, myriad riders’, combines two terms each indicating an imperial prince. The first reflects the Buddhist notion that one who is born a prince has in a previous existence lived a life of perfection, observing the ten precepts, while the second denotes a prince’s power as head of a large army.

⁵⁵ *Shinobu no sudare* 忍の簾. *Shinobu* here bears a double meaning: ‘to recall, recollect’, and also the name of a plant, hare’s foot fern, loosely associated with the plants used to

weave the blinds.

⁵⁶ A play on *izumi* 泉, ‘spring’ and the name of the place.

⁵⁷ A poem by Nakatsukasa 中務 in *Shinsen-zaijū* 新千載集, # 302. The second and third lines of the original poem are repeated in Zeami’s text.

⁵⁸ This poem is by the retired emperor Juntoku and is included in *Shoku Kokinshū* 続古今集, # 1568.

⁵⁹ A poem by Kojijū 小侍従 in *Shinkokinshū* 新古今集, # 1664.

Guide them to the village,
 Three-day moon of autumn.⁶⁰
 New moon by the edge of the clouds
 Reflects the sad world in its light,
 Could even you, a prince, escape this?
 'As often has been said,
 When you have entered
 The lower depths of Hell,
 Royalty or slave—
 It makes no difference there.'⁶¹
 'With the pure heart of a lotus,
 Undeiled by mud,'⁶²
 Clear, like the waters of the spring itself,
 You lived here at Izumi.
 You must have walked the refreshing path,
 You must have walked the refreshing path.⁶³

Ten Shrines

(*tada kotoba*) Now fighting broke out in the province and all Sado became embroiled in battle. Since my place of exile, too, became a crossroads of conflict, I was moved and lodged here at Izumi. Then autumn passed, winter drew to a close and the spring of Eikyō 7 came.⁶⁴ Since the gods of the ten shrines⁶⁵ of this province were here, in reverence I offered a composition.

(*sashigoto*) Men are earthly beings of the gods;⁶⁶
 The service of the shrine attendants

⁶⁰ Zeami has slightly revised the first line of this poem by retired emperor Juntoku, in *Gyokuyōshū* 玉葉集, #2649.

⁶¹ A poem by Prince Takaoka 高岳親王 in *Shasekishū* 沙石集, 8, quoted in the noh *Nishikigi* 錦木. The terms translated as 'royalty' and 'slave' are *setsuri* 刹利 and *shuda* 首陀, Japanese equivalents for the Indian castes *kṣatriya* and *sūdra*.

⁶² The opening lines of a poem by Bishop Henjō 遍昭 in *Kokinshū*, #165.

⁶³ *Suzushiki michi* 涼しき道, a phrase used in many noh plays to indicate the road to the Pure Land paradise.

⁶⁴ 1435

⁶⁵ Although no such shrine now exists, a 14th-century record indicates that in the area of Zeami's exile there was once a place of

worship called 'Ten Shrines', apparently a *sōsha* 総社, in which ten deities worshiped in various parts of Sado were jointly enshrined. As in other provinces, such a shrine enabled officials and others to worship all the deities of the province without need for travel.

⁶⁶ These nine lines of the section marked *sashigoto* translate one long sentence in the original, the syntactic relationship among its parts being very unclear (see zz, p. 495). Lines identical to various parts of this passage are found in several noh, although the entire passage is not included in any single play. The first line, also found in the noh *Mimosuso* 御裳濯, may mean either that men are created by the gods or that they are protected by them; in view of the following lines, the latter meaning seems more probable here.

Increases the gods' awesome power.⁶⁷
 The sleep of the five marks of decay⁶⁸
 Wakens to the moonlight of ultimate enlightenment,
 And mankind, like the gods, will be
 Saved from disaster and granted long life.
 So vow the gods,
 Inspiring our deep gratitude.
 I come in pilgrimage to the gods,
 Directing my steps from shrine to shrine.

Truly the deities, softening their glow,⁶⁹
 Appear in this material world,
 Inspiring man's first bonds to Buddha.
 And Buddha, in his life's Eight Stages,⁷⁰
 Through his enlightenment,
 Brings his blessings for mankind
 To full completion.

On the islands of our land⁷¹
 Shines the benevolent light
 Of the reign of our sovereigns.
 In this jewel-fenced⁷² land
 We know a time of rejoicing
 Over long years of prosperity.
 Truly the nine-fold spring⁷³ is eternal,
 The ten shrines, cloudless,
 The ten shrines, cloudless.

⁶⁷ A passage similar to this and the preceding line appears in the noh *Aridōshi* 蟻通, where they are quoted in a manner suggesting a familiar proverb.

⁶⁸ This and the following line appear in the noh *Matsuo* 松尾, while these two lines and the two following are found in the noh *Kusanagi* 草薙. *Gosui* 五衰 is the Buddhist term for the five physical marks of decay apparent when a heavenly being approaches death, while 'the sleep of the five marks of decay' refers to a state of unenlightenment.

⁶⁹ The first half of this passage is based on a section of the Tendai *Maka shikan* 摩訶止觀. The concept, which originated in the *Tao te ching* 道德經, appears in many Chinese Buddhist texts and is prominent in medieval Japanese texts, among them numerous noh and *Shasekishū*.

⁷⁰ *Hassō* 八相, the stages in the life of the historical Buddha, the sixth being *jōdō* 成道, enlightenment; his whole life cycle is also referred to, as here, as *hassō jōdō*.

⁷¹ Zeami here uses *Akitsu* 秋津洲 as the name for all Japan.

⁷² *Tamagaki no* 玉垣の, an ancient decorative epithet for the enclosures of imperial residences or shrines. Its use in reference to the whole country conveys the sense of the all-embracing protection afforded by the imperial line.

⁷³ Here 'nine' is poetically associated with 'ten' in the next line. As *kokonoe no* 九重の, 'nine-fold', is also a decorative adjective for imperial palaces, the imagery of the benevolence of the emperor continues through to the end of this passage.

Northern Mountain⁷⁴

(*tada koto*) Around this time I met a man of whom I inquired generally⁷⁵ about the mysteries of the gods of this province.

(*age u*) Now our realm is called Akitsushima.
 Though it is a small country,
 Like scattered millet,⁷⁶
 Since it is the land
 Where heaven and earth
 Were opened into being,⁷⁷
 The descendants of Amaterasu Ōmikami
 Have fittingly continued
 The line of descent of the sun
 Unbroken to this day.

(*sashigoto*) According to the Way of the gods,⁷⁸
 The names of our land are many.
 It is first called Dainihonkoku,
 For at the bottom of the plain of the blue sea
 Appeared the golden characters 'Dai Nichi',⁷⁹
 And since that time the land
 Has been called by this name.
 And a moment's thought reveals
 That the land is not one
 But eight islands, washed by waves.
 Let us tell of them briefly.

(*kusemai*) We think back to the beginnings:
 Presented by the Heavenly Ancestor,⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Another name for Mt Kinboku 金北, the highest peak on Sado.

⁷⁵ The text has the incomprehensible けいかい, possibly a copyist's error for *taigai*, 'generally'. Konishi, p. 388, suggests that the word should be *kekkaï* 結界, a place 'bound off', a world apart, a place for religious ceremony. In which case, the sentence would read, 'I inquired about the mysteries of the gods of this province and about their places of worship.'

⁷⁶ *Sokusan hendo* 粟散辺土, an expression used particularly in Buddhist texts to indicate the topography of Japan in contrast to the land masses of China and India. Although Zeami says that he inquired about Sado, the section first describes the entire country and then narrows down to focus on Sado.

⁷⁷ *Kaibyaku* 開闢, indicating a beginning, although not precisely an act of creation.

⁷⁸ *Shintō*, written in *kana*.

⁷⁹ *Dainichi no kinmon* 大日の金文. The characters are identified with Dainichi nyorai 大日如来 (Mahavairocana). A similar story appears in *Shasekishū*, 1. Zeami alludes in this passage to the beginnings of Japan before its 'creation' by Izanagi and Izanami. According to this explanation, the seal of Dainichi indicated the place where the deities' spear was to be thrust. The myth is closely associated with a medieval syncretist notion which viewed Amaterasu as a *kami* manifestation of Dainichi.

⁸⁰ *Tenso* 天祖. In the *noh Sakahoko* 逆鉾, in which a similar passage appears, the 'heavenly ancestor' is clearly *kuni tokotachi no mikoto*

The true spear was thrust down,
 Radiating brilliance,
 From the floating bridge of heaven.
 Of these Lands of the True Spear,⁸¹
 Beginning with Awaji
 Which is in the Southern Sea,
 Here in the Northern Sea is Sado Island.
 Providing the Womb and Diamond Worlds,⁸²
 They float in the south and north,
 As lands which came forth
 From a golden lotus of seven leaves.⁸³
 Guarding the four seas,
 These two islands are known
 As mother and father of the gods.
 And Hokuya's poem, too,
 'In that sea
 There is a golden island;
 If you inquire of its name,
 It is called Sado.'⁸⁴
 Wonderful, this poem of the god,
 And the enduring name
 Of the marvelous province
 Will last for ever.

国常立尊, who instructs Izanagi and Izanami to find the land of the reed plain and presents them with the spear. The conceptualization in both *Sakahoko* and *Kintōsho* seems close to the creation myths specifically presented in *Jinnō Shōtōki* 神皇正統記, a history of Japan completed by Kitabatake Chikafusa 北畠親房 in 1339.

⁸¹ *Hoko ma no kuni* 矛まの国, another, but uncommon, name for Japan. It is unclear whether *ma* is best interpreted as 間 'space' or 真 'pure, true'; I have chosen the latter principally for its appropriately decorative sense.

⁸² *Taikonryōbu* 胎金両部. The *taizōkai* 胎藏界, 'Womb World', and the *kongōkai* 金剛界, 'Diamond World', are esoteric mandala representing, roughly, noumenon and phenomenon, with overtones of female-male in the distinction. Zeami symbolically centers the World Womb on Sado and the Diamond World on Awaji, although there may have been some doubt in his mind as to which island is associated with which mandala. He speaks

of the Womb and Diamond Worlds which 'float in the south and north', thus apparently associating Awaji with the Womb World (as in other literary and religious texts) and Sado with the Diamond World. Yet developing the association between Kumano and Izanagi in the South, and Hakusan and Izanami in the North, Zeami clearly associates Sado with Izanami at the end of this passage.

⁸³ This phrase may refer back to the Golden Characters, n. 79 above.

⁸⁴ Sugawara Michizane 菅原道真, 845-903, was deified after his death in exile as Kitano Tenjin 北野天神; 'Hokuya' is another reading for 'Kitano'. The source of the poem is not known. Word association links the 'gold' of Golden Island with *sado* 砂土, 'sandy soil', in which gold is found, and gold was discovered on Sado in the Nara period. Although the etymology of the name Sado 佐渡 itself is unclear, a prosaic reality underlies the island's epithet *kogane no shima* 黄金の島, Golden Island or Island of Gold.

(age u) Even now, here is the godly world
 Of Izanagi and Izanami;
 Dividing their reflected radiance,
 Izanagi is manifest as Kumano Gongen.⁸⁵
 In the clouds on the Southern Mountain
 Sowing seeds,⁸⁶ he governs the nation.
 Izanami is manifest as Hakusan Gongen.⁸⁷
 On the Northern Sea she harvests seeds.
 Here on Sado, the Northern Mountain,
 Day after day, month after month,
 The light of the moon of Buddha's nirvana
 Like the radiant appearance of the gods⁸⁸
 Has shone incessantly.
 And so the lands of the province are rich,
 The people strong and happy,
 As Hakusan in the clouds and Izanami
 Govern the seas of Sado.

(sage) Through what bond from a former life
 Have I now come to rest
 For a time in this sacred land?
 I give myself over to the unsettled life
 Of clouds and water.
 All living beings and the many Buddhas
 Live in peace together.
 The mountains are naturally high,
 The seas are naturally deep.
 'The heart which tells completely
 Of the clouds on the mountains,
 The moon on the sea.'⁸⁹
 Ah, marvelous—the seas of Sado.

⁸⁵ The equation of Izanagi with the deity of Kumano appears in *Jingi Seisō* 神祇正宗 by Yoshida Kanetomo 吉田兼俱, 1435–1511. The Kumano cult in most instances seems to have venerated both Izanagi and Izanami together, and the *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀 calls Kumano the burial place of Izanami.

⁸⁶ These images of Izanagi and Izanami as sower and reaper also appear in the noh *Awaji* 淡路 and in medieval Shinto texts.

⁸⁷ The principal Hakusan shrine was located in present-day Ishikawa-ken. There were shrines dedicated to Hakusan Gongen 白山権現 throughout Japan, but special veneration

was paid to the deity in the Hokuriku region.

⁸⁸ A local Sado legend in Zeami's time may have held that the radiance emanating from the manifestation of Hakusan Gongen on Hakusan illuminated Mt Kinboku on Sado. *zz*, p. 256.

⁸⁹ A quotation from *Hekiganroku* 碧巖録, a basic text of Rinzaï Zen. The phrase was used by Zeami in his *Kyū-i* 九位 to describe the fifth of nine levels of understanding and accomplishment of the noh actor; the image seems to imply a man in complete harmony with nature.

Green mountains as far as the eye can see.⁹⁰
 The name is natural, too.
 For if you inquire of its name,
 It is called Sado,⁹¹ the Golden Island,
 Marvelous.

Firelight Ceremony⁹²

'The voice of the people in a world well governed shows that they rejoice and are at peace. Such government is harmonious.' 'Heaven and earth are moved and the gods and spirits are touched.'⁹³

'It is the appointed day
 Of the second month
 At Mt Kasuga.
 Now let us celebrate in worship
 Until the peak resounds.'⁹⁴
 The writing of this poem
 Was itself a Way with meaning,
 True also of the poem:
 'In the second month
 We push through snows
 At Kasuga, where dew and moonlight
 Settled on the moor
 Do reverence to the gods.'⁹⁵
 These celebrations have continued
 Every year until the present.
 So, by the will of the gods,
 The country remains in peace.
 Now on the second day in the second month,
 In ceremonial robes of early spring,
 They must be proceeding
 To that shrine and temple⁹⁶

⁹⁰ Another phrase from Zeami's description of the fifth level of attainment in *Kyū-i*.

⁹¹ Here Zeami repeats the last two lines of the poem cited in n. 84 above.

⁹² In the text this section is unlabelled, and I give the name added in zz.

⁹³ Transformed into rather *kambun*-flavored Japanese, these are one-and-a-half stanzas from the 'Great Preface' to the *Shih ching* 詩經. Zeami also quotes these and the intervening stanzas in his *Go'on Kyoku* 五音曲.

⁹⁴ A poem by Minamoto Shunrai 源俊頼 included in his *Sambokuki Kashū* 散木奇歌集. What I have translated as 'the appointed day of the second month' is *nigatsu no hatsuzaru* 二月の初申; the first date in the second lunar month having *saru* as one of its cyclical signs was set as the day for the performance of *takigi noh* at the Kasuga Shrine in Nara.

⁹⁵ A poem by Emperor Go-Murakami 後村上 in *Shin'yōshū* 新葉集, #605.

⁹⁶ Kasuga Shrine and Kōfukuji.

(age)
 Where the gods receive
 Their song of offering.
 Now in the services
 Held at Kōfukuji
 In the Eastern and Western Halls,
 They present the songs and dances of entertainment,
 Praying for ten thousand years of life,
 For a wealthy country
 And a prosperous people.
 They greet the spring and add another year,⁹⁷
 In this firelight service for the gods.
 Kitano Tenjin, too, wondrously wrote,
 'Famous even in China,
 These services at Kōfukuji
 Bring prosperous blessings.'⁹⁸
 To this very day,
 These offerings of entertainment
 Begin the cycle of twelve services.
 Before our eyes, wonderful,
 The way of the gods⁹⁹ lasts eternally.

Look on these words,
 The plover tracks
 Of one left on the Golden Island,
 To last as a sign, unweathered,
 For future generations.

Second month, Eikyō 8¹⁰⁰

Novice Zembō¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ The verb here is *tsumu* 積む, 'to pile up' (as of firewood), the image connecting to the *tagigi* (kindling wood) of *tagiki noh*.

⁹⁸ Lines based on a Chinese poem by Michizane. Although quoted in this context, they originally referred to a different religious service.

⁹⁹ Again, *shintō*.

¹⁰⁰ 1436

¹⁰¹ 沙弥善芳. *Kintōsho* is the only text which Zeami signed with this name. The full form of his name in religion was possibly Shiō Zembō 至翁善芳 (zz, p. 493). Zeami's letter to Zenchiku (see p. 443, above) is signed Shiō.